

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Volumes and trends

Ongoing large-scale emergencies continued to drive increases in the amount of international humanitarian assistance provided in 2015, which reached a record high of US\$28.0 billion. This was the third consecutive annual increase. However, the rise in 2015 was less pronounced than the year before – a rise of 12% on the 2014 figure, compared with an increase of 20% between 2013 and 2014.

At the same time, the amount of international humanitarian assistance required to respond to humanitarian needs represented in UN-coordinated appeals dipped slightly in 2015, following a major rise the previous year. The combined appeal request was down 3% on 2014's unprecedented total to US\$19.8 billion.

However, reported contributions to these appeals actually decreased by more than the fall in requirements, leaving an increased funding gap of US\$8.9 billion, as donors also directed assistance outside of appeals. This was the largest funding gap for UN-coordinated appeals ever recorded, both in volume and the proportion

of requirements met, with just 55% of the total requirements funded in 2015. As before, there was much disparity between donor responses to the UN appeals, with Iraq at one end of the spectrum receiving 74% of its requested funding and Gambia at the other end receiving just 5% of total requirements.

A number of sectors within UN-coordinated appeals are persistently underfunded, such as education, agriculture and staff security.¹ Multi-sector² requirements in UN-coordinated appeals have increased more than 13-fold between 2005 and 2015, now accounting for almost one-third of all requirements across sectors, though only 55% of these requirements were met in 2015.

Requirements from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement, which are also significant barometers of humanitarian need, increased again in 2015 (up by US\$96 million to US\$2.4 billion), attracting US\$1.9 billion in funding.

International humanitarian response

International humanitarian assistance increased for the third consecutive year, reaching a record high of US\$28.0 billion in 2015. This was a rise of US\$2.9 billion, or 12%, on the previous year's high of US\$25.1 billion and over 50% more (up US\$10.0 billion) than the amount provided in 2012.

Despite the record amount provided in 2015, the rise between 2014 and 2015 was less remarkable than increases in the previous two years. Between 2012 and 2013, international humanitarian assistance rose by 16% (US\$2.9 billion) and between 2013 and 2014 by a further 20% (US\$4.2 billion).

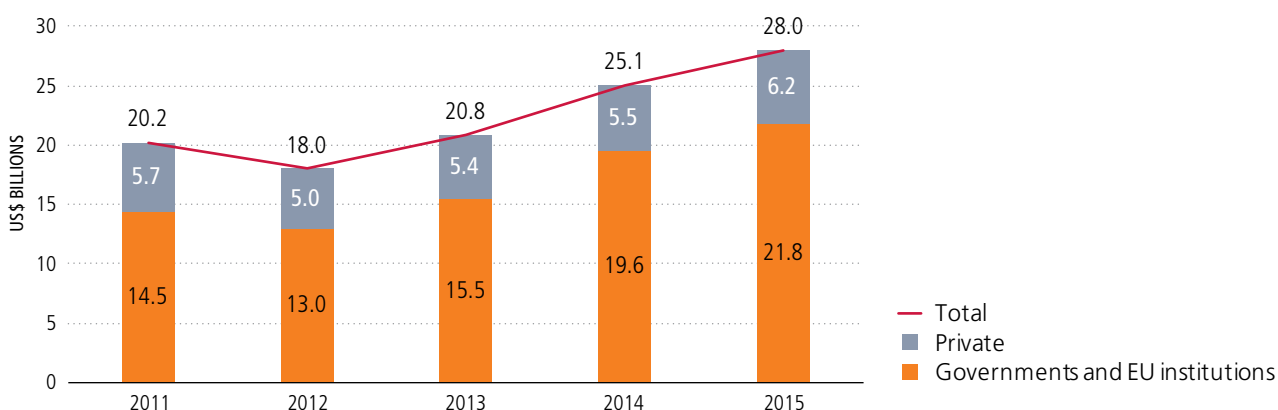
This total is the combined amount reported by government donors, including the EU institutions, and private donors – individuals, trusts and foundations, companies and corporations, and national societies (see *Methodology and definitions*). In 2015, government donors increased their contributions by around 11%, and private donors increased theirs by 13%. Chapter 4 covers funding by different donor types in more detail.

