

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Brussels Conference will provide a platform for the government of Afghanistan to set out its vision, development strategy and planned reforms by gathering together up to 70 countries and 30 international organizations and agencies.
- ACF released a report, "Afghanistan: Where Humanitarian Concerns Do Not Match International Action" to point out how the current management of aid in Afghanistan have real consequences on the impact of service delivery.
- ACBAR calls for protection of civilians, whether they live in government, or in opposition held areas. Respect and justice is demanded from all parties in the conflict - from frontline workers and nurses to school teachers' whose workplaces are raided, bombed, or threatened by armed groups, or government and international forces.
- Afghanistan is facing a humanitarian crisis with an estimated one million people on the move by the end of the year. As a result, the Humanitarian Community in Afghanistan launched a Flash Appeal requesting US\$150 million to support the thousands of vulnerable families returning from Pakistan every day.

THE BRUSSELS CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan Ministry of Finance: <https://goo.gl/0x7TKR>
European Union conference web page: <https://goo.gl/ECmdIU>

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING

339 million
MYR revised request (US\$)

155 million
received (US\$)

(Reflects funding on Financial Tracking Service as of 19 September 2016)

Source: <http://fts.unocha.org>
More on funding on page 8.



Children displaced by conflict living in Kabul. Of the more than 265,000 people displaced in Afghanistan since the beginning of the year, 56 per cent are children. Photo credit: OCHA/Stacey Winston

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The Brussels Conference on Afghanistan: An Overview

The European Union (EU) and the government of Afghanistan will co-host the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan on 5 October 2016. The Brussels Conference will provide a platform for the government of Afghanistan to set out its vision, development strategy and planned reforms by gathering together representatives from 70 countries and 30 international organizations and agencies. The Brussels Conference will be an opportunity for the international community to signal sustained political and financial support to Afghan peace, governance and development. This is a pivotal moment for Afghanistan to secure financial commitments for the next 4 to 5 years.

The Brussels Conference expects to focus on three objectives¹:

- Joint international and Afghan efforts to increase the effectiveness of sustained international support and funding, on the basis of a new Afghan national development framework
- Afghan reform efforts, including on economic reform, rule of law, improved public finance management and anti-corruption so as to ensure the provision of the most important services and public goods
- Regional efforts to support a political process towards peace and cross-border economic cooperation



**Brussels Conference on
AFGHANISTAN**

4-5 October 2016

PARTNERSHIP FOR PROSPERITY AND PEACE

Leading up to the Brussels Conference, two related events will take place on 4 October. The first is entitled '*Empowered women, prosperous Afghanistan.*' The objective of this gathering is to provide a platform for the Afghan government to outline policy progress and plans on the protection and empowerment of women. The event will include two panels: one focusing on the political and human rights of Afghan women, and the other on the socio-economic status of women.

The second event is on regional integration and prosperity. This event expects to establish the next steps for regional economic cooperation projects that can attract the resources of Afghanistan, regional partners and the wider international community. It will gather representatives from regional and international partner countries, as well as from

¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2016/10/05/>

Sources for the overview article: Afghanistan Ministry of Finance: <https://goo.gl/0x7TKR> and European Union conference web page: <https://goo.gl/ECmdIU>

international organisations. In addition, an EU-Afghanistan senior level dialogue meeting on migration is planned in lead up to the conference on 3 October.

Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini and Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for Development Cooperation, will represent the European Union. President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah will represent Afghanistan.

What is the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework 2016-2021 (ANPDF)?

“While Afghanistan faces many challenges, we must plan for a future where our country moves beyond our history of war and poverty and begins the long and difficult journey to prosperity. Even though sustainable development and prosperity will take longer than a single generation to achieve, we must lay the foundations of our future now.”-Afghanistan Ministry of Finance, MoF link: <http://policy.mof.gov.af/>

The ANPDF sets out the main development strategy for Afghanistan the next five years, including priorities and reforms. The ANPDF is categorised into National Priority Programmes, out of which four will be presented at the Brussels Conference. One of the priority programmes is the Citizen’s Charter, which should ensure that vulnerable groups are included in the development process, including women, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and persons with disabilities. A second includes women’s empowerment, a commitment to end women’s socioeconomic marginalisation and increasing women’s engagement in the market place, as well as agriculture and urban development. With the support of the UN, donors and humanitarian partners, the current humanitarian situation in Afghanistan became a component of the Brussels Conference, particularly with regard to the sudden influx of Afghan returns from June 2016 onwards along with the more than 265,000 displaced people since the beginning of 2016.

