

Health Action in Crises

Rapid Response Account

1 December 2009



Purpose

The purpose of WHO's Rapid Response Account (RRA) for Health Action in Crises is to ensure the Organization has immediate access to emergency response funds for its humanitarian work.

The immediate availability of funds to respond to rapid-onset crises is critically important. Equally importantly, anticipating and preparing for emergencies is key to saving lives. WHO will also use the RRA when natural disasters threaten or when there are clear signs that a political or social crisis is likely to spill over into a major humanitarian catastrophe. The early withdrawal of funds before these events will enable WHO to plan and position the necessary staff, supplies and equipment to ensure a timely, structured and coordinated response.

Background

WHO's health action in emergencies has expanded rapidly in recent years; total expenditures in 2006-2007 amounted to US\$ 282 million. Unlike other UN humanitarian agencies which receive a large proportion of their funding in the form of flexible or broadly earmarked contributions, practically all the emergency funds received

by WHO are tightly earmarked for projects to be implemented under Consolidated Appeals and/or other funding appeals. The delay in funding decisions, together with the tight earmarking of contributions, often delay WHO's immediate health action and hamper its ability to address urgent, priority needs.

Benefits

The RRA will allow WHO to respond more effectively to WHA resolutions 58.1 and 59.22 calling for greater investments of resources, systems and expertise for emergency preparedness and response. By making funds immediately available, the RRA will kick-start field operations, enabling the immediate deployment of experts, supplies and equipment and allowing WHO to fulfill its four core functions in an emergency (assessing needs, coordinating, filling gaps and building capacity).¹

¹ CERF is an important source of funding to WHO, but not an alternative to the availability of individual agencies' response funds.

Establishment and management of the Rapid Response Account

1. WHO calls on donors to contribute unspecified funds for the RRA.
2. RRA funds are to be used only for immediate emergency operations.
3. All decisions to activate the RRA will be taken by the Assistant Director-General of Health Action in Crises (ADG/HAC), who will determine the amount to be withdrawn after due consideration and in consultation with the relevant regional office.
4. RRA funds may also be used to facilitate the work of other technical departments who contribute to the emergency response as part of WHO's Common Technical and Operational Platform.
5. If at any time during the year funding of the RRA falls below specified levels, WHO will prepare an appeal to donors for its urgent replenishment.
6. WHO will maintain a full record of the contributions received for the RRA on its website, as well as funding received under similar funding mechanisms established by WHO's Regional Offices.
7. The RRA can also be used as a revolving fund/loan mechanism pending receipt of funds from other sources, including CERF grants and Flash Appeals.
8. WHO will prepare an annual report for donors on the use of the RRA.

| Contributions | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|--|
| Donor | Amount in US\$ | Date | Status/Remarks |
| Finland | 421,000 | May 2009 | Received |
| Finland | 80,000 | June 2009 | Received |
| Ireland | 25,000 | August 2009 | Received |
| United Kingdom | 500,000 | August 2009 | Transfer from bilateral emergency fund |
| Finland | 553,000 | November 2009 | Pledge |
| Total contributions | 1,579,000 | | |

| Emergency Country Action | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Country | Amount in US\$ | Date | Status/Remarks |
| Sudan | 300,000 | June 2009 | Reimbursed |
| Philippines | 75,000 | August 2009 | |
| Philippines | 553,000 | November 2009 | |

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