



CERF-FUNDED CLIMATE-SMART HUMANITARIAN ACTION

CERF climate action

CERF has become the leading global humanitarian funding tool for climate-related emergencies, distinguished by its efficiency in delivering timely humanitarian assistance that reaches the most vulnerable, particularly in the world's most fragile contexts.

Historically, more than a quarter of all CERF funding has supported climate-related humanitarian action, rising to 35 percent in 2024. **Since its inception in 2006, CERF has allocated some \$2.7 billion to climate-related emergencies**, enabling life-saving assistance for millions of people.

CERF funding has supported activities that not only help communities meet urgent needs but also equip them with the tools and knowledge to better withstand and recover from future climate-related hazards.

Strengthening CERF's role within climate financing: The added value of the Climate Action Account

Conflict and violence-affected settings are among those hit hardest by climate change. [To address the lack of climate adaptation funding](#) in these fragile settings, and to reach more crisis-affected communities facing increasingly frequent and severe climate hazards, **OCHA launched the CERF Climate Action Account (CCAA) at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai in late 2023.**

Building on CERF's time-tested comparative advantages as the UN's global emergency fund and its growing climate portfolio, the CCAA is a new income window for donors to channel additional climate-related financing to where it is most needed.

The CCAA aims to scale action, offering donors a high-impact opportunity to support faster, smarter, and more cost-effective humanitarian responses. With generous contributions from donors, **the CCAA has generated an additional \$18.4 million to date**¹ to address urgent humanitarian needs, and help build vulnerable people's resilience and adaptive capacity against future climate-related shocks and stresses.

Dedicated climate action funding

As the climate crisis worsens and escalates global humanitarian needs, CERF works to further strengthen its support for impactful humanitarian programming with climate adaptation benefits. As part of this strategic effort, **the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) decided to pilot a dedicated \$10.5 million allocation in 2024**, to support innovative, climate-smart humanitarian initiatives **in nine countries**. This funding made possible through the generous contributions to the CERF Climate Action Account, helped to assist over 222,500 people, while building resilience and adaptive capacity of crisis-affected communities for future climate-related hazards, often in the face of multiple overlapping climate-related threats.

UN country teams' funding requests for the climate action allocations far exceeded the available resources, underscoring the overwhelming demand for such funding. Building on the achievements and insights gained from the climate action allocations of 2024, **in 2025 the ERC committed \$9.5 million for climate action allocations to fuel similar climate initiatives in another eight countries.**

1 As of July 2025, see [CERF's Climate Action Portfolio](#) for updated overviews of contributions to the CCAA

Alignment with international and national frameworks

Initiatives funded through the two climate action allocations, totaling **\$20 million**, are strategically aligned with collectively agreed upon humanitarian priorities, such as those outlined in Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans. They also support key areas identified in the [UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience](#) and support local, national, and international climate strategies under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including [National Adaptation Plans](#) and [Nationally Determined Contributions](#).

Fostering system-wide innovation and learning

The climate action allocations incentivize initiatives that go beyond traditional humanitarian programming – prioritizing those that introduce approaches to climate-related humanitarian challenges and offer potential for replication, scaling, and adaptation in other contexts.

For example, to support climate-smart Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) activities in drought-affected, water-scarce regions in Zambia – where climate change has intensified both the severity and probability of droughts, this funding enabled the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to pilot several innovations, including the installation of low-flow water fixtures that optimize water use, the deployment of remote digital monitors to track water systems in real time enabling earlier malfunctioning detection and reducing downtime, and the adaptation of the World Health Organization/UNICEF WASH Facility Improvement Tool to include climate-specific considerations so that health facilities can implement immediate water-saving measures and prepare for extreme weather events.

CERF works closely with UN agencies' and the UN Country Teams' climate experts in the development and implementation of these innovative projects, to gather best practices and facilitate collective learning across the wider humanitarian system.

