The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF), launched on 12 February 2019, collects donor contributions to make funding directly available to humanitarian partners operating in eastern Ukraine so they can deliver timely and effective life-saving assistance and protection to the most vulnerable people.

A new fund for urgent relief

Now in its fifth year, the conflict in eastern Ukraine has created a deepening humanitarian crisis affecting more than 5 million people, of which 3.5 million need urgent humanitarian aid and protection.

Since the start of the conflict, more than 3,320 civilians have been killed and up to 9,000 injured. Shelling, violent clashes, landmines and other unexploded remnants of war are a daily threat to millions of people. The long-term consequences of the crisis are getting increasingly serious with deepening socio-economic impact and disruption of access to essential services and facilities.

Despite enormous challenges, humanitarian partners continue to deliver life-saving assistance and protection to millions of people on both sides of the "contact line". To support these efforts, in March 2019, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, launched the UHF – a Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

In calling for the establishment the UHF as a strategic and vital tool to help deliver humanitarian action in eastern Ukraine, relief organizations, donors and other partners in the Ukraine highlighted the importance of an agile response in a rapidly changing and fluid situation and the ability to steer resources directly to the most critical parts of the operation when and where they are needed most.

Donors have already expressed strong support for the fund with pledges and commitments totalling around US$3 million.1

Invest in humanity

The UHF is an opportunity for donors to pool their contributions to deliver a stronger and more coherent response in eastern Ukraine. Investments in the Fund will allow partners to reach the most vulnerable people and will help ensure maximum impact of limited resources:

• UHF is timely and flexible: The Fund supports the delivery of an agile response in a fluid and rapidly changing environment, allowing of operational partners to act quickly knowing that resources are available immediately for the most urgent life-saving activities.

• UHF supports leadership, coordination and a needs-based response: Under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), a wide range of relief partners jointly assess and prioritize the most urgent needs through an inclusive and transparent process, fostering collaboration and collective ownership of the emergency response.

• UHF is efficient and accountable: The Fund minimizes transaction costs and provides transparency, accountability and robust risk-management. Recipient organizations are thoroughly assessed, and relief projects are monitored with regular reporting on achievement and impact.

• UHF offers value for money: It ensures the most strategic, effective and efficient use of limited resources in difficult and often dangerous circumstances, making taxpayer's money go as far as it can to save lives and reduce the suffering of women, girls, boys and men caught up in the crises.

1 As of March 2019
Coordinated, timely allocations

Under the leadership of the HC, UHF funding is directly available to a wide range of relief partners – including national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN Agencies and Red Cross/Red Crescent Organizations – for activities prioritized within the framework of the Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). This ensures that funding is available and prioritized at the local level by those closest to the people in need.

The HC is supported by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the UHF Advisory Board. The advisory board includes representatives of donors, national and international NGOs and UN agencies to ensure decisions reflect the views across the humanitarian community.

Operational support is provided by OCHA’s Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) based in Kyiv, Ukraine. This ensures the UHF is managed from the frontlines of the crisis with allocation processes and monitoring close to operational partners and their projects, while maintaining a close link to strategic decision-making. The effective use of UHF funds is supported by OCHA’s wider coordination activities, including needs assessments and strategic planning.

Like all CBPFs, the UHF is designed to complement other humanitarian funding sources, such as bilateral funding and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

HOW CBPFs WORK

Contributions
Donors contribute to specific CBPFs.

Identifying Humanitarian Needs
Aid workers on the ground identify the most urgent types of humanitarian assistance that people need, such as shelter, food, clean water and medicine.

Managing Funds
Contributions are pooled into single funds.

Requesting CBPFs Funding
Humanitarian partners work together to prioritize life-saving relief activities. They request CBPF funding through the Humanitarian Coordinator.

Allocating Funds
Based on expert advice from aid workers on the ground, the Humanitarian Coordinator allocates CBPF funding.

Saving Lives
Relief organizations use the money for life-saving aid operations. They always track spending and impact, and report back to the Humanitarian Coordinator.

ABOUT CBPFs

There are currently 18 active CBPFs globally. In 2018, they received more than $950.2 million to enable humanitarian partners to deliver life-saving assistance for millions of people affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. Following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the UN Secretary-General stressed the critical role of CBPFs, and called on donors to increase the proportion of HRP funding channeled through CBPFs to 15 per cent.

How can you help?

The Ukraine HRP seeks $162 million to provide life-saving assistance for 2.3 million people. In its first year of operations, the UHF aims to attract around $10 million in support of the HRP.

For more information about humanitarian operations in the Ukraine please contact OCHA: sequi@un.org or bochorishvili@un.org

Donors are urged to contribute to the UHF and are invited to contact: ocha.donor.relations@un.org

Individuals can also support the UHF by donating via https://www.unocha.org/ukraine/about-uhf

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2 Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, the occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine and Yemen.