



**Executive Board of the  
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Programme, the United Nations  
Population Fund and the United  
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**UNFPA – financial, budgetary and administrative matters**

**UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND**

**Scaling up UNFPA humanitarian response funding**

*Summary*

UNFPA seeks to provide more funding to countries experiencing emergencies and to scale up its response while awaiting dedicated donor funding. To this end, UNFPA proposes to increase the annual allocation of the emergency fund from regular resources, from the current limit of \$5 million to \$10 million. It requests the Board to grant the Executive Director the authority to increase this amount by a maximum of 20 per cent in a given year, with post-facto approval of the Executive Board, if the number and the extent of the emergencies so warrant. It further proposes to establish a humanitarian response reserve for \$10 million, as a one-time allocation from regular resources.

*Elements of a decision*

Elements of a decision are contained in section III of this report.



## I. The changing global humanitarian setting

1. Emergencies and other humanitarian situations affect an increasing number of people around the world. At the same time, these humanitarian crises are increasing in intensity, duration, complexity, frequency and variety. Moreover, the increase in armed conflicts and natural disasters has not only inflicted a high economic cost on affected communities, but also extracted a huge humanitarian cost, especially for women and girls.

2. Communicable diseases remain the leading cause of mortality and morbidity in the least and less developed countries (*World Health Statistics 2014*). Women are at special risk, due to the social role they often occupy as ‘caregivers’. In situations of widespread disease, pregnant women are at particular risk of suffering complications. Health crises, as the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has shown, have further implications for sexual and reproductive health as they overwhelm local and national healthcare systems.

3. In humanitarian emergencies, whether caused by conflict, natural disaster or disease, large parts of the affected populations often take flight, swelling the numbers of refugees or internally displaced persons. By the end of 2013, over 51.2 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide because of persecution, conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations. Some 16.7 million persons were refugees; a majority of the internally displaced persons and refugees were women and children (*UNHCR Global Trends 2013*). An immediate and swift response at the onset of a population’s displacement can mitigate immediate and longer-term health and protection risks for women and girls.

4. During 2014 second regular session of the Executive Board, the UNFPA Executive Director indicated that UNFPA would continue to integrate preparedness and disaster risk reduction in its development results framework in order to ensure a more predictable, effective and measurable response, and to achieve sustainable resilience in high-risk countries. He noted that providing a continuum of programming across the diverse humanitarian settings was now a priority for UNFPA.

5. The members of the Executive Board have expressed their appreciation for the UNFPA response in emergencies, and noted that UNFPA has a vital role to play in humanitarian contexts, in particular as co-lead on gender-based violence. They have urged UNFPA to work in close collaboration with partners at all levels and to draw on lessons learned from the humanitarian response in the Central African Republic, the Philippines and South Sudan to pursue robust engagement in humanitarian crises, in keeping with its commitments. They also appreciated the organization’s leadership role in addressing gender-based violence, as evinced at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, and stated that they looked forward to UNFPA following up on the commitments made.

6. This increased demand for UNFPA to respond to humanitarian situations has led to a doubling of the organization’s humanitarian requirements, from about \$78 million in 2006 to about \$175 million in 2014 – the largest ever appeal in UNFPA history. This growing trend mirrors the global humanitarian appeal trends for all humanitarian actors; global funding requirements have more than doubled over the same period, to over \$10 billion per year (*World Humanitarian Data and Trends in 2013*).

## II. UNFPA emergency fund

7. The UNFPA emergency fund continues to be a crucial source of initial funding that allows country offices to implement timely humanitarian response. Its main purpose is to provide immediate funding for country offices to enhance timely launching of live-saving humanitarian

assistance with focus on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and population-related data.

8. The emergency fund, created by the Executive Board in decision 2000/13, began with an annual allocation of \$1 million. Since then the Executive Board has increased the annual allocation twice – raising it to \$3 million annually in 2006, and in decision 2013/32 (within the context of the strategic plan, 2014-2017 and the integrated budget for 2014-2017) to \$5 million.

9. The demand for a UNFPA response to complex humanitarian situations has increased significantly over time, which has led to greater humanitarian funding requirements. However, the UNFPA emergency fund has not increased in line with these requirements, rising only modestly from an annual allocation of \$3 million in 2006 to \$5 million in 2014. This represented, in 2014, less than 3 per cent of total humanitarian requirements for starting humanitarian activities at the onset of a crisis until UNFPA can mobilize other funding.

10. The emergency fund is available to country offices for the following purposes:

(a) *Acute phases of emergencies.* For all humanitarian assistance programmes (aimed at saving lives and alleviating suffering of a crisis-affected population) in response to armed conflicts or natural disasters;

(b) *Chronic humanitarian situations.* The country office is either expanding the humanitarian response or requesting funds as bridge financing;

(c) *Preparedness planning.* Contributing to the implementation of a national contingency or preparedness plan; or initiating or implementing minimum preparedness actions by the United Nations country team.

