The world needs a humanitarian fund to assist long-term crises

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Ahead of the World Humanitarian Summit that will take place next month, Devpolicy Associate Director Robin Davies writes in an op-ed for *The Guardian* on the need for a global humanitarian fund to finance protracted crises and to meet the international shortfall in funding:

> "Humanitarian assistance policymakers will gather at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul at the end of May. Their agenda is rather slight, and one omission is particularly glaring. In each of the last few years, the financing needs of UN-co-ordinated humanitarian operations were estimated to be $20bn or more. The amount of financing actually provided fell short by some $8-9bn – or up to $15bn according to one estimate. It is anomalous that the world is equipped with global funds to finance action on infectious diseases and climate change, but not humanitarian crises. The centreless nature of fundraising for humanitarian action has long been a problem. The problem should no longer be tolerated.
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> Global funds act as financing aggregators and distributors, independent of implementing agencies and therefore unburdened by their mandate limitations and resource allocation constraints. They have the flexibility to attract finance from any source and to allocate it to any entity well placed to act effectively. Their fundraising and institutional arrangements are designed to focus high-level attention on the problems that they exist to address. Global funds for infectious diseases and climate change exist because these problems transcend national borders and cannot reasonably be left to the resources of so-called first responder developing countries. Clearly, the same is true of the growing problem of crisis-related human displacement.
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> It is not just that humanitarian assistance is currently too scarce. It is also for the most part tightly tied to specific crises and implementing organisations and provided within narrow time windows. Even responses to the most protracted crises depend heavily upon annual allocation decisions by an array of donor governments. This is why a central financing capacity is important."

Read Robin's full op-ed here, and download the policy brief on which it is based here [pdf].