“Guided by the desire to realize self-reliance, this framework is the next step in the process of creating a long-term development narrative for Afghanistan. It provides coherent high-level guidance to the government and other stakeholders. It sets out an economic, political and security outlook that provides a context for the Government’s approach to development. This context leads to a fiscal strategy that will guide the Government in how it uses its budget to support its policy goals, and ultimately to ensure the sustainable management of public investment on behalf of the people of Afghanistan. The framework argues that the key mechanism for turning national policy into tangible outcomes lies in making the process of forming and then spending a national budget – one that is credible, effective, and will drive improved government performance. However, making the budget process a driver for carrying out reform also requires complementary reforms to governance, citizen engagement, and significant advances in the rule of law.”

The above definition is as noted in the ANPDF. To read the full document, please see the following link: <https://goo.gl/e4MCSa>

[The following article is contributed by Action Contre la Faim \(ACF\) Afghanistan](#)

People first: the needs of Afghanistan

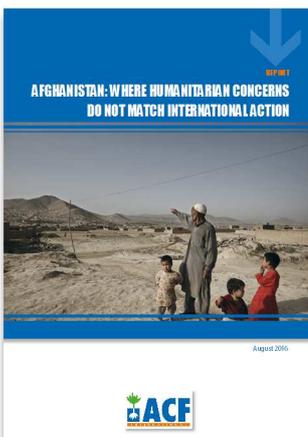
The Brussels Conference on 4 to 5 October will mark an opportunity for Afghan and international leaders to take decisions for a better future of Afghan people. In October, international donors together with Afghan representatives and other partners will gather in Brussels to reaffirm financial commitments to the Afghan self-reliance.

For this occasion, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) released a report “Afghanistan: Where Humanitarian Concerns Do Not Match International management of aid in Afghanistan services delivered to the Afghan



Families displaced with their belongings in Ghor province, western Afghanistan. Photo credit: ACF/Sandra Calligaris

Action to point out how the current have real consequences on the impact of population. From a humanitarian



Download the ACF report: <https://goo.gl/XQQCDW>

perspective, ACF highlights the crucial need for aid and development policies that reflect and aim to address the direct needs of the Afghan population. We must return to a more coherent and rational approach to the aid delivered in Afghanistan: working to contextualize, evaluate and adapt it to local needs and to implement effective monitoring systems focusing as much on project quality and impact as on good management.

Overview of humanitarian context and past commitments

Afghanistan is facing a widespread humanitarian crisis where humanitarian needs are fast growing, especially due to the increase of civilian casualties and displaced populations. In the first six months of 2016, the number of civilian casualties reached a record number since 2009. In 2015, the number of people forcibly displaced by conflict increased by 96% compared with 2014. With an average of 4,300 returns per day since mid- July, over one million people are estimated to be on the move by the end of 2016 internally and across the borders, significantly burdening already fragile humanitarian context in Afghanistan. On top of the raging conflict, threats against aid workers are escalating, cutting access to aid and services for many Afghans in highly insecure areas.

In the last years, a number of senior officials meetings served to reaffirm the international support towards reinforcing security, governance and the rule of law in Afghanistan. As a result of Kabul meeting in 2015, the Self-Reliance Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF) was adopted, detailing the partnership between donors and the Government. According to ACF, the focus of this and other frameworks is entirely on governance and management of funds, while the immediate needs of Afghan people are overlooked.

The way forward

In the current agreements between the Afghan government and its international partners, little consideration has been given to the humanitarian assistance and whether this assistance is reaching the people that are most in need. All involved actors need to recognize that Afghans continue to suffer in a state of emergency and that the current aid system does not sufficiently address the real needs of the Afghan people. Although the state building and governance approach dominating

development programs seeks to provide long-term economic, social and political solutions, the immediate needs of the population in this highly unstable environment have to be addressed promptly.

Humanitarian and development partners need to strengthen their cooperation to move from “managing crisis” to “managing risks” in order to build resilient communities. Although Brussels Conference is a development forum, in a protracted crisis such as Afghanistan, and with widespread and chronic needs, Brussels final statement cannot overlook the need for immediate solutions of upcoming humanitarian crisis. For now, humanitarian actors have shouldered the burden to address acute humanitarian needs, which are further aggravated by lack of basic services. However, government and development partners need to step up their engagement to address the underlying causes of acute needs.



