



DRC HF

Democratic Republic
of the Congo
Humanitarian Fund

DRC HUMANITARIAN FUND

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Credits

This document was produced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) DRC. OCHA DRC wishes to acknowledge the contributions of its committed staff at headquarters and in the field in preparing this document.

The latest version of this document is available on the DRC HF website at www.unocha.org/democratic-republic-congo/about-drc-humanitarian-fund

Full project details, financial updates, real-time allocation data and indicator achievements against targets are available at [CBPF DataHub](#).

About DRC HF

Front Cover

Kalehe, Sud Kivu, July 2023.

A beneficiary expresses her joy at receiving emergency food beds after the floods and landslides that ravaged the Kalehe territory.

Credit: Action pour le Bien-être Communautaire (ABCom)

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LETTER FROM THE HC

I am pleased to present to you the 2023 Democratic Republic of Congo Humanitarian Fund (DRC HF) Annual Report. It encapsulates the tireless efforts and invaluable contributions made by the DRC HF in fostering a localized, agile, and people-centered humanitarian response throughout the past year.

2023 was marked by immense challenges as the DRC continued to grapple with some of the world's most complex humanitarian crises fueled by inter-community and armed conflicts. With 25.4 million people in need, the escalation of armed conflicts in the East resulted in severe human rights violations, disproportionately affecting women and children. Over 6.5 million people were identified as internally displaced by the end of 2023. The dire humanitarian situation prompted a six-month activation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) system-wide scale-up. Root causes such as conflict over natural resources control, underdevelopment and logistical resource constraints further compounded issues such as food insecurity and malnutrition. Additionally, outbreaks of measles, monkeypox, and cholera added complexity to our response efforts. The challenges were further exacerbated by heavy rains and flooding, impacting already vulnerable communities. In this context, the DRC HF emerged as a critical funding mechanism, aligning closely with the priorities outlined in the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan and the scale-up response.

In that regard, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the recipients of DRC HF funding for their unwavering commitment to addressing the needs of the Congolese people. The DRC HF projects demonstrated the Fund's agility in deploying rapid assistance in contexts of conflicts as well as sudden disasters related to natural events in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu. The Fund also stepped-up humanitarian response in the province of Mai-Ndombe, hitherto gravely overlooked. Moreover, the DRC HF was an actor of the nexus approach in the Tanganyika province supporting livelihood activities. The Fund optimized the impact of its scarce resources, strategically

complementing the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) \$45.7 million allocations bringing the overall pooled fund mechanisms' response to \$88.7 million.

The DRC HF remains a trailblazer for the localization in DRC, actively engaging with the Advisory Board (AB) constituencies, the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum and local NGO networks. As a result, and thanks to its robust risk management and monitoring resources, the Fund directly allocated 53 per cent of the total funding in 2023 to national NGOs and, throughout the year, it accompanied national partners to build up financial and programmatic competencies with ad hoc training sessions. In 2024, we will pursue on this path, supporting local and national partners' critical participation in the relief efforts.

I would like to express my gratitude to the donors who have supported the DRC HF, making these achievements possible. However, I must highlight the continued decrease in funding in 2023, underscoring the urgent need for sustained support from existing and new donors to ensure the Fund's continued success in advancing the localization agenda and supporting the most vulnerable. As we look ahead to 2024, I am optimistic about the opportunities presented by the new DRC HF's operational manual on flexible and innovative approaches that will enable the Fund to operate in a more reactive and sustainable manner.

Once again, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed to the success of the DRC HF. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in DRC.

Paix – Kimya – Amani – Yenge – Bupole

Sincerely,

Bruno Lemarquis
Humanitarian Coordinator for DRC

“

Despite grappling with limited resources in a challenging context, I believe the Fund truly showcased its value to the humanitarian response in 2023. The Fund was the very first mechanism to answer the call for additional funding following the response scale-up in Eastern Congo. And yet, it still assumes its role in advocating for attention to and funding humanitarian actors addressing overlooked crises in Mai Ndombe.

Bruno Lemarquis
Humanitarian Coordinator for DRC

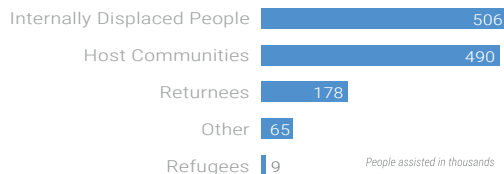
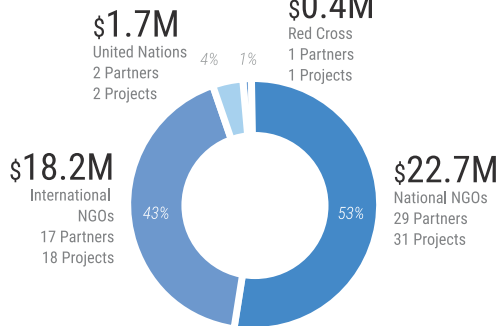
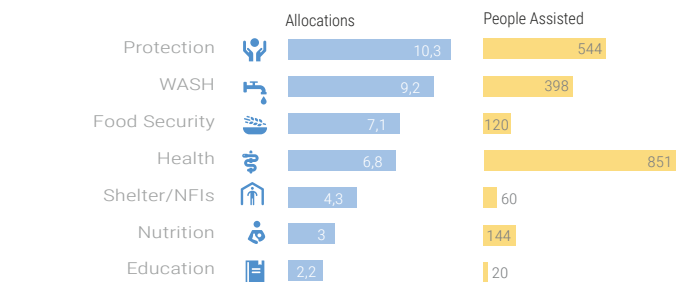
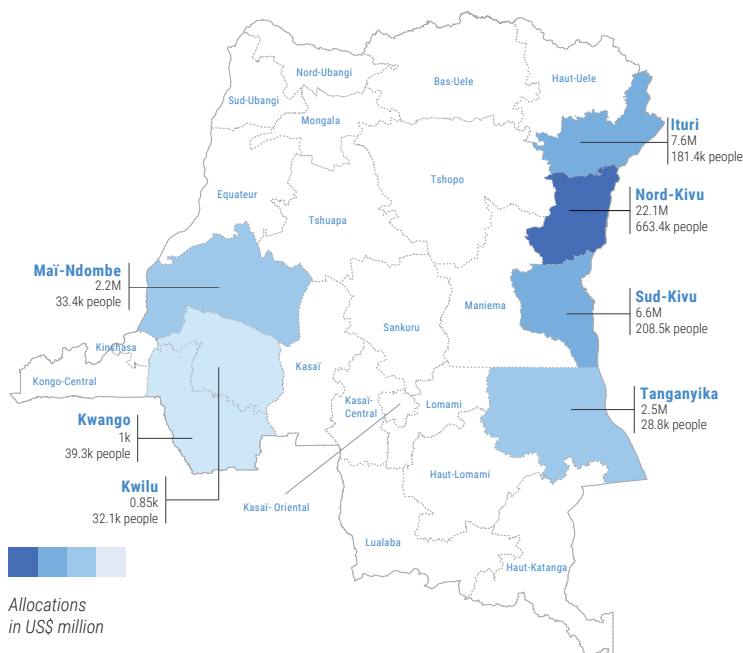
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Goma/Nord-Kivu, December 2023.

