



UNITED NATIONS

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**WESTERN UNION BECOMES FIRST CORPORATE DONOR TO UN
EMERGENCY FUND**

(New York: 13 December 2007): At the high-level United Nations conference convened today in support of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), The Western Union Company announced a \$100,000 donation, making it the first corporate donor to the United Nation's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

“Reaching an annual goal of \$450 million requires the participation of many donors year after year,” said John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “This contribution from Western Union sets a very positive and welcome example in corporate social responsibility, one that we hope other corporations will emulate,” he added.

The CERF has helped to save millions of lives during its first two years by providing quick initial funding for life-saving assistance and rapid response in sudden onset, rapidly deteriorating, and underfunded humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. It also helped to redress the imbalances in global aid distribution that have too often left millions of people in so-called neglected or forgotten crises in need.

Funding from CERF went to 11 agencies in order to help jump start aid, including food aid, health care, shelter and non-food items, and water and sanitation. For example, when part of Indonesia was devastated by floods in February 2007, the Fund helped the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the government launch a massive immunization campaign for children to prevent disease outbreaks and also allowed the World Food Programme (WFP) to provide food to 40,000 of the neediest people. In the Central African Republic, CERF support enabled UNICEF to carry out community-based nutrition programmes in some 126 towns.

A 2006 resolution of the General Assembly specifies that the CERF should ultimately reach \$500 million per year, of which \$50 million is a revolving loan fund. Since its launch on 9 March 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund has committed \$595.3 million to humanitarian projects in 59 countries affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. Since January 2007, the CERF has committed \$212.9 million to rapid response grants in 48 countries and \$124 million to underfunded emergencies in 23 countries.

The United Nations encourages donors to support the CERF through multi-year commitments to ensure the sustainability of the Fund.

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