Population based development aid empowers people to take charge of their lives. ACF work with communities. Photo credit: ACF

Recommendations

ACF calls all the actors that will participate in the Conference to:

- Reach a commitment for a better inclusion of frequent emergencies in their financial allocations, including population's health needs, by assigning funds to contingency planning in mid and long-term programs;
- Set not only long term development, but also short term clearly defined and measurable population based goals (including specific benchmarks that would ensure better accountability), that are aligned with the long term development objectives of Afghanistan to strengthen the capacity of its national institutions;
- Commit to improved civil society involvement in the formulation and the delivery of development policies by giving local NGOs and other national actors improved access to information of national policies development as well as their increased role in the implementation of development projects;
- Focus on needs based approach aiming at alleviating the suffering of the Afghan population and refrain from politicizing aid programs either towards counter-terrorism objectives or limitation of migration.

[The following article is contributed by ACBAR](#)

The Brussels Conference: a moment for NGOs to reassess their role as humanitarian and development actors

The Brussels conference is an opportunity for the government of Afghanistan, the international community, civil society, and the private sector to meet and reaffirm their partnership and commitment to Afghanistan's future. The government will present their vision for the next five years. The international community is expected to renew its financial commitment to support Afghanistan state building and development. As development and humanitarian funds should continue to be functioning clinic in Hilmand, a fully water for a village in Badakhshan, Kabul for internally displaced persons, country - in short the right to a dignified

The situation in Afghanistan has and a sharp rise in internally displaced repeat the calls for protection of government or in opposition held from all parties in the conflict for teachers whose workplaces are groups, or government and more enabling environment for NGOs,



A man and his daughter driving home after receiving non-food items in Ghor province. Photo credit: IRIS/Gandara Collection

part of civil society. NGOs, both in sectors, will remind participants that programmed to address basic needs: a staffed school in Kunar, access to clean decent living conditions in camps in job opportunities for youth all around the life.

deteriorated, with an increase in conflict persons and civilian casualties². We civilians, whether they live in areas. We demand respect and justice frontline workers: from nurses to school raided, bombed, or threatened by armed international forces. We also call for a a reduction in bureaucratic impediments

² Between 1 January and 30 June 2016, UNAMA documented 5,166 civilian casualties (1,601 deaths and 3,565 injured), marking a one per cent decrease in civilian deaths and a six per cent increase in civilians injured (UNAMA, Protection of Civilians Report, June 2016)

“ACBAR is actively engaged in the Brussels Conference preparation and co-organized the National Consultation for Civil Society in Afghanistan along with other Civil Society Organizations in September. As a representative of NGOs working in Afghanistan, ACBAR is advocating for development and humanitarian issues to be prioritized in the Conference agenda. This article is part of the ACBAR Brussel Series, a collection of Op-ed and position papers from ACBAR members, available at: www.acbar.org.”

and political intrusion, at Kabul and provincial levels. These are preconditions for development and for the government's vision to be materialized.

At this time when the government and the international community are pledging themselves to a mutual accountability framework, we NGOs should also take time to review our systems, our coordination and our modus operandi to be as effective and strategic as possible.

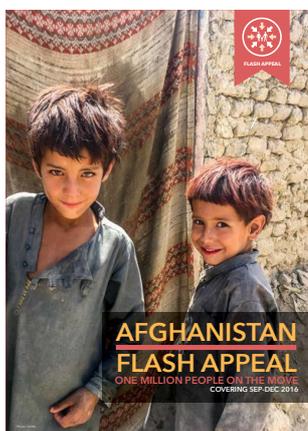
- **Humanitarian space – humanitarian organisations including NGOs need to reach civilians in insecure areas.** Some of the most conflict-affected areas remained poorly covered by humanitarian actors, especially those held by the opposition³. Despite the known challenges, additional resources and efforts need to be made to reach conflict affected areas, not only to assist the most vulnerable but also to maintain our commitment to neutrality.
- **Improve joint and impartial needs assessments and risk analysis:** Significant efforts have been made in Afghanistan to strengthen the quality and coordination of humanitarian needs assessments. However, more can be done to create common data collection and analysis standards. Risk analysis can also involve development partners and local authorities, to ensure the alignment of humanitarian and development programming.
- **Increase partnership with national and local NGOs:** Partnership between national and local NGOs and international organisations should go beyond financial transactions. It should include capacity building and joint programming in order to promote ownership and greater sustainability of Afghan organisations. In addition, partnerships amongst national NGOs should also increase.
- **Improve gender and protection mainstreaming:** According to UNOCHA's Human Response Plan 2016, "Humanitarian action in Afghanistan continues to suffer systemic problems in assisting and protecting women and girls". Gender mainstreaming, inclusion of people with disability and the elderly in program design and implementation should be improved and NGOs should increase and promote the use of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) protection guidelines.
- **Collective accountability:** NGOs have been essential development partners for the Afghan people, the government and the donors since the beginning of the 1980s. Yet, there is still a negative perception of NGOs, among many government employees, the opposition forces, and the public. Collectively, NGOs should continue to be transparent and rigorous in their programming, follow the NGO code of conduct, and publish annual reports for public information.