A displaced family setting up shelter at the Bulengo site, near the town of Goma.

Credit: UNOCHA/Francis Mweze

2023 IN NUMBERS

**\$40.8M**
CONTRIBUTIONS**1.2M**
PEOPLE
ASSISTED**108k**
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES ASSISTED**715.3k**
WOMEN and GIRLS
ASSISTED
**57% OF TOTAL PEOPLE
ASSISTED****49**
PARTNERS**52**
PROJECTS**97k**
people in IPC 3 and 4 assisted
with food assistance (incl. 31k
people through cash modality;
32%)**220k**
people assisted with cholera
prevention services**64k**
people assisted with
psychosocial and mental health
support, including through
child-friendly spaces**4.3k**
latrines built or rehabilitated
to assist some 239k people**\$43M**
ALLOCATIONS**1.2M**
PEOPLE ASSISTED

The Annual Report uses the number of people targeted as a proxy for the number of people reached and henceforth the term people assisted will be used. This approach allows for more timely global reporting as the final data on people assisted only becomes available over a year after the allocation of CBPF funds. The reported outcomes will be available on the <https://cbpf.data.unocha.org/> the CBPFs will continuously monitor if targets are reached.

Figures for people assisted may include double counting as individuals often receive aid from multiple cluster/sectors. The maximum methodology was applied by the DRC Humanitarian Fund to estimate the number of people assisted in 2023. The total number of people assisted is thus the sum of the maximum number of targeted beneficiaries by gender per profile and location at admin level three/health areas.

Donor contributions



In a continuous dire humanitarian context such as the DRC, it is of vital importance that donors show commitment to directly help local communities. It is why the Netherlands has decided to support OCHA with multi-year funding for its Humanitarian Fund, to underpin their important work with local organizations for humanitarian aid to the Congolese people.”

*Piter Pals,
Second secretary at the
Embassy of the Kingdom
of the Netherlands in
Kinshasa*

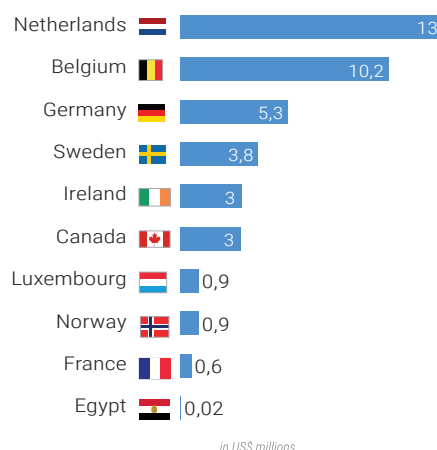
In 2023, the DRC HF was faced with financial challenges, receiving a total contribution of \$40.8 million, used in conjunction with the CERF allocations of \$45.76 million. This marked the fifth consecutive year of declining funding (excluding a brief stabilization in 2021), showing a 12 per cent decrease in contributions compared to 2022. Contributions received in 2023 were lower than the \$43 million allocated by the DRC HF that year, which had to rely in part on funds carried over from 2022.

Despite the difficulty of maintaining funding levels, the DRC HF has been able to rely on its top three donors, who have maintained their leading role since 2020, albeit in a different order: Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. The Netherlands emerged as the Fund's top donor in 2023 with a 72 per cent increase, committing \$13 million. Belgium strengthened its position as the second top donor, increasing its contribution to \$10.2 million from \$9.4 million in 2022, while Germany dropped to \$5 million from \$17.4 million in 2022. These donors have also reaffirmed their commitment to providing predictable humanitarian funding by pledging multi-year contributions up to 2026. The DRC HF could also count on Canada, which pledged a multi-year contribution for 2023-2024. In addition, Luxembourg more than doubled its support to \$908,000 in 2023. The Fund also broadened its donor base, with France and Egypt making their first contributions to the DRC HF.

Although the timeliness of contributions decreased, with only 15 per cent (\$6.2 million) accessible in the first quarter of 2023 compared to 30 per cent in 2022, a substantial 89 per cent of funds (\$36 million) were disbursed in the first half of the year. This facilitated the rapid response



\$40.8M
CONTRIBUTIONS



DONORS WITH MULTI-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

| | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Belgium | \$18.2M | 2023 - 2024 |
| | Canada | \$5.9M | 2023 - 2024 |
| | Germany | 6.9M | 2023 - 2026 |
| | Netherlands | 16.5M | 2023 - 2025 |

to the floods and landslides in Kalehe, in South Kivu province, and supported the scaling up of the emergency humanitarian response strategy in eastern Congo in June 2023. An additional \$2.3 million contributions in the last quarter allowed for the launch of a third reserve allocation in December to address the displacement crisis in eastern Congo and provided greater visibility for funding in 2024.

The scarce resources available and the limited visibility on the funding in the pipeline forced the fund to be extremely selective on the crises the DRC HF would respond to, only using reserve modality, mostly in complementarity to concomitant CERF allocation, and prioritizing well-performing

partners and mainly focusing on lifesaving activities such as Shelter/NFI, Food Security, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Protection.

Looking ahead, the [DRC 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan](#) anticipates that more than 25.4 million people in need with the most urgent humanitarian needs concentrated in the eastern provinces, severely hit by violence and insecurity. To this, the DRC HF remains optimistic about reversing the funding decline through continued and intensified advocacy, donor engagement, and resource mobilization efforts. Nearly \$30 million has already been pledged for 2024 from Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden.



