

[New UN funding to help sustain critical aid programmes for nearly 150,000 in Chad](#)

17 November 2017 – The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) – a pool of funding which supports critical relief operations in crises around the world – has allocated \$11 million to help meet the life-saving needs of some 147,000 people in southern Chad, where aid operations are faltering in want of resources.

[These funds will] help us meet urgent needs of refugees, returnees and local populations when our humanitarian appeal is seriously underfunded, [said](#) Stephen Tull, the Humanitarian Coordinator in the African nation.

To date, less than 40 per cent of the requirements have been met at national level [and the allocation will] support a new joint programme of assistance, he added.

The latest allocation follows an earlier release of \$10 million in September last year in the same region to cover the priority needs of the most vulnerable communities. In 2017, the provinces of Moyen-Chari, Mandoul, Logone Oriental and Logone Occidental witnessed several new populations influxes, compounding the crisis.

The situation was further complicated by the gradual withdrawal of humanitarian partners due to an increased lack of funding.

The latest batch of resources will help provide multi-sectoral emergency assistance through multi-purpose cash transfers, and contribute to strengthening basic social services, food security, protection, shelter and livelihoods. Funds will also support nutrition, health and education programmes.

About 14 per cent of the allocation will also be used by the UN Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) services to maintain humanitarian access throughout the country.

However, in spite of the additional funds, the needs remain daunting.

According to Florent Méhaule, the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) in Chad, further support remains critical to help the 866,000 people in need of emergency assistance.

This funding will only cover a fraction of the needs, he added, underscoring that increased involvement of development actors and of the Government to support and complement the efforts of the humanitarian community and help reinforce the resilience of affected populations.

Established by the UN General Assembly in 2006, CERF is a humanitarian funding mechanism managed by OCHA, on behalf of the UN Secretary-General. It enables a faster and more effective response to vital needs of people affected by natural disasters, armed conflicts, or under-funded crises.

Since 2006, the Fund has provided \$173 million to aid programmes in Chad and is the third largest humanitarian donor in the country.

[Famine may be unfolding 'right now' in Yemen, warns UN relief wing](#)

17 November 2017 – The United Nations relief wing on Friday warned of famine-like conditions unfolding in Yemen, as a blockade on aid and other essential goods by a Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels there enters its 12th day.

Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), sounded the alarm during the regular bi-weekly news briefing in Geneva.

He was responding to a question from a journalist who asked him to clarify a [warning yesterday from UN aid chiefs](#) that the closure of air, sea and land ports in Yemen threatened millions of vulnerable children and families.

It means that these are the number of people in areas where there's an IPC4 Integrated Phase Classification 4 which is the last step before obviously 5, which is famine [...] But you are correct, there may be as we speak right now, famine happening, and we hear children are dying. I mean, there's excess mortality as a cause and consequence of undernourishment.

Yemen imports up to 90 per cent of its daily needs, including fuel, which has now reached crisis levels.

Reserves are in such short supply that three Yemeni cities have been unable to pump clean water to residents in recent days, according to UN partner the Red Cross.

This has left one million people at risk of a renewed cholera outbreak, just as the country emerges from the worst epidemic in modern times.

RELATED: [Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen](#)

Other diseases are also a threat, including diphtheria, a serious infection of the nose and throat, that's easily prevented with a vaccine.

It is spreading fast and has already claimed 14 lives, according

to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), which said that a vaccination campaign is planned in nine days' time.

In addition to water and sewage problems in Hodeida, Sa'ada and Taiz, the Red Cross warned that the capital Sana'a and other cities will find themselves in the same situation in two weeks – unless imports of essential goods resume immediately.

Also at the briefing, Alessandra Vellucci, for the UN Information Service (UNIS) recalled yesterday's statement in New York from Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General regarding a letter the UN chief sent to the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations.

In the letter, the Secretary-General said that the blockade imposed by the coalition since 6 November is already reversing the impact of humanitarian efforts. While he welcomed the reopening of Aden port, the Secretary-General noted that this alone will not meet the needs of 28 million Yemenis.

As such, the Secretary-General called on the Saudi-led coalition to enable the resumption of UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights to Sana'a and Aden airports, and the reopening of Hodeida and Saleef ports so that fuel, food and medical supplies could enter Yemen.

[Photo Story: World pushing for faster climate action at Bonn conference](#)

17 November 2017 – The international community has been meeting in Bonn, Germany, for the past two weeks to tackle climate change. One year after the entry into force of the Paris Climate Agreement, the annual Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) is an opportunity for nations around the world to show their ambition for climate action and their determination to keep their promises under the theme of "Further, Faster – Together."