Beyond the government and the international community, the development and progress of Afghanistan will also depend on the commitment of civil society to be more coordinated, efficient, quality driven and accountable.

Humanitarian Chief visits Afghanistan and launches Flash Appeal 2016

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, made his first visit to Afghanistan on 6 to 7 September as the UN Humanitarian Chief. The USG called on the international community to scale up support to over one million people on the move who are anticipated to be displaced internally and across borders by the end of the year.

Afghanistan is facing a humanitarian crisis, as highly vulnerable families will experience the severity of Afghan winter, many for the first time. Over 5,000 displaced Afghans are returning from Pakistan every day. As a result of this sudden influx of returnees, the Humanitarian Community in Afghanistan decided to launch a Flash Appeal requesting around US\$150 million to support the humanitarian response to meet the needs of the



For more information, please see the Afghanistan Flash Appeal 2016 <https://goo.gl/w721YU>

³ According to HRP, Helmand provinces experienced decreases in operational humanitarian actors of around 20% last year. Besides, 1st CHF allocation review highlighted that the great majority of humanitarian actors

spike in numbers of new people on the move, including the newly displaced, returns and undocumented Afghan returnees.

“Families have lost their homes and livelihoods. Displaced people are living in tents, unable to feed their children and have had little or no formal education. This cyclical pattern of prolonged conflict must end to avoid another of generation of children being lost to war and suffering,” said the UN humanitarian chief concluding his two-day visit to Afghanistan.

During his mission to Afghanistan, Mr. O’Brien met with humanitarian partners, Government officials and the diplomatic community. The USG also visited with displaced families affected by the continued conflict in the Kabul Informal Settlement Site and the CHF-funded EMERGENCY (NGO) trauma hospital for the war-wounded.

The humanitarian impact of this prolonged conflict in Afghanistan is severe. More than 1.1 million people displaced from their homes by the people since the beginning of 2016. are increasing and access



USG Stephen O'Brien visits with conflict-displaced children in Kabul. Photo credit: OCHA/Stephen O'Brien

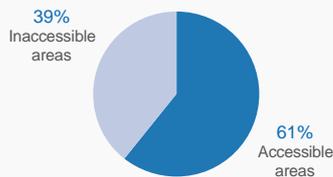
conflict, including more than 263,000. As the conflict ensues, humanitarian needs constraints have escalated.

Stories of survival in the South

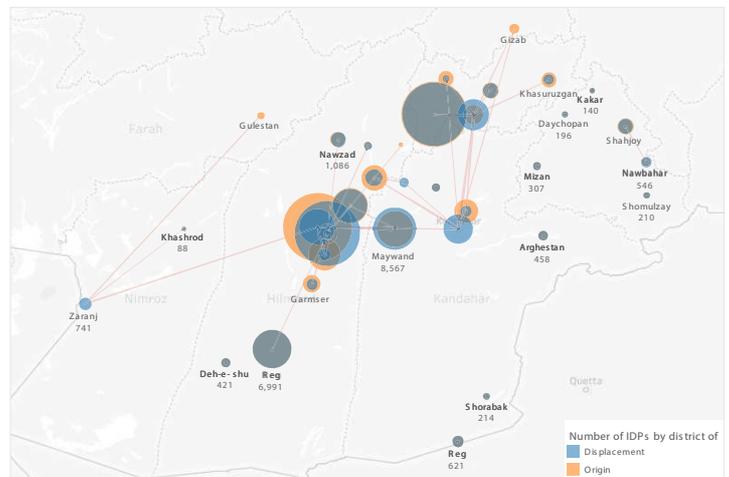
Key figures for the Southern Region

	Individuals displaced	87,051
	Families	12,508
	Adult male	23%
	Adult female	23%
	Children under 18	54%