Rwanguba/Nord-Kivu, August 2023

A displaced woman received a dignity kit in the Rwanguba health zone in Rutshuru, despite being under armed group control. In an environment marked by challenges and uncertainty, she finds invaluable support in preserving her dignity.

Credit: SOFEPADI/Laetitia Ndeke



Bunia/Ituri, September 2023
Shelters are lined up at the Kigonze site, near the town of Bunia,
Ituri province.

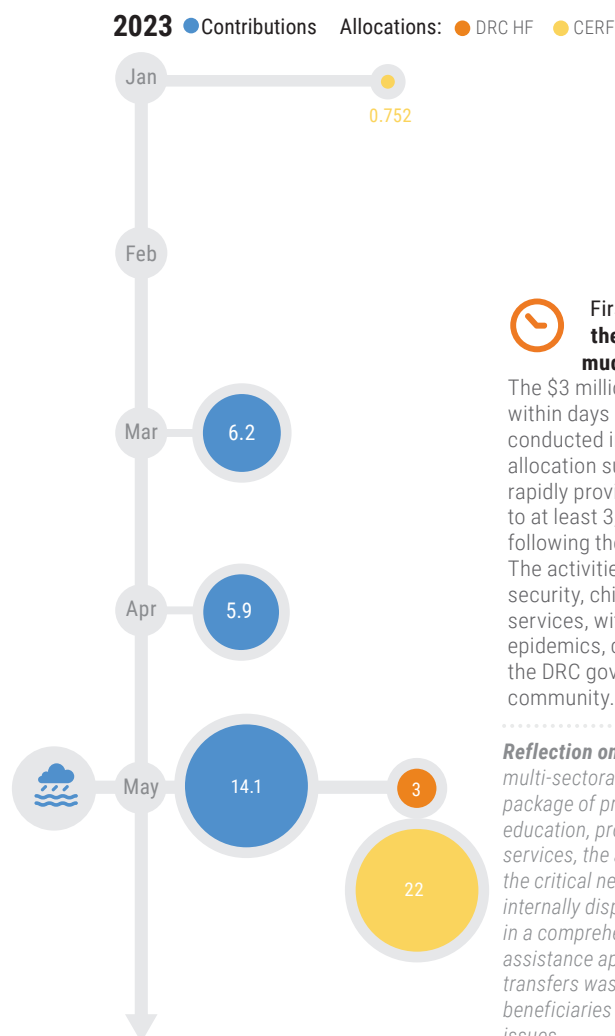
Credit: UNOCHA/Francis Mweze

Humanitarian Context and Allocations

2023 saw a sharp escalation of the armed conflicts in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which led to serious violations of human rights. Congolese women and children are exposed to the worst forms of abuse and exploitation. By the end of December, over 6.5 million people were displaced internally, marking one of the largest displacement crises globally, second only to Sudan. This crisis stemmed from prolonged conflict, leading to a dire and protracted humanitarian situation and food insecurity. Rising prices of fuel and fertilizer, along with climate-related shocks, made it challenging for people to afford basic necessities. Additionally, the country faced epidemics of measles, malaria, monkeypox, and cholera. Heavy rains also triggered flooding, worsening living conditions for the most vulnerable.

Catastrophic Flooding and Mudslides in Kalehe Territory, South Kivu

Severe bad weather in May 2023 in the Kalehe territory (South Kivu) caused brutal flooding and mudslides. The devastating impact of the disaster claimed the lives of at least 411 people, seriously injured 54, while over 5,000 others were reported missing, with a high risk of epidemics in the region. The aftermath witnessed the destruction of six schools, nearly all the water infrastructures and almost 3,000 houses, rendering around 18,000 people, including 12,000 children (of which 1,200 unaccompanied), homeless.



First Reserve Allocation: Support to the people affected by floods and mudslides

The \$3 million Reserve Allocation was launched within days after heavy rains and funds were conducted in a record time of 16 days. The allocation supported 3-months long projects to rapidly provide life-saving emergency assistance to at least 3,000 households in extreme distress following the devastating floods and mudslides. The activities aimed at strengthening food security, child protection, WASH, and health services, with a key objective to prevent epidemics, complementing efforts initiated by the DRC government and the humanitarian community.

Reflection on implementation: By ensuring a multi-sectoral and integrated response with a package of primary healthcare, Non-Food Items (NFI), education, protection and gender-based violence services, the allocation was instrumental in serving the critical needs of 3 000 households among the internally displaced people (IDP) and host populations in a comprehensive manner. The multipurpose Cash assistance approach through unconditional sectoral transfers was reportedly well appreciated by beneficiaries especially in remote areas with access issues.

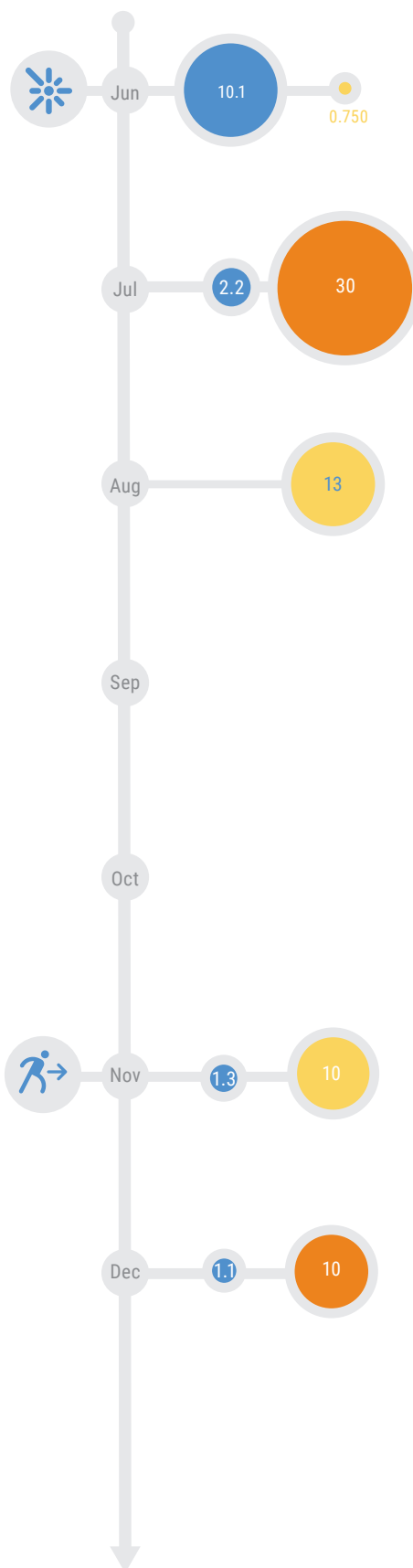
Escalating violence and human rights violations

Between January and June 2023, the resurgence of armed conflicts exposed the population to increased violence and human rights violations causing an abrupt relapse of the humanitarian situation in North Kivu with some 600,000 people newly displaced, 51% of whom were women and, in Ituri, more than 144,000 people displaced in the Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi territories. Cases of GBV and serious human rights violations reached worrying proportions, with over 31,000 cases of GBV recorded between March and April 2023.

