



What Is the CERF?

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a stand-by fund established by the United Nations to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

The CERF was approved by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 December 2005 to achieve the following objectives:

- promote early action and response to reduce loss of life;
- enhance response to time-critical requirements;
- strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in under-funded crises

The CERF is authorized to raise up to US\$ 500 million, including a grant facility of up to \$450 million and a loan facility of \$50 million. The CERF is funded by voluntary contributions from around the globe from Member States of the United Nations, private businesses, foundations and individuals.

The Fund is managed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General. The Fund allows the UN to react immediately when a disaster strikes by making funding available for life-saving activities to eligible agencies such as UN and its funds, programmes, and specialized agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

CERF is intended to complement – not substitute for – existing humanitarian planning and funding mechanisms such as consolidated and flash appeals. The CERF provides seed funds to jump-start critical operations and fund life-saving programmes not yet covered by other donors.

United Nations and its funds, programmes and specialized agencies as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are eligible for both grants and loans.

The two components have distinct features:

Grant Facility

- ◆ Up to US \$450 million, depending on voluntary contributions received.
- ◆ Established in December 2005 by the United Nations General Assembly.
- ◆ Allows the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) to ensure coverage of life-saving programmes when funds are not available from other sources.
- ◆ Used to allocate funds to UN operational agencies to address critical humanitarian needs based on priorities established under the leadership of the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator in the field.
- ◆ Each applicant must justify the need for funds, taking into consideration other available resources. If a donor pledge is forthcoming, the loan facility should be used.

Loan Facility

- ◆ US \$50 million available.
- ◆ Established in 1991 as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. The Revolving Fund is now managed separately as part of the upgraded Central Emergency Response Fund.
- ◆ Used to make loans to UN agencies for emergency programmes based on indication that donor funding is forthcoming.
- ◆ Loans must be reimbursed within 6 months.
- ◆ US \$337 million were disbursed in loans over the last 14 years.
- ◆ Primarily used as a cash-flow mechanism allowing UN agencies to access funds rapidly while they are waiting for donor pledges to be transferred.

Further information, including CERF application toolkit, is available on <http://cerf.un.org>.