11. UNFPA provides emergency funds to countries facing crises based on the following criteria:

(a) Regular country programme funds are not available;

(b) Country programme funds are not immediately available but could be used later for reimbursement with the approval of the Government;

(c) Donor support for the UNFPA component of a consolidated appeal process or flash appeal has been committed but funds are not yet in hand.

12. The emergency fund has consistently proven to be an effective method for providing funds to UNFPA offices in a timely manner and allowing the organization to initiate its response to crises before donor and CERF funds become available. Today, the emergency fund remains the quickest, most reliable and most adaptable source of emergency funding for UNFPA.

### **Changing emergency fund allocation trends**

13. Some 70 country offices benefited from the emergency funds from 2008 to 2013. However, by mid-2014, the number of requests from country offices had risen significantly due to the number of worldwide crises and level-3 emergencies. Requests for emergency funding had risen from 12 in 2013 to 21 during the first six months of 2014 alone.

14. In 2013, the UNFPA emergency fund was an invaluable funding instrument that enabled country offices to initiate timely humanitarian response in acute phases of emergencies around the world. In most countries, this emergency funding came to complement other sources of funding or to set the stage for UNFPA country offices to mobilize funds more effectively once a presence on the ground had been established.

15. Since the last increase in the emergency fund, it has become obvious that, with the escalating number and complexity of emergencies, the current level of funding, while increased, is not enough. The past year saw the United Nations system respond to four different level-3

emergencies (Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan and Syria) as well as the Ebola outbreak. The magnitude of the crises have increased since 2011, when there was only one level-3 emergency (the food crisis in the Horn of Africa).

16. By October 2014, 24 country offices had requested and received emergency funds. However, while the country offices had requested \$11.4 million, the emergency fund allocated only \$4.8 million, covering merely 42 per cent of the requests.

17. The increased number and volume of emergency responses resulted in UNFPA not having sufficient resources remaining in the emergency fund to provide bridge funding to country offices between the signing of donor agreements and the receipt of pledged contributions; this was the case in Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan, Myanmar, Philippines, Somalia and South Sudan. Moreover, the depletion of the emergency fund by October 2014 also had an impact on allocations to the Ebola outbreak response for the affected countries, thus causing delay in the organization's ability to respond more quickly to emergencies or to scale up its humanitarian response.

18. Given the challenges outlined above, UNFPA proposes a two-pronged approach to scale up its ability to fund its humanitarian response to emergencies.

19. *Increase the annual allocation of regular resources to the emergency fund from \$5 million to \$10 million.* UNFPA asks the Executive Board to grant the Executive Director the authority to increase an allocation to the emergency fund by an additional 20 per cent in a given year, with post-facto approval of the Executive Board, if the number and the extent of the emergencies so warrants. This flexibility is in recognition of the inherent element of uncertainty in any emergency. The additional funding (up to 20 per cent) may be warranted by: (a) declaration of a level-3 emergency; (b) number of people in need exceeding 100,000; (c) ongoing system-wide humanitarian action; and (d) frequency of disasters having depleted the emergency fund by mid-year.

20. *Establish a humanitarian response reserve for \$10 million, as a one-time allocation from regular resources.* UNFPA would use the humanitarian response reserve solely as a bridge funding mechanism between the signing of donor agreements and the receipt of pledged funds. To minimize the risk exposure, access to the humanitarian response reserve will be limited to a maximum 20 per cent of the amount committed, or up to \$0.5 million per agreement, whichever is lower. UNFPA will report on the status of the reserve in its annual audited financial statements.

21. This two-pronged proposed approach would enable UNFPA to provide more funding directly to the countries experiencing emergencies. The organization would no longer use the emergency fund for stopgap measures; instead, the newly established humanitarian response reserve would enable UNFPA to scale up its response while awaiting the donor funds, and act more quickly, with minimal risk exposure.

### **III. Elements of a decision**

22. The Executive Board may wish to:

- (a) Take note of the document DP/FPA/2015/2;
- (b) Recognize the increasing demand for UNFPA humanitarian response and the resulting need for additional emergency funding resources;
- (c) Approve an annual allocation of \$10 million of regular resources for the emergency fund, reflecting an increase of \$5 million from the previously approved level;
- (d) Authorize the UNFPA Executive Director to increase an allocation to the emergency fund by an additional 20 per cent in a given year, with post-facto approval by the Executive Board, if the number and the extent of the emergencies so warrant;

- (e) Approve a one-time allocation of \$10 million of regular resources for the establishment of the humanitarian response reserve. UNFPA will report on the status of the reserve in its annual financial statements.
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