Massive displacement triggered by heightened conflicts

The deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Ituri, North and South Kivu with the intensification of clashes between armed groups in October 2023, led to massive displacement and a persistent protection crisis, aggravated by conflicts over control of mineral-rich areas.

By 30 November, 5.59 million internally displaced people were registered in the three provinces, including 2.48 million in North Kivu, 1.68 million in Ituri and 1.5 million in South Kivu.



Second Reserve Allocation: Scale-up the response in conflict-affected regions

The activation of the IASC system-wide scale up triggered a \$30 million Reserve Allocation supporting response efforts in North Kivu and Ituri, synergizing with the CERF allocation which additionally targeted South Kivu. Beyond these regions, the allocation extended its reach to address the challenges posed by inter-community conflicts in Mai Ndombe, an overlooked crisis for which the Fund has played a role of catalyzer for additional humanitarian funding since 2022. All funded projects primarily focused on 1) combating and preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA); 2) responding to basic needs of conflict-related IDPs; and 3) providing protection to the population affected by inter-community clashes. Through this allocation the Fund maintained its critical role for advancing the PSEA Agenda in DRC.

Reflection on implementation: In the face of escalating access constraints, characterized by unpredictable security context, some partners dedicated significant time and effort to gaining community acceptance and, crucially, deployed or hired local staff at the health area level. Thanks to their adaptability they secured their ability to carry out activities. While this approach may entail extra costs for staff relocation, the DRC HF endorsed and supported partners in this strategy due to its pivotal significance. This approach reduces risks for partners' staff, diminishes long-term logistical costs, and aids in ensuring the timely implementation of projects.

Third Reserve Allocation: Further support people affected by the conflict in Eastern Congo

In the face of escalating violence exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Eastern Congo, the \$10 million Reserve allocation strategically financed life-saving projects aimed at providing a comprehensive and integrated response to the newly displaced populations, targeting the most affected zones in North and South Kivu. Simultaneously, the complementary efforts of CERF funding were directed towards North Kivu and Ituri, amplifying the impact of the response. Notably, localization efforts were made, channeling specific funding (\$2 million envelop) to empower local WLOs.

Reflection on the allocation process: As part of the DRC HF's commitment to support localization and women's leadership in the humanitarian response, the Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) adopted a new pilot approach, working hand in hand with the WLOs from the early phases of the allocation process. Dedicating specific time and resources, the HFU organized regular meetings and tailored training sessions for the eligible WLOs to build up their understanding of the DRC HF allocation process and improve their proposal writing skills. Ultimately, five newly eligible WLOs were awarded a total of \$2.7 million. As the implementation phase commences, the HFU will maintain close engagement to provide ongoing support, ensuring the seamless rollout of their projects.

Promoting Localization



The DRC HF's heightened involvement with various national NGO representatives underscores its willingness to cultivate a deeper understanding of local needs and capacities. For many national NGOs, receiving funding from the DRC HF serves as a notable endorsement, enhancing their credibility and positioning them for future opportunities with a broader array of donors who value the Fund's rigorous vetting process and commitment to amplifying local voices in humanitarian response efforts."

*De - Joseph Kakisingi,
Coordinator for the National
Council of Humanitarian
and Development NGO Fora
in DRC (CONAFOHD)*

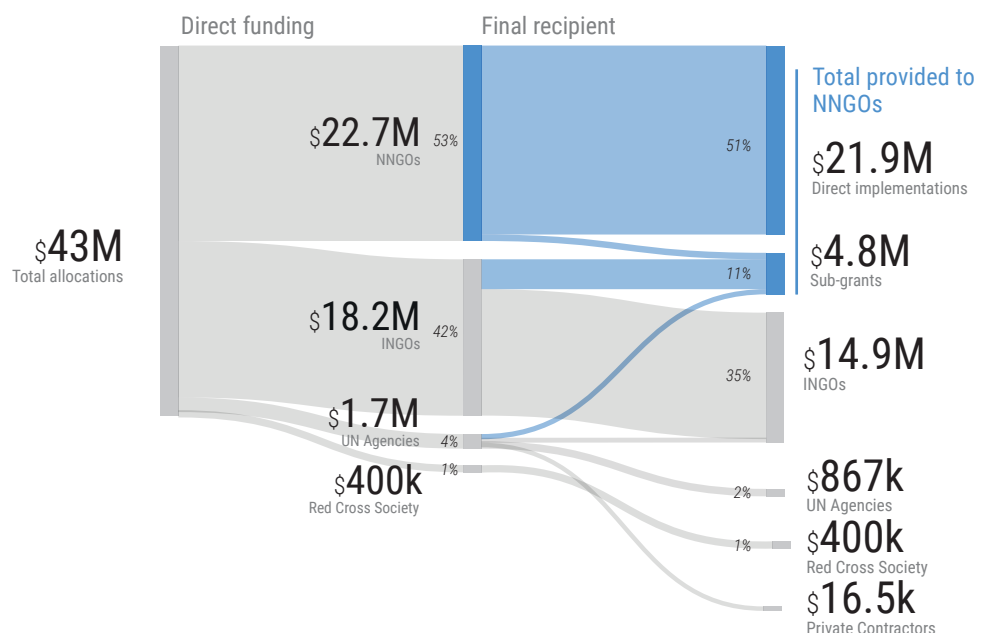
The DRC HF is committed to maximizing the impact of its funding by providing support to grassroots national NGOs. Especially with the DRC context, this approach leverages local organizations' access and invaluable understanding of the operational context, ensuring a timely and efficient response to humanitarian needs, while actively promoting community-led initiatives and ownership of the response.