The gathering, known as COP23, started last Monday, with technical discussions over the [Paris Agreement](#), and featured high-level events this week, including an address by UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres.

In his address on 15 November, Secretary-General Guterres called climate change "the defining threat of our time," adding that "our duty – to each other and to future generations – is to raise ambition." He called for lowering emissions and doing more to adapt to the changes, including through investment in climate-friendly developments, building partnerships, and strengthening political leadership. Pictured: UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Fijian Prime

Minister Frank Bainimarama, Secretary-General Guterres, and Ovais Sarmad, UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary.

While senior officials addressed the international community, one of the most reported stories was of 12-year-old Timoci Naulusala, whose village in Fiji's Tailevu province was hit by a cyclone last year. "My once beautiful village is now a barren and empty wasteland," he told the thousands of participants. "Climate change is here to stay unless you do something about it."

At the heart of the conference in Bonn is the Paris Agreement, which was adopted by the 196 parties to the UNFCCC in December 2015. It calls on the international community to combat climate change by limiting global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius and strive not to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius. Above, children at the welcoming ceremony at COP23 on 6 November.

"While Paris represented one of those moments where the best of humanity achieved an agreement so important to our collective futures, Bonn represents how we will move forward to fulfil its promise," said the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa. "We are running out of time to turn things around. To do so, we must significantly increase our efforts to reduce emissions and our carbon footprints." Ms. Espinosa is pictured above on one of the bicycles ferrying people between venues for the conference, along with electric buses.

Fijians performing a traditional ceremony at the opening of COP23. The president of the conference is Fiji – the first time a small island country on the frontlines of climate change holds that honour. Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said the world can no longer ignore phenomena such as extreme storms and rising sea levels: "It's hard to find any part of the world that is unaffected by these events."

Above, protesters at one of the COP venues in Bonn. They are among the thousands of delegates from 193 countries – as well as scientists, environmentalists and advocates – estimated to be participating in the two-week event. Given the high turnout, the event is being held in Germany, where logistics are a lesser strain on the country's resources, rather than in Fiji, which officially holds the presidency.

Among the side events scheduled at COP23 are several focusing on the power of cities, regions, private sector companies and investors, in implementing the Paris Agreement in the areas of energy, water, agriculture, oceans and coastal areas, human settlements, transportation, industry, and forests. Pictured above are signs from an alliance that calls itself “America’s Pledge.” Led by California Governor Jerry Brown and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the group says it is committed to the Paris Agreement after President Donald Trump said in June that the United States would withdraw from it.



Credit: Jose M. Correa/UNDAC

Among the initiatives launched at the climate conference is the InsuResilience Global Partnership, which aims to offer insurance against climate risks to an additional 400 million poor and vulnerable people in developing countries by 2020. At the start of the initiative, only around 100 million poor and vulnerable people in Africa, Asia and Latin America were insured against climate-related risks. [Read more about the initiative from our team in Bonn.](#)

A week before the opening of the Conference, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) announced that the levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) surged at “record-breaking speed” with levels in 2016 higher than anything seen in at least 4.5 million years – before humans existed. The findings coincide with WMO data showing that 2017 is likely one of the hottest years on record.

Climate change is a threat to rich and poor alike, wrote Ms. Espinosa, UN Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner and the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Robert Glasser in an [opinion piece](#) published in October. They talked about the devastation that Category 5 hurricanes brought to the Caribbean and the United States, and warned that the severity and frequency of such weather events will escalate, unless something is urgently done. Pictured, damage on 8 September from Hurricane Irma in Antigua and Barbuda.

Our team in Bonn has been filing stories for two weeks. [Here is our first.](#) We speak to UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Ms. Espinosa, and revisit the Marrakech Climate Conference, which set the stage for this month’s event. Next year’s climate conference will take place in Poland. Pictured: Aerial view of the Bonn Campus, Germany.

Desperate Rohingya refugees use home-made rafts to get to Bangladesh – UN

17 November 2017 – Over the past 10 days, dozens of makeshift rafts carrying more than a thousand people have floated into Bangladesh, proof that Rohingya refugees are resorting to increasingly desperate means to flee Myanmar, the United Nations refugee agency said Friday.

Unable to pay for the crossing, [refugees are building rafts](#) from whatever material they can get their hands on – mostly bamboo poles and empty jerry cans tied together with rope and covered with plastic sheets, William Spindler, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters at the regular press briefing in Geneva.