Percentage of IDPs within accessible and inaccessible areas (2016)



Major offensives by the Taliban in the Southern Region of Afghanistan have most recently focused on the provincial capital of Hilmand Province Lashkargah. With government efforts to defend Lashkargah drawing regional resources, it was only a matter of hours before the security and stability of Tirinkot city was threatened. Displaced families were able safely flee the city to Kandahar, but the main highway was cut shortly after the fighting began trapping thousands of people in Tirinkot. During the most intense days of fighting, urban areas of the city were subject to rocket fire and heavy clashes.



People on the move in the Southern Region. Data source: OCHA

Within 48 hours of the assault on 7 September the main roads in and out of Tirinkot City were closed, main electricity lines and mobile communications were cut and clashes between armed groups and government forces quickly moved closer into the city itself. The Southern region of Afghanistan faces one third of all the displacements in the country, with 56,581 of the more than 265,000 displaced individuals across Afghanistan since January 2016.

Amidst the war-wounded patients in EMERGENCY (NGO)'s hospital in Kabul, one bed among all others in the room attracts the attention of visitors, a 12 year old boy wrapped in bandages and visibly still shaken by the pain he endured after being hit by a rocket while out in the field with the family's sheep in the southern province of Uruzgan.

According to the boy's father who stays faithfully by his son's hospital bed, "My son Mohammad Juma and our family live in central Uruzgan, in southern Afghanistan. My son was with sheep in open land when the area was hit by rocket fire. Mohammad Juma and his cousin who was playing in the field when they were hit by shrapnel and Muhammed injured severely, yet thankfully survived," said Mr. Juma. Thanks to our family members who guided us to EMERGENCY hospital in Kabul where my son is receiving excellent care," said Mr. Juma.

Despite government forces pushing the Taliban out of the Tirinkot city, the main highways remain closed as fighting continues and road checkpoints are consistently targeted. Communications are unreliable and civilians are not able to move on the highway. Some families displaced from the outskirts of the city at the onset of the conflict have managed to return, but reports indicate that many civilians are waiting for safe passage to Kandahar City seeking security and humanitarian assistance. While a limited humanitarian presence remained in the city, the insecurity has prevented assistance and closure of the airport and highways is hindering access to civilians affected by the conflict in and around Tirinkot.



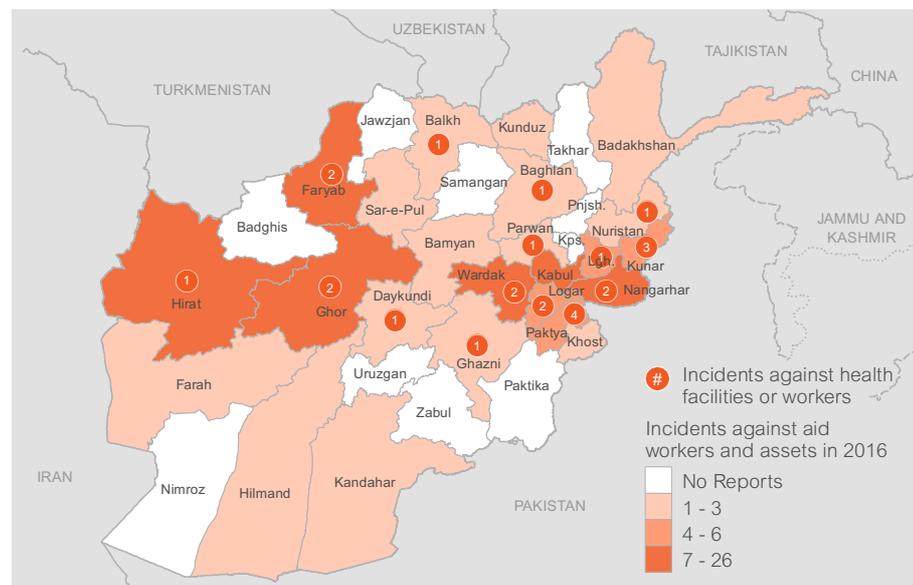
USG Stephen O'Brien speaks with 12-year-old Mohammed who suffered injuries from a rocket attack and his father at EMERGENCY (NGO) hospital in Kabul. OCHA/Stacey Winston

Access remains a challenge for humanitarian partners in Tirinkot with continuous clashes between NSAGs and the Government and every district - along the roads in Uruzgan, which have been continuously affected by the intensified fighting in recent months. A total of 196 displaced and assessed households who fled from Tirinkot to the Khandarhar and humanitarian partners are ready to provide assistance when the area is safe and accessible.