Over the course of the year, national NGOs have proven themselves to be invaluable partners of the Fund, harnessing their ability to swiftly mobilize resources and forge robust consultation mechanisms with local authorities and beneficiary communities. This proved to be a crucial advantage in the rapid response to the floods and landslides that ravaged the Kalehe territory in May. Capitaliz-

ing on their unique attributes, two national partners commenced life-saving assistance within a mere three days of their project budgets being approved by the DRC HF, whereas it took over two weeks for other partners to initiate their activities.

National NGOs are well represented at the DRC HF governance body with three representatives of national NGOs designated as part of the 12 members of the AB. Since 2023, two of the three national NGOs representatives at the AB are women's-led organizations (WLO). The involvement of WLOs in the AB sparked insightful discussions regarding the Fund's strategic planning, particularly concerning localization. This led to the initial development of the DRC HF's "localization strategy." Additionally, WLO representatives raised questions about the Fund's governance, particularly regarding the

ALLOCATION FLOW BY PARTNER TYPE *in US\$ million*





14
TRAININGS

practical application of its secondary objective to promote localization. They emphasized the intricacies of the eligibility process, prompting the DRC HF to look into possibilities to support greater access to humanitarian funds for local partners while upholding essential due diligence measures.

In addition, six sessions were organized ahead of the Second and Third Reserve Allocations to ensure partners' understanding of the allocation processes, financial requirements and policies and the use of the Grant Management System, including one session specially for the 14 newly eligible WLOs of the Fund. Overall, more than 240 partners benefitted from these trainings, with a strong 74 per cent representation from national NGOs. The efficacy of these sessions is evidenced by enhanced partner engagement in communication, proactive identification of implementation challenges, and improved quality of budget line narratives.



120
NATIONAL NGO
TRAINED

In 2023, the DRC HF took further strides in support to national NGOs, allocating a larger share of funding directly to them and establishing itself among the top five CBPFs in this respect. Out of the \$43 million disbursed through three reserve allocations, an impressive \$27 million, 63 per cent, went to national NGOs, with \$22.7 million, 53 per cent, provided through direct funding to 29 national NGOs. This marked an 8 percentage points increase compared to 2022 (\$20.9 million – 55 per cent) and surpassed the AB's benchmark of 40 per cent.

Looking ahead to 2024, the DRC HF remains dedicated to advancing the localization agenda. Plans include updating its localization strategy taking stock of the key asks collected during consultations with local NGOs. Under the HC's leadership, the Fund aims to allocate 60 per cent of its funding directly to national partners in 2024, contributing to a more efficient and sustainable humanitarian response in the long term.



9
WOMEN-LED/
WOMEN RIGHTS
ORGANISATIONS
TRAINED

This achievement is the result of increased consultations and engagement with the AB constituencies, the NGO Forum and local NGO networks to advance the localization agenda in the DRC HF allocations. Based on the outcome of these consultations, the DRC HF integrated specific criteria into the proposal quality scoring matrix for the Second and Third Reserve Allocations used by the technical and strategic review committees. This ensured that, where technical and physical capacity was equal, preference was given to local partners. Moreover, a \$6 million envelope, 60 per cent of the Third Reserve Allocation, was earmarked for local and national NGOs, including 20 per cent for national women-led organizations. A key prerequisite for establishing this type of criteria was the assurance that the DRC HF had a vast pool of high-performing national partners.

The eligibility process, initiated in 2022 and continued in 2023, saw 342 national partners applying to become a DRC HF partner. With the support and guidance of the HFU, 48 national NGOs became eligible to the DRC HF in 2023, while the process is still ongoing for 58 others as of 31 December 2023. Nine newly eligible partners received funding as part of the Second and Third Reserve Allocations. As of 31 December 2023, the Fund has 81 national NGOs (of which 32 are WLO) out of 130 eligible partners.

The HFU also conducted capacity-building activities, including eight training sessions in various provinces throughout the year on the new Global Guidelines requirements and eligibility criteria.

Programming Highlights

Accountability towards affected People

The DRC HF considers accountability towards affected people (AAP) an essential requirement for all the projects it funds. Throughout the 2023 allocation review process, the technical review committees ensured that the prerequisite of three indicators developed by the DRC HF in collaboration with the AAP working group in late 2022, were included into all projects. These indicators helped ensure the projects had a robust AAP framework, including adherence to the “do no harm” principle and the establishment of complaint and feedback mechanisms, which were monitored throughout the implementation. In addition, the DRC HF systematically requested that selected partners include an analysis of the communities’ perception of the humanitarian response in their project and assess the related level of satisfaction of beneficiaries. These analyses are a critical tool for the DRC HF to assess the impact of projects on the lives of the affected communities.

Beneficiaries’ perception of DRC HF funded projects was assessed by the HFU monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team during field visits thanks to the previously mentioned AAP mandatory indicators. Out of the 68 projects monitored by the M&E team in 2023, 45 per cent of them had beneficiaries expressing their full satisfaction, 51 per cent were partially satisfied and only 4 per cent were not satisfied. These levels of perception were consistent with the level of performance for these projects, whereby 94 per cent of the projects performance were evaluated as either outstanding or as meeting the expected results, with only 6 per cent as underperforming.

The DRC HF also relied on its toll-free number, the DRC HF hotline, which implementing partners are requested to actively share and promote to their beneficiaries. In 2023, the DRC HF recorded over 1,200 calls to its hotline and more than 185 messages. Most communications received were

requests for monetary assistance, however, 11 concerned complaints on on-going projects and partners already considered as underperforming by the HFU. Capacity to manage the hotline were bolstered by the establishment of a risk management unit which prioritized the revision of the hotline management policies and procedures. The unit conducted this work in conjunction with the AAP working group’s experts to ensure its alignment with best practices and already existing feedback mechanisms in the country. This collaboration will continue in 2024, as the DRC HF aims to improve the way feedback received is used to better inform its future decisions.

Addressing Gender Equality and Responding to Gender Based Violence

Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse

In a male-dominated humanitarian operation, where the scale of gender-based violence (GBV) requires urgent additional investment, the Gender Stand-by Capacity Project (GenCap) mission in DRC in June 2023 helped focus the attention on the increasing risks of sexual exploitation and abuses as well as the escalating prevalence of GBV in the eastern of Congo, especially in camps settings. The mission supported humanitarian actors, including the DRC HF, in identifying mitigation measures in relation to women and girls’ exposure to trading sex for survival within camps as well as in relation to their vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse within the conflict-related contexts in the eastern provinces of the country.

