

18 January 2022

Response to the Evaluation of the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund (SRF)

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Foundation (UN Foundation) welcome the thorough and thoughtful formative evaluation of the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund (SRF), its findings, and recommendations. WHO and UN Foundation jointly commissioned the evaluation as the two lead partners of the Fund's inception and operationalization. The evaluation was conducted by IOD PARC (International Organisation Development Ltd.). The evaluation was designed and managed according to the guidance and procedures of the WHO Evaluation Office and the United Nations Evaluation Group.

The findings, lessons, and recommendations will contribute significantly to a better understanding of the impact, effectiveness, performance, and enabling factors that ensured the success of the innovative SRF.

SRF was created in March 2020 to provide strategic and urgent resource mobilization in a rapidly evolving, unprecedented emergency pandemic context. Novel characteristics of SRF included its speed, outreach to non-traditional donors, and mechanisms rooted in global partnership across a diverse fiduciary network and anchored in solid organizational operating procedures, protocols, and due diligence protection.

Lessons from the evaluation of the Fund teach us much about efficiency, the value of transparency of financial flows, agile and evidence-based decision-making structures, the imperative of trusted partnership, and, above all, the immense importance of flexible resources at scale to counter a global threat. We are deeply humbled that the evaluation recognized these characteristics and significant achievements of the Fund. It found it to be highly relevant, effective, and efficient in responding to urgent needs and effectively delivering against its Key Performance Indicators.

In particular, the lessons from the architecture, establishment, and operation of the Fund, highlighted by the evaluation, showed how critical it is for WHO to respond in a fast and flexible way in the context of a major health emergency. The innovative approach of the SRF represents a successful example to prove how non-earmarked, flexible funds have been critical to rapidly finance the early needs of the pandemic response, especially personal protective equipment (PPE) supply chains, and mechanisms and in general to act in a timely manner when most needed.

SRF represents a “proof of concept” for a rapidly established resource mobilization effort to respond to an emergency targeting non-state actor donors, including the private sector and individuals. It was creative in its outreach, and the WHO Framework of engagement with non-

State actors (FENSA)-compliant due diligence systems were effectively and rapidly implemented to protect the integrity of the Fund.

We are pleased that the WHO Foundation is now in place to draw on this experience and the lessons highlighted in this evaluation. SRF should be an informative model for creating and operating mechanisms that may be needed to strengthen global solidarity and mobilize resources for future emergencies.

We appreciate that the evaluation has incorporated feedback from diverse stakeholders involved with the Fund. We are pleased to see that there was consensus from stakeholders that the Fund exceeded expectations in terms of funds raised and operational effectiveness and efficiency. The findings and recommendations of this evaluation are priceless as we, and others, use these learnings in a myriad of ways.

The World Health Organization and the United Nations Foundation commit to sharing the evaluation findings publicly to ensure complete transparency with Fund stakeholders.

In solidarity,



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Director-General
World Health Organization



Elizabeth Cousens
President and Chief Executive Officer
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