Humanitarian access: aid workers incidents

INCIDENTS IN JANUARY-AUGUST 2016

-  129 Incidents
-  13 Aid workers killed
-  15 Aid workers wounded
-  101 Aid workers abducted
-  25 Incidents against health facilities and workers



Incidents against aid workers and assets - January to August 2016. Data sources: Various

Funding

Total humanitarian funding for Afghanistan currently stands at US\$293 million to provide life-saving assistance through the United Nations, International Organizations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and other humanitarian partners.

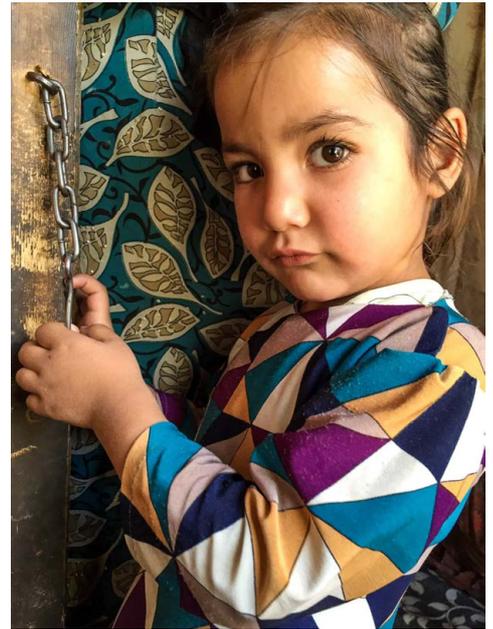
According to the online Financial Tracking Service (FTS) US\$155 million in humanitarian aid contributions have been reported against the humanitarian response plan (HRP). This represents 46 per cent of the total US\$339 million request.

In addition to the HRP 2016 funding requirement, Afghanistan launched an emergency Flash Appeal of US\$152 million in September. The appeal is intended to address the acute humanitarian needs of an unanticipated number of people reported and anticipated to be “on the move” internally and across borders by the end of the year. Predominantly triggered by the recent surge in the return of registered refugees and undocumented Afghans from Pakistan, over one million people are estimated to be affected, far surpassing planning figures for the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan.

In support of humanitarian activities which cater to the humanitarian needs of people on the move, both internally and across borders, a CHF Reserve Allocation of US\$5 million was opened for proposals on 4 September. Approval and signature of projects will take place in the next days. A total of US\$43.9 million has been pledged to the Afghanistan Common Humanitarian Fund in 2016.

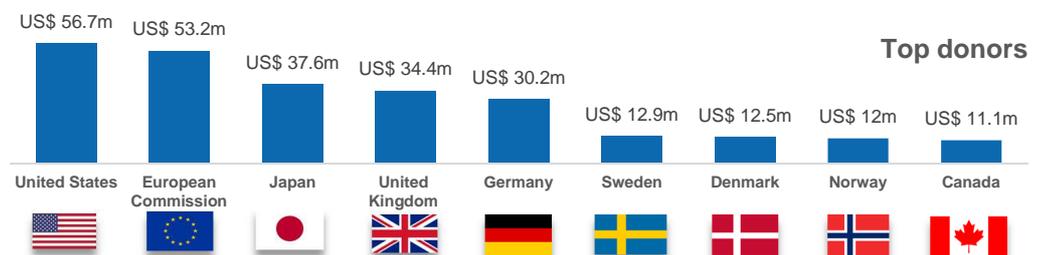
A concept note totaling US\$18.6 million has also been developed and submitted to the CERF Rapid Response window.

Bilateral donors have also indicated their willingness to support activities included in the Flash Appeal, including Belgium, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



A child displaced by conflict living in an informal settlement in Kabul where CHF-funded partners provide humanitarian assistance.
Photo credit: OCHA\Stacey Winston

US\$293 million total humanitarian funding
US\$155 million towards the HRP



Source: Financial Tracking Service (FTS) <http://fts.unocha.org>

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