As part of the Second Reserve Allocation launched in support of the scale-up, a \$700,000-worth project was granted to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), representing the second phase of the 2021- 2022 UNFPA project aiming at reinforcing the PSEA Agenda in the country.

Protection – Gender Based Violence

Building on the outcome of the GenCap mission and on the IASC system-wide scale-up declared around the same time, the DRC HF made substantive progress in prioritizing GBV prevention, mitigation, and response, working hand in hand with the GBV protection area of responsibility (AoR). From there on, all funded projects integrated specific actions aimed at reducing gender-related violence in IDP camps such as the review of shelters size to accommodate household sizes, separation of latrines, establishment of child friendly spaces, the promotion of income generating activities targeting women.

The DRC HF was a critical financial support to the GBV efforts, funding 29 per cent of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2023 program contributions with \$5.4 million allocated to GBV programming in the country. Together with GBV-related CERF grants in 2023 (\$5.5 million for GBV granted via CERF Rapid Response and Underfunded Emergencies windows), this percentage increases up to 56 per cent. Out of the 52 projects funded in 2023, seven included GBV protection-related core activities as their response. In addition, 31 were not specifically related to GBV, but provided for GBV-related activities for a total of \$1.3 million, including distribution of hygiene kits, survival kits, ad hoc GBV case referral systems, GBV case management, and psychological support, as well as providing budgets for GBV experts for GBV-related training and services in communities.

Including persons living with disabilities

The 2024 HRP for DRC, as did the previous one, considers that 15 per cent of the people in need of humanitarian assistance in DRC are people living with disabilities (PWD). They are often facing with additional barriers to access basic services, further increasing their vulnerability. Their involvement at every step of project development and implementation is therefore critical. During the identification of target population for DRC HF funded projects, analyses were carried out based on the Washington Group questions and households' demographics to adapt selection criteria and ensure the proper implication and targeting of PWDs.

Beyond their inclusion in targeted groups, DRC HF supported partners in training their staff on disability inclusion and adapting their activities to ensure PWDs' access and participation. For

example, in Rosayo II, an IDP site located on the outskirts of Goma in North Kivu, in 2023, World Vision International incorporated feedback from a focus group conducted with PWDs during the needs assessment phase of their project. This informed the construction of shelters equipped with access ramps specifically designed for PWDs, facilitating their ingress and egress from the camp's shelters. This initiative was part of a project funded by the DRC HF in 2022.

Moreover, the DRC HF supported projects which ensured the inclusion of PWDs as effective actors of the implementation of humanitarian activities. For example, in 2023, the WASH project implemented by OXFAM in Kalehe under the First Reserve Allocation included the training and inclusion of PWDs as part of the reparation committee able to do light work such as plumbing fixes on the newly constructed WASH structures. Similar inclusion of PWDs were also promoted in the Third Reserve Allocation projects, particularly in shelter construction activities such as the one planned as part of the international NGO Action Aid International's project.

This approach will feed into the best practices that the DRC HF will continue to promote in 2024 to further strengthen accountability toward PWDs and their empowerment throughout the humanitarian project cycle.

Enhancing Complementarity with CERF and other Funding Streams

Given funding constraints to address a crisis with the magnitude and complexity of the humanitarian crisis in DRC, it is imperative to ensure that each funding opportunity is utilized in a coordinated manner to optimize response efficiency.

In 2023, the CERF was the third largest contributor to the DRC HRP and DRC was its third largest recipient of with a total of \$45.7 million allocated. The HC strategically orchestrated the sequencing and synergy of both the DRC HF and CERF funds to ensure their complementary support to affected communities.

Upon the activation of the IASC system-wide scale-up, both the DRC HF and the CERF announced funding releases – a \$30 million reserve and a \$13 million rapid response allocation respectively. Their approaches were defined through the same consultation process taking into consideration priority needs and existing

capacities. This was a unique opportunity to ensure complementarity in terms of geographical coverage and secretariat support, having most of the UN agencies CERF projects covering the outskirts of Goma in WASH, health and shelter services and most of the HF NGOs covering remote areas outside IDP sites in food, protection, child protection and education.

Later in the year, the intensification of violence triggered significant population displacement in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. In complementarity with the \$10 million released from CERF, the HC initiated a matching \$10 million third Reserve Allocation to ensure urgent and vital humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable population groups across the three provinces. In North Kivu, the DRC HF allocation targeted the same areas as the CERF rapid response allocation, enhancing the impact of the response for displaced people and returnees through complementary multi-se-

ctoral interventions in health, food security, WASH, nutrition, shelter/NFI. In addition, while the CERF funding covered emergency response in Ituri, the DRC HF allocation supported projects addressing the needs of displaced persons and returnees in Fizi, South Kivu.

Additionally, the DRC HF played a catalytic role by advocating for funding to support the humanitarian response in areas affected by overlooked crises. Notably, through the Second Reserve Allocation in July, the DRC HF allocated a second round of funding to projects funded for the first-time last year in the Mai Ndombe province which has faced a rapid escalation in community violence over the past year. This renewed attention prompted large donors and UN agencies to consider financing activities in this province.



Goma/Nord-Kivu, April 2023
Pasqualine, a baby born in the Save the Children supported medical center in Bon Bosco IDP camp on the outskirts of Goma, on Easter day. Save the Children activities were funded by the DRC HF through the 2022 Fourth Reserve Allocation.

Credit: UNOCHA/Angelica Alhaique

Oicha/Nord-Kivu,
February 2024

Ursule in her mother's arms,
Kahindo, surrounded by her
brothers and sisters, Pierre
and Pierrette

Credit: AOF/Didi Kasereka



OVERCOMING MALNUTRITION: THE JOURNEY OF KAHINDO AND BABY URSULE

Kahindo, aged 29, lives in a hamlet in the health area of Liva located in the health zone of Oicha, Beni territory, in North Kivu. Originally from Liva, she had fled with her family to Otomabere in the neighboring province of Ituri in March 2022 to escape the violence of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) a Ugandan rebel group, operating in both provinces. This highly active group is responsible for various atrocities such as attacks, massacres, kidnappings, rapes, pillages, and destruction of civilians' properties. One month pregnant at the time, Kahindo left Otomabere once again to escape ADF violence, and returned to her hometown in May 2022. During her prenatal consultations, Kahindo learnt she was expecting twins. In February 2023, she gave birth at the referral health center in Eringeti and delivered not two but three babies: Pierre, Pierrette and a little **Ursule**.