The most severe and large-scale crises, or 'mega-emergencies', were undoubtedly driving the continued increase in funding in 2015. Ongoing conflict and displacement in the Middle East region attracted generous contributions from international donors, though still not enough to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations according to the amounts requested in UN appeals (see the following section *UN-coordinated appeals*). In 2015, almost one-third of the total funding was allocated to the Syria crisis and the top five emergencies combined – Syria, as well as Yemen, South Sudan, Iraq and Sudan – accounted for over half of all international humanitarian assistance.³ Chapter 5 explores this concentration of funding for major crises further and also highlights persistently underfunded or 'neglected' emergencies.

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FIGURE 3.1

International humanitarian response, 2011–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD Development Assistance Committee data, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service, UN Central Emergency Response Fund and Development Initiatives' unique dataset for private voluntary contributions

Notes: Figures for 2015 are preliminary estimates. Totals for some years may differ from those reported in previous Global Humanitarian Assistance reports due to updated data and methodology. Government and EU institutions data is in constant 2014 prices. Private figures are in current prices.

UN-coordinated appeals

UN-coordinated appeals present an overview of the impact of crises in different contexts and communicate a collective ‘ask’ to the international community on the part of UN agencies, a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and in some cases governments, to meet the most urgent identified humanitarian needs. Not all countries in crisis are covered by UN-coordinated appeals and not all international humanitarian organisations take part in appeal processes. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC), for example, has its own mechanisms for appealing for emergency funding, as does Médecins Sans Frontières. That said, UN-coordinated appeals are currently the main collective measure of humanitarian needs and the estimated cost of responding for most major crises.

In 2015, the amount requested through UN-coordinated appeals was slightly lower than in the previous year, with a total request of US\$19.8 billion compared with US\$20.3 billion in 2014. This decrease of 3% (down US\$0.6 billion) contrasts with the significant

increase in appeal requests between 2013 and 2014 when requirements rose by 54% (US\$7.1 billion).

As requirements decreased from 2014 to 2015, so did the funding to meet them. The funding decrease was much sharper, however – while requirements fell by 3%, funding fell by 13% (US\$1.6 billion). It is also the first decrease in funding since a three-year run of increases from 2012 to 2014.

The UN Secretary-General’s report for the World Humanitarian Summit called on donors of international humanitarian assistance to urgently narrow the gap between requirements and funding provided within humanitarian appeals, setting a minimum average of 75% coverage.⁴ Levels of funding for UN-coordinated appeals in 2015 fell well below this target. Only 55% of the requested funding was received in 2015, leaving a shortfall of US\$8.9 billion. This makes 2015 the year of the largest funding gap ever recorded for UN-coordinated appeals for both the volume and proportion of requirements met, and

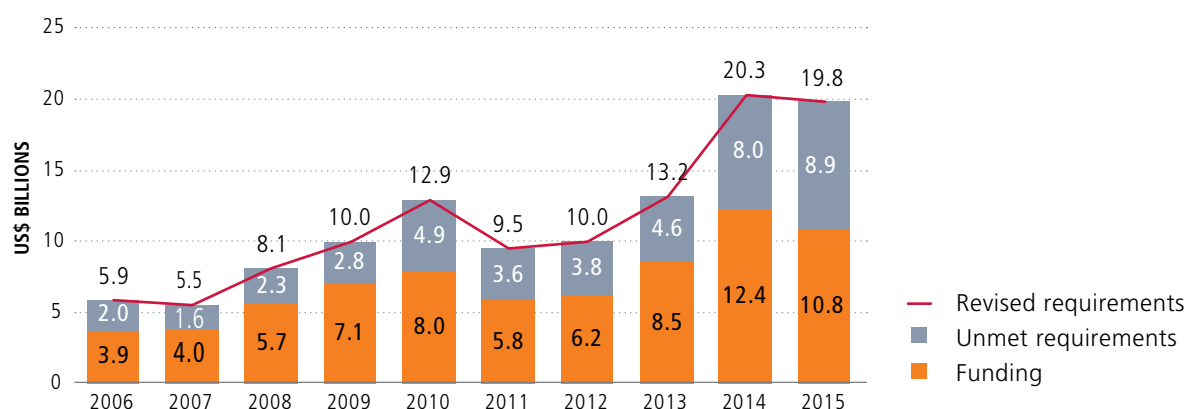
well below the average of 65% of appeal requirements met over the past decade.