Using paddles made of bamboo and plastic debris some of these rafts made it to Shahporir Dwip in Bangladesh, a journey of about four hours, he added, pointing out that the Naf river estuary between the two countries is about three kilometres wide at this point.

According to Mr. Spindler, more than 100 Rohingya refugees are known to have drowned in shipwrecks and boat incidents since the start of the [crisis](#) on 25 August, and recent arrivals said they had been waiting for more than a month in desperate conditions on Myanmar's shores with food and water running low.

An estimated 620,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh since 25 August, the UNHCR spokesperson explained. The Kutupalong Extension site alone, which was set up soon after the influx began, is now highly congested sheltering some 335,000 new arrivals – more than half of the influx so far.

Citing UN Habitat data that Dhaka's population density is 44,500 people per square kilometre, UNHCR said 13 out of 20 blocks in the Kutupalong Extension area are more densely populated than parts of the Bangladesh capital city, with an area known as Block CC sheltering more than 95,000 people per square kilometre.

Despite concerted efforts to deliver more aid and services, the overcrowding and difficult living conditions in the camps and makeshift sites increase health, sanitation and fire risks as well as violence and trafficking, stressed Mr. Spindler.

Additional land and more space for shelters and infrastructure are needed urgently to provide life-saving services and aid, including water points, latrines and spaces for women and girls.

As high population density also escalates risks, particularly for sexual and

gender based violence (SGBV), UNHCR is engaging all segments of the refugee communities to raise awareness.

Together with our partners, we are working to put in place referral pathways for women, survivors of SGBV, as well as safe spaces for women and girls," said Mr. Spindler.

Solar-powered healthcare

Meanwhile, the UN International Organization for (IOM) is using solar energy to power its health posts in Kutupalong and Balukali makeshift settlements now home to an estimated 440,000 Rohingya refugees.

As the [demand for our healthcare services increases](#), solar-powered lighting means we can provide round the clock emergency consultations and medicine distributions," said Mariam Abdelkerim-Spijkerman, the IOM Emergency Health Officer in Cox's Bazar.

Prior to the latest refugee influx, in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Bangladeshi Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, IOM had been coordinating aid work in the health sector.

As people continue to flood into the settlements, pressure on the health sector has steadily risen.

The health needs of the refugees are immense – providing 24-hour lighting helps save lives," explained Ms. Abdelkerim-Spijkerman.

[With UN support, more countries confronting threat of drug-resistant 'superbugs'](#)

17 November 2017 – Efforts to stem the spread of antimicrobial resistant pathogens on farms and in food systems are gaining strength, thanks to strong backing by governments and technical support from the United Nations to boost national capacities, the Organization's food security and health agencies reported Friday.

According to the [first annual survey](#) conducted by FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN), WHO (World Health Organization) and a global intergovernmental body on animal health (World Organization for Animal Health), more than 6.5 billion people over 90 per cent of the world's population now live in country that has in place, or is developing a national action plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Nearly all of these plans cover both human and animal health in line with the recommended 'one health' multisectoral approach, said the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in a news release announcing the findings.

The report's release comes at the end of World Antibiotic Awareness Week , which kicked off this on Monday 13 November.

Antimicrobial medicines antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals or antiparasitics are widely used in livestock, poultry and aquaculture operations to treat or prevent diseases.

However, their over-use and misuse, such as for promoting growth is leading to the emergence of microbes resistant to these drugs, making the diseases they cause difficult or in cases, impossible, to treat. Humans exposed to these antimicrobial resistant pathogens are also affected in the same way.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE What you need to know

There is progress, but there are also gaps

Since the survey was completed last year (2016), more countries have unveiled plans to tackle AMR.

Yet despite the progress, the global push to address this problem which is taking epic proportions is still in its early stages.

There are weak points that still need to be shored up particularly in the food and agriculture sectors of low- and middle-income countries, key battlegrounds against 'superbugs' resistant to conventional medicines, FAO cautioned.

In particular, there are major gaps in data regarding where, how and to what extent antimicrobials are being used in agriculture; also systems and facilities for tracking the occurrence of AMR in food systems and the surrounding environment need to be strengthened.

According to Ren Wang, FAO Assistant Director-General for Agriculture and Consumer Protection, the UN food security agency, along with its partners, is using its expertise and experience to assist developing countries.

The goal is to help them develop the tools and capacity to implement best practices in animal and crop production, reduce the need for antimicrobials in food systems, develop surveillance capacity to assess the scale of AMR and efforts to control it, and strengthen regulatory frameworks to minimise the misuse of antibiotics while simultaneously ensuring access to drugs for treating sick animals, he added.