While her brother and sister were doing well, Ursule weighed only 1.5 kilograms at birth. She was taken care for 16 days by the neonatology service at the General Referral Hospital in Oicha. Although she recovered upon returning to Liva, the condition of the child deteriorated again in her new environment. Ursule's parents relied on meager compensation from manual agricultural work as opportunities arose. With three new mouths to feed and the resumption of violence, it

became very difficult for Kahindo to work in the fields, and work became scarce. The household income decreased, making it impossible for them to properly feed their children. In September 2023, Kahindo noticed that her little Ursule, then 7 months old, seemed unwell and weak: *"Ursule was not developing like the other two. She had difficulty suckling, and she didn't seem to be gaining weight; I found her different from her siblings."*

During a home visit conducted as part of the active screening activities for malnutrition, Rachel, one of the 100 community health workers trained by the national NGO Action of the Future (AOF), detected key signs of malnutrition in little Ursule. *"I was going door to door, and that's how I came to Kahindo's house to do the screening. I found Ursule weak and in poor condition. So, I measured the child's mid-upper arm circumference, which was 109 mm, indicating severe malnutrition. That's when I quickly recommended that the mother take Ursule to the health center for care."*

Rachel immediately referred Kahindo to the Liva health center. This health facility provides free care for nutritional emergencies with the support of AOF under its Emergency Nutrition Response project for ADF-affected displaced, returnees, and host families in five health areas of Oicha in North Kivu, funded by the DRC Humanitarian Fund.



In such a context marked by great insecurity, children are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. When not promptly addressed, malnutrition drastically increases the risk of child mortality and can lead to growth delays that can cause physical, mental, and cognitive development problems in children. That's why during its Second Reserve Allocation, launched in August 2023 as part of the collective response effort mobilized by the activation of the IASC system-wide scale-up, the DRC Humanitarian Fund allocated \$2 million to support nutrition projects in the Ituri and North Kivu provinces and funded AOF's project, its partner since 2021.

Health workers quickly diagnosed Ursule with a severe acute malnutrition case and referred her to the Ambulatory Therapeutic Nutrition Unit of the Liva Health Center in North Kivu for appropriate care. After 57 days of treatment, Ursule regained her health and was declared cured of malnutrition by the healthcare staff. *"I thought my child was going to die because I had lost all hope, but thanks to the care, she is alive and well today. She has even started walking,"* the mother recounts a few months later.

Thanks to the \$300,000 project funded by the DRC Humanitarian Fund, AOF facilitated the care of 323 children like Ursule (186 girls and 137 boys) with severe acute malnutrition, including 19 with complications, in five nutritional units in the Oicha health zone (Erineti, Pakanza, Mbau, Mavivi, Liva), and aims to assist 660 malnourished children in total by July 2024. Beyond the management and care of malnutrition cases, the project also provides awareness-raising sessions and cooking demonstrations to mothers to teach them how to prepare nutritious meals for their children and trains women in malnutrition detection.

Kahindo benefited from these courses. *"I attended nutrition education sessions where I learned how to prepare a 4-star meal, consisting of four types of foods, and I also learned how to prepare enriched porridge for children."*

To respect anonymity, the names have been changed.

[Read more impact stories on StoryHub.](#)

Oicha/Nord-Kivu, February 2024

Kahindo is delighted by Rachel's visit to their home to monitor Ursule, while she prepares sombe, a much-loved local vegetable rich in fibre, iron, vitamin C and vitamin A.

Credit: AOF/Didi Kasereka

Risk Management

Risk management of projects

Throughout the year, the Fund conducted 55 financial spot checks (25 international NGOs and 30 national NGOs) and 134 monitoring visits (106 in situ; 28 remotely, primarily due to access and time constraints) for the 68 projects ended in 2023. Compared to 2022, this represents a 32 per cent and 12 per cent decrease in financial spot checks and project monitoring activities respectively, directly correlated with the decrease in number of projects funded.

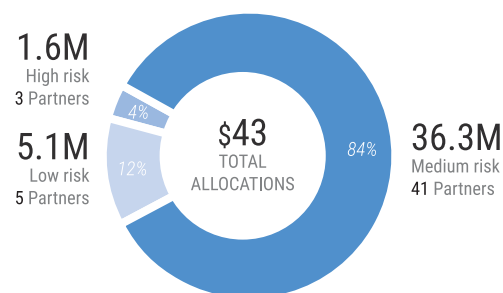
By the end of the monitoring cycle, 54 projects (80%) were rated outstanding or satisfactory by the M&E team, while 12 projects faced justifiable underperformance issues owing to implementation challenges. Only two projects showed unjustifiable underperformances. Nearly half of the projects (32) improved their rating over the project monitoring cycle, with the number of projects demonstrating outstanding performance increasing from 2 to 11 between the first and second monitoring cycles. This can be partly attributed to the support and guidance provided by the HFU to partners during quality assurance activities.

In 2023, the geographical distribution of the M&E team was revised in an effort to get closer to partners and improve exchanges: two M&E staff positioned in Goma covering North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Tanganyika, two in Beni for the Greater North Kivu axis, one in Bunia for Ituri and one in Kinshasa for Kinshasa, Mai Ndombe, Kasai.

Risk management of partners

The eligibility process, the first one ever conducted by the Fund since its establishment, started in 2022 and continued in 2023. It saw 371 partners applying to become a DRC HF partner. In 2023, 59 partners became eligible while the process is still

IMPLEMENTATION BY PARTNER RISK LEVEL TYPE



UPDATED RISK LEVEL BASED ON PERFORMANCE INDEX



OVERVIEW 2023



¹ Capacity assessment is created and conducted in 2023

² Capacity assessment is only revised in 2023, regardless of what year it was created

³ Capacity assessment is created, conducted and revised in 2023



7
REPORTED
INCIDENTS



39
ONGOING
CASES/INCIDENTS

underway for 58 others. As of 31 December, the DRC HF counted 130 eligible partners (81 national NGOs, 39 international NGOs, 7 UN Agencies and 3 Red Cross).