In 2015, there were 36 UN-coordinated appeals, five more than in the previous year and thirteen more than in 2013; though more of the appeals were smaller than in either of the two previous years (twelve appeals with requests of less than US\$100 million in 2015, compared with eleven in 2014 and just four in 2013). The 2015 appeals comprised 24 country-specific humanitarian response plans; five flash appeals for responses to sudden-onset emergencies or sudden escalations of crises; six regional refugee response plans; and one appeal for a response to chronic humanitarian needs in the Sahel region.

New appeals were launched for a number of rapid-onset emergencies, while others including for the Ebola outbreak response and Typhoon Haiyan closed. The new appeals included the Nepal earthquake; Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu; drought in Honduras and Guatemala; conflict and displacement

FIGURE 3.2

Funding and unmet requirements, UN-coordinated appeals, 2006–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data

Notes: 2012 data includes the Syria Regional Response Plan 2012 monitored by the UNHCR. 2015 data does not include the Yemen Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan. To avoid double counting of the regional appeals with the country appeals, the Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) does not include the Democratic Republic of the Congo component; the Central African Republic RRRP only includes the Republic of Congo component; the Nigeria RRRP is not included. For this analysis we use the FTS summary tables and totals may not match appeals analyses using custom download data. Data is in current prices.

in Libya; and a deterioration of the chronic humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The number of regional appeals coordinated by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has multiplied in response to increased displacement across borders, demonstrating efforts to coordinate regional approaches to the protection, response and resilience needs of refugees and host communities. In 2015, UNHCR requested funding for six regional refugee appeals: Syria, South Sudan, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Yemen and Nigeria. Combined, these regional appeals amounted to requests for US\$5.3 billion, representing 27% of the total funding requested through UN appeal processes in 2015. This compares with 24% requested for two regional appeals in 2014, Syria and South Sudan, amounting to US\$4.4 billion.⁵

Large appeals continued to dominate. The five largest appeals combined requested 58% of the 2015 total.

Large appeals continued to dominate appeal requirements and response. The five largest appeals combined requested 58% of the 2015 total requirements, similar to levels in 2014. As in 2014, the largest amount requested for a single crisis was for Syria (combining both the regional and

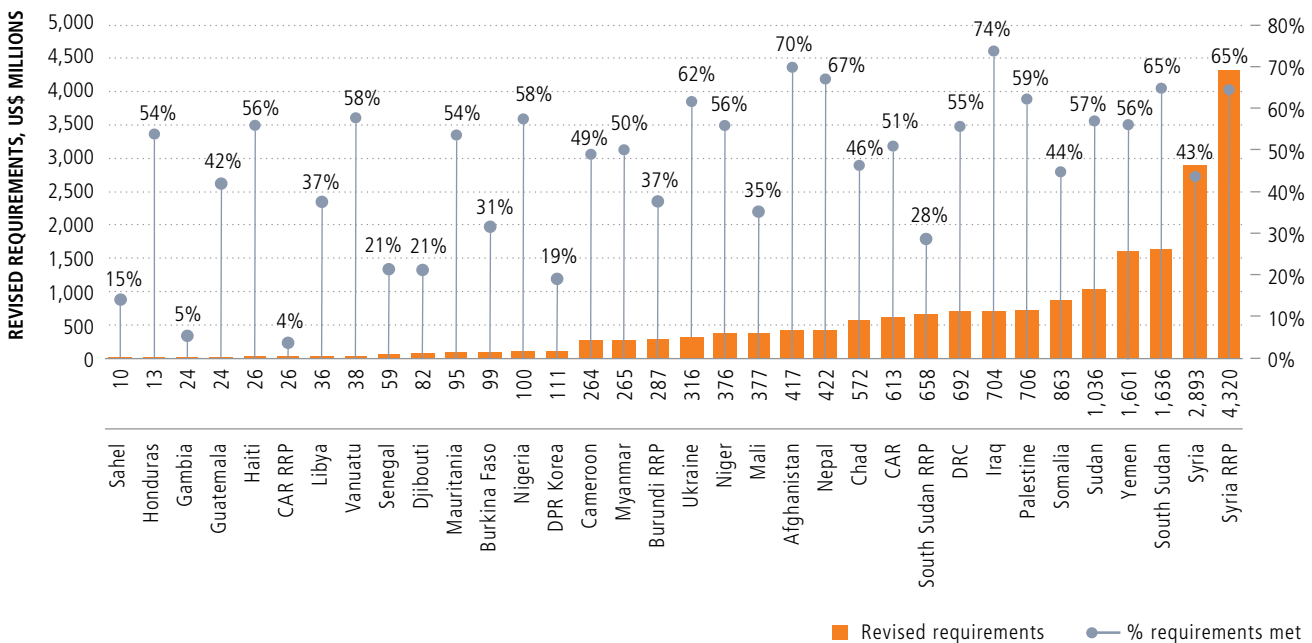
in-country Syria appeals), accounting for 37% of the total appeal requests in 2015 (compared with 30% in 2014).

