

June 2021

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT CONTINGENCY FUND FOR EMERGENCIES



World Health  
Organization



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*2020 Annual report: Contingency Fund for Emergencies*

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CFE funds were critical in WHO's response to the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Equateur Province.

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# FOREWORD



The CFE has proved that a small investment at the right time can pay life-saving dividends and dramatically reduce the direct costs of controlling outbreaks and responding to emergencies.

In 2020, COVID-19 taught the world a hard lesson about the importance of pandemic preparedness. One of the key elements of preparedness is putting the capacity in place to respond immediately when a health emergency strikes. WHO Member States created the Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) in 2015 for this reason – to enable WHO to take quick action to save lives.

The CFE continued to make a difference in 2020. In response to COVID-19, the CFE released nearly US\$ 9 million in January and early February at the outset of the pandemic. The funding reached every WHO region, and enabled WHO to prioritize countries with weak health systems for technical and operational support, including for the procurement of personal protective equipment when no other funding was available for acute response. Although ultimately the speed and scale of the crisis would overwhelm the world's defenses, the swift action enabled by the CFE still made a difference in the most vulnerable contexts in those early days of the response.

The CFE was also used in a variety of other contexts in 2020. It proved critical in helping to stop the two Ebola outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, providing start-up funding for the response in Equateur Province and continuity for critical, life-saving operations in North Kivu. In Lebanon, the US\$ 2 million released by the CFE in 24 hours was used to procure essential medical supplies for hospitals treating victims of the Beirut port explosion. The CFE also provided immediate and high-impact funding for WHO's work in the complex emergencies in Mozambique and Sudan, the conflict in the Syrian Arabic Republic, and the response to Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu.

In all, more than US\$ 43 million was released from the CFE during 2020, enabling WHO to respond to 14 emergencies in 13 countries, and globally in response to COVID-19.

I thank the 13 Member States who contributed US\$ 23 million to the CFE in 2020. I am encouraged by the ongoing discussions by WHO Member States around raising sustainable financing for WHO and strengthening WHO's global health emergency preparedness and response capacity. The CFE is a key enabling pillar of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, and should be a part of these discussions.

The CFE has proved that a small investment at the right time can pay life-saving dividends and dramatically reduce the direct costs of controlling outbreaks and responding to emergencies. I count on your continued support to ensure WHO has the flexible resources it needs to respond quickly and effectively to health emergencies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus'.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
WHO Director-General

# ..... CFE CONTRIBUTORS IN 2020 .....



Austria



Canada



Denmark



Estonia



Georgia



Germany



Kuwait



Luxembourg



Netherlands



New Zealand



Norway



Philippines



Sweden

# 2020 OVERVIEW

## About the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies

The WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) was established in 2015 as a key component of the reforms undertaken by WHO to strengthen its role in emergencies. The unique benefit of the CFE is that it can be used to rapidly deploy WHO and global health emergency workforce assets for control and containment of a disease outbreak or to strengthen the health response in humanitarian crises before other funding mechanisms can be triggered. The CFE is a global public good in that it addresses health emergencies that can have regional and global impact. The ability to respond rapidly to an outbreak or an emergency can make the difference between minimizing the loss of life, illness, and injury or seeing it spiral out of control and inflict a heavy toll of avoidable deaths.

Other funding mechanisms such as the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the World Bank Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) can be accessed for health emergencies. The CFE's capacity to release funds within 24 hours or less for an event following grading and streamlined internal approval, and its availability to be used for most disease outbreaks or health emergencies, sets it apart from these and other financing mechanisms which may have more restrictive funding criteria and slower disbursement cycles.

CFE funding can be used to directly finance WHO response activities, personnel, and essential supplies, as well as funding some of the activities of implementing partners as part of a WHO operational plan.

While the funds may be released rapidly, they are also subject to stringent oversight and robust accountability ensured by WHO's financial rules and regulations. Each new funding allocation is tracked through the WHO grant management system, with full financial reporting submitted to the World Health Assembly on an annual basis.

## Key figures in 2020

**US\$ 43.8**  
**million released**

**6** disease  
outbreaks

**2** natural  
disasters

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