In 2023, the DRC HF made well-informed funding decisions by considering partner position and risk. The Fund enhanced its Partners Performance Index (PPI) system to offer real-time analyses of partners risk levels, drawing insights from monitoring, finance and programmatic assurance activities. Based on these analyses, the HFU adjusted the risk levels of four partner INGOs and of one national NGO, raising the risk level of four partners and lowering it for one. Moreover, the HFU identified 20 partners (11 national NGOs, six international NGOs, two UN Agencies and one Red Cross) exhibiting recurring underperformance and/or non-compliance issues. Consequently, following the DRC HF's Risk management framework and adhering to the 2022 Global Guidelines (Annex 8), the HFU conducted an in-depth monitoring, resulting in 13 organizations undergoing a four-month performance review plan. To date, nine of them have implemented all HF recommendations with close follow-up planned for 2024.

Following the publication of the new global guidelines for Country-based Pool Funds at the end of 2022, the DRC HF also led an exercise to assess

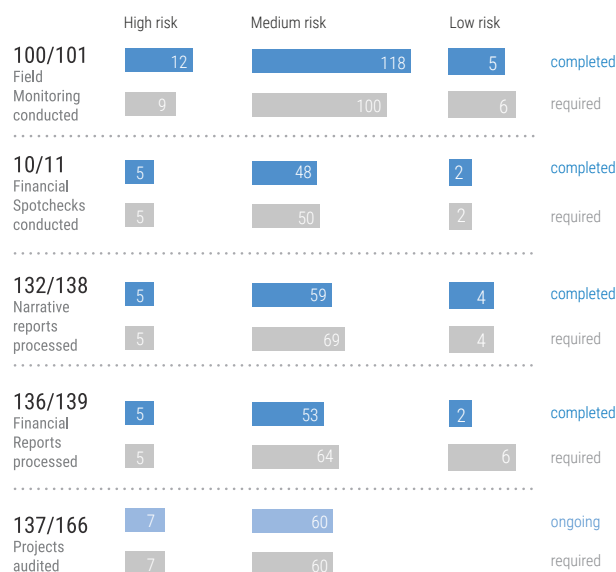
all eligible partners' compliance with the updated requirements. To support partners, the DRC HF launched a series of refresher trainings and information sessions on the new eligibility criteria in the last quarter of the year, including for all OCHA sub-offices to ensure they could provide further assistance to partners in their area. Eligible partners' alignment with the new guidelines was then assessed through a questionnaire. 83 of the 123 eligible partners (UN partners were not included) had aligned themselves with the global guidelines by 31 December while the HFU is still following up on the others.

In 2024, the DRC HF will continue to regularly review partners' eligibility and PPI. Moving forward, the Fund aims to update PPIs every six months to align risk levels with on-the-ground realities and delivery quality

Risk management of funding

HF management was alerted through assurance activities to potential misconduct related to activities implemented by four partners (two national NGOs, one international NGO and one UN Agency), currently under review.

Additionally, two international NGOs self-reported allegations of misconduct and end-of-project auditors were advised of these by the HFU. One case of fraud allegations was reported to donors in 2023.



Annexes

| Annexes list | | Annexes title |
|--------------|---------|------------------------------|
| 22 | ANNEX A | 2023 DRC HF ADVISORY BOARD |
| 23 | ANNEX B | COMMON PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK |

ANNEX A

2023 DRC HF ADVISORY BOARD

| STAKEHOLDER | ORGANIZATION |
|-----------------------|---|
| Chairperson | Humanitarian Coordinator |
| INGO | International NGOs Forum |
| INGO | Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) |
| INGO | Solidarités Internationall (SI) |
| NNGO | Cause Rurale |
| NNGO | Programme de Promotion des Soins de Santé Primaire (PPSSP) |
| NNGO | Action pour le Bien-être Communautaire (ABCom) |
| UN | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) |
| UN | World Food Programme (WFP) |
| UN | World Health Organization (WHO) |
| Donor | Belgium |
| Donor | Germany |
| Donor | Sweden |
| Secretariat | DRC Humanitarian Fund (DRC HF/OCHA) |
| Managing Agent | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) |
| Observer | GenCap |

ANNEX B

COMMON PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The DRC HF measures its performance against a management tool that provides a set of indicators to assess how well a Fund performs in relation to the policy objectives and operational standards set out in the CBPF Global Guidelines. This common methodology enables management and stakeholders involved in the governance of the Funds to identify, analyze and address challenges in reaching and maintaining a well-performing CBPF.

CBPFs embody the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, and function according to a set of specific principles: Inclusiveness, Flexibility, Timeliness, Efficiency, Accountability and Risk Management.



Principle 1 **INCLUSIVENESS**

A broad range of humanitarian partner organizations (UN agencies and NGOs) participates in CBPF processes and receive funding to implement projects addressing identified priority needs.

- 1 **INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE**
- 2 **INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING**
- 3 **INCLUSIVE IMPLEMENTATION**
- 4 **INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT**
- 5 **INCLUSIVE RESPONSE**



Principle 2 **FLEXIBILITY**

The programmatic focus and funding priorities of CBPFs are set at the country level and may shift rapidly, especially in volatile humanitarian contexts. CBPFs are able to adapt rapidly to changing priorities and allow humanitarian partners to identify appropriate solutions to address humanitarian needs in the most effective way.

- 6 **FLEXIBLE ASSISTANCE**
- 7 **FLEXIBLE OPERATION**
- 8 **FLEXIBLE ALLOCATION PROCESS**
- 9 **FLEXIBLE IMPLEMENTATION**



Principle 3 **TIMELINESS**

CBPFs allocate funds and save lives as humanitarian needs emerge or escalate.

- 10 **TIMELY ALLOCATION**
- 11 **TIMELY DISBURSEMENTS**
- 12 **TIMELY CONTRIBUTIONS**



Principle 4 **EFFICIENCY**

Management of all processes related to CBPFs enables timely and strategic responses to identified humanitarian needs. CBPFs seek to employ effective disbursement mechanisms, minimizing trans-action costs while operating in a transparent and accountable manner.

- 13 **EFFICIENT SCALE**
- 14 **EFFICIENT PRIORITIZATION**
- 15 **EFFICIENT COVERAGE**
- 16 **EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT**
- 17 **EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT**



Principle 5 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

CBPFs manage risk and effectively monitor partner capacity and performance. CBPFs utilize a full range of accountability tools and measures.

- 18 **RISK MANAGEMENT OF PROJECTS**
- 19 **RISK MANAGEMENT OF FUNDING**
- 20 **RISK MANAGEMENT OF PARTNERS**

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