There were major differences in the responses to appeal funding requests. At one end of the spectrum, Iraq was the best-funded appeal in 2015 with 74% of its requirements met followed by Afghanistan with 70%; while Gambia, with one of the smallest appeals in 2015 (requesting just US\$23.7 million for immediate needs in the context of chronic food insecurity), received the lowest proportion of requested funding at just 5%.⁶ The difference between the best- and worst-funded appeals was 69-percentage-points, lower than the 79-percentage-points difference in 2014.

Concerns remain over the inconsistent ways that donors respond to appeal requests, and disparities in the way that humanitarian response

FIGURE 3.3

Revised requirements and proportion of requirements met, 2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service

Notes: The data does not include the Yemen Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan. To avoid double counting of the regional appeals with the country appeals, the Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) does not include the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) component; the Central African Republic RRRP only includes the Republic of the Congo component; the Nigeria RRRP is not included. CAR: Central African Republic; DPR Korea: Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Data is in current prices.

plans are costed.⁷ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee continues to look at alternative ways of costing humanitarian response plans. It is hoped that more consistent and transparent identification and costing of the needs of crisis-affected people will strengthen donor confidence in the appeals system and result in more adequate and predictable donor responses.

With the increase in the overall amount of funding requested through UN-coordinated appeals between 2005 and 2015, the volumes requested by individual sectors have also grown. In some sectors the increases have been particularly significant. Requirements in the shelter and non-food items sector, for example, increased by 300% – from US\$424 million in 2005 to US\$1.7 billion in 2015. Similarly, requirements in the health, water and sanitation, and protection⁸ sectors have all grown by over 200% in the last 11 years.

Despite increases in the volume of funding received for most sectors, the funding received as a proportion of the total amount requested reveals persistent underfunding in a number of areas. Safety and security of staff and operations (22% funded in 2015) has received less than half of its requested amount every year for the last 11 years; and the agriculture (33% funded in 2015) and protection (35% funded in 2015) sectors received less than half of their required funding in 9 and 10 of the last 11 years respectively.

Other sectors in UN-coordinated appeals have become increasingly underfunded. The education sector, for example, received just one-third of its requested amount in 2015 (31% or US\$197.4 million) compared with two-thirds in 2005 (66% or US\$189.1 million). Despite a 126% increase in requirements for education over the 11-year period, funding increased by just 4% (US\$8.3 million). Similarly, while requirements in the water and sanitation sector have increased more than three-fold between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of funding received failed to keep pace, falling by 21% (from 61% to 40%) over the 11-year period.

This underfunding for specific sectors can partially be explained by looking at the rise in multi-sector funding requests and responses. 'Multi-sector' refers to projects and activities with no one dominant sector and often applies to assistance provided by UNHCR for refugee populations.⁹ As the number and scale of regional refugee-related appeals have grown – including the Syria Regional Response Plan, the largest appeal in 2015 (see Figure 3.3) – so has the scale of multi-sector requirements. The amount requested for multi-sector programming has increased more than 13-fold between 2005 and 2015, reaching US\$6.2 billion in 2015 – almost one-third of the total requirements for all sectors. By 2015, funding for multi-sector approaches accounted for a third (32% or US\$3.4 billion) of the total amount received for UN-coordinated appeals. However, this still only represented 55% of the multi-sector funding requested.