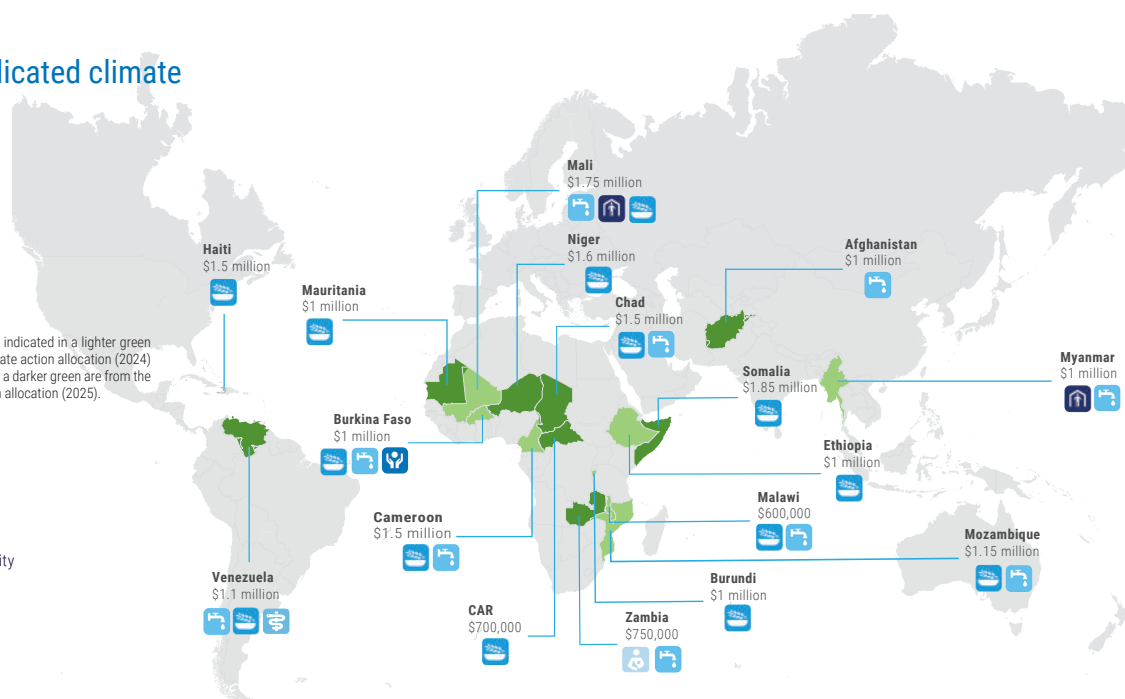
CERF dedicated climate funding:

\$20 M
allocated
to
17
countries

Please note countries indicated in a lighter green are from the first climate action allocation (2024) and those indicated in a darker green are from the second climate action allocation (2025).

Sectors

- Nutrition
- Health
- Food Security
- WASH
- Shelter
- Protection



GENERATING TANGIBLE IMPACT ON THE GROUND

Three stories of dedicated climate funding delivering life-saving assistance and catalyzing humanitarian action.

Promoting indigenous knowledge and community-led responses in Venezuela

Across the initiatives funded by the climate action allocations, localized responses are promoted, with local communities and partners playing a key role in designing and implementing the projects. This approach is exemplified in Venezuela, where **\$1.1 million from the 2025 climate action allocations** is enabling climate-smart, community-led responses that are addressing urgent humanitarian and climatic challenges.

In La Guajira — one of Venezuela's most climate-vulnerable regions — prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall, and desertification, intensified by El Niño and La Niña, have severely impacted the Indigenous communities of Añú, Wayuu, and Yukpa. **With the CERF allocation, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNICEF are implementing critical WASH, health, and food security interventions, placing Indigenous knowledge and local leadership at its core.**

FAO is addressing food insecurity through nature-based, climate-smart solutions — rehabilitating degraded land using native food plant species that are proven to be more resilient against increasing climate shocks, promoting ancestral seed banks, and constructing half-moon irrigation systems².

UNICEF is developing climate-resilient community-led health and WASH services. For health, this includes the solarization of health centers and cold chain systems to ensure continuity of maternal, emergency and immunization services which are often disrupted during climate shocks. For WASH, solar-powered desalination and reverse osmosis systems are being implemented to provide safe drinking water, mitigating risks linked to climate-related drought and water contamination.

Within this WASH component, UNICEF is engaging local leaders and Climate Action Committees³ to empower communities, addressing immediate humanitarian needs while building long-term resilience. **Through a consultative process, traditional ecological practices are integrated into the design of systems,** while existing adaptive practices are strengthened through capacity building.

² Half-moon irrigation systems are traditional techniques to recover degraded land and prevent desertification by digging holes or crescent-shaped ditches which capture scarce rainwater and direct it toward growing plants.

³ Climate Action Committees consist of trained community members who are able to identify local climate risks and determine climate-smart solutions that can be integrated into projects. They ensure these solutions are sustainable through ongoing monitoring and maintenance, while fostering local ownership and resilience through knowledge sharing.

Sowing seeds of resilience in El Niño-affected communities in Mozambique



Maringue, Sofala Province, Mozambique. Inácio Jaime Anton and his son in their home vegetable garden. With support from FAO, they are rebuilding their lives, guided by resilience and innovation. Credit: FAO/María Legaristi Royo.

In 2024, a El Niño-induced drought, one of the strongest on record due to the growing impact of climate change⁴, devastated Mozambique's Manica and Sofala provinces, leaving over one million people without income or hope.

Crops failed, livestock perished, and staple food prices soared, deepening already existing vulnerabilities. With limited access to food and water, vulnerable groups faced increased protection risks, often resorting to harmful coping mechanisms. For children and adolescents, hunger directly impacted school attendance, further jeopardizing their future.

In August, Dito Jerosse Culambandeu, a 41-year-old farmer from Manica province stood in his parched maize field, recalling the last rainfall in January.

"You can see how dry the machamba (field) is. It's been two months now that we don't have anything to eat," he said.

In response, **\$1.15 million from the 2024 CERF climate action allocation enabled the World Food Program (WFP), FAO, and UNICEF to equip local communities with climate-smart solutions that address urgent food security and WASH needs and build resilience against future droughts. Smallholder farmers like Dito now produce and preserve nutrient-dense food year-round, reducing their dependence on erratic rainfall.**

Using solar-powered irrigation systems and cold storage facilities provided by WFP, they can pump groundwater or stored surface water for crop production during dry spells, and reduce post-harvest losses of perishable, drought-resilient crops, allowing farmers to preserve produce during dry seasons when market access may be limited.

Drought-tolerant seeds and resilient irrigation systems provided by FAO are helping optimize water use and maintain soil moisture and fertility, while UNICEF's WASH infrastructure with carbon-neutral water-efficient technologies such as rainwater harvesting and solar-powered infrastructure are ensuring sustainable clean water access to communities.

Thanks to the support of the climate action allocations, Dito is no longer just surviving, he is rebuilding. With access to resilient farming tools, seeds, and systems, he can feed his family, restore his livelihood, and look toward a more sustainable future for his family and his community.

4 UNCCD. 2025. Drought Hotspots Around the World 2023-2025. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Bonn.



Maringue, Sofala Province, Mozambique. Marieta Luis Filipe in her home vegetable garden. With FAO's support, communities are adapting to climate risks and preparing for future seasons, one seed at a time. Credit: FAO/María Legaristi Royo.

Advancing women's leadership and gender-responsive programming in CAR

Gender-sensitive responses are a key consideration to the climate action allocations, recognizing that [climate-related hazards disproportionately affect women and girls](#). For example, the Central African Republic (CAR) \$700,000 climate action allocation in 2025 prioritizes women and girls, who are the main targets of activities and actively involves them in designing and implementing projects.

CAR's Haut-Mbomou and Mbomou prefectures, already grappling with conflict and displacement, were hit by severe floods in 2024, further exacerbating vulnerabilities, particularly among women and children. **With CERF funding, UN Women is implementing critical and innovative food security interventions that empower climate-vulnerable women.**

Efforts include distributing gender-sensitive agricultural kits to women's farming associations, enhancing access to productive assets, reducing negative coping strategies, and strengthening female leadership in climate action. Marginalized youth are also receiving income-generating activity kits and short-term training on climate-adaptive agriculture, product processing, and crisis-sensitive marketing – measures that build resilience, address urgent food insecurity and economic vulnerability, and help prevent harmful survival strategies such as enlistment in non-state armed groups. Solar-powered food processing and drying platforms are being installed to reduce post-harvest losses and improve household food availability during lean periods, while women managing these platforms receive training in food hygiene, storage, and market access, strengthening their leadership in community food systems. Additionally, Women's Multi-Service Centers are being rehabilitated to provide protection services

(e.g., gender-based violence support), climate-adaptive livelihood training targeting women and youth, and community resilience initiatives such as cereal banks and livestock cooperatives. These centers integrate protection and adaptation services ensuring gender-transformative impact and long-term ownership. After the project, Multi-Service Centers will be handed over to the Ministry of Gender to ensure sustainability and replication. Complementing these efforts, the initiative also pilots quarterly gender-climate alert bulletins co-developed with women's groups to identify gendered risks, inform protection-sensitive responses, and provide localized early warning tools that integrate gender analysis into adaptation planning.

The initiative also strengthens women's roles in decision-making and local climate governance. **All activities are led by women- and youth-led groups, with 80 per cent of funding channeled through local women-led organizations.** As CAR's first humanitarian project to center women's leadership in linking life-saving assistance with climate resilience, this initiative pilots an innovative, scalable model that addresses immediate needs while advancing inclusive, community-driven adaptation in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.



Read more impact stories from our partners on [CERF's Climate Action webpage](#).

Thank you to our donors! How can YOU help?

OCHA thanks donors in empowering CERF, including by supporting to the [Climate Action Account](#), to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance that integrates climate-smart innovations and community-led solutions. In a world where climate-related disasters increasingly drive humanitarian needs, climate action is not an optional add-on but a foundational building block of effective humanitarian action. OCHA urgently calls for increased contributions to the Climate Action Account, in addition to core humanitarian contributions to CERF.

Member States, donors, foundations and businesses are invited to contact: ocha.donor.relations@un.org

[Donate to CERF](#)

[Donate to the Climate Action Account](#)



Maringue, Sofala Province, Mozambique. Guerani di Pangana Nzero, a member of a Farmer Field School supported by FAO. An initiative helping households adapt to climate risks. Credit: FAO/Maria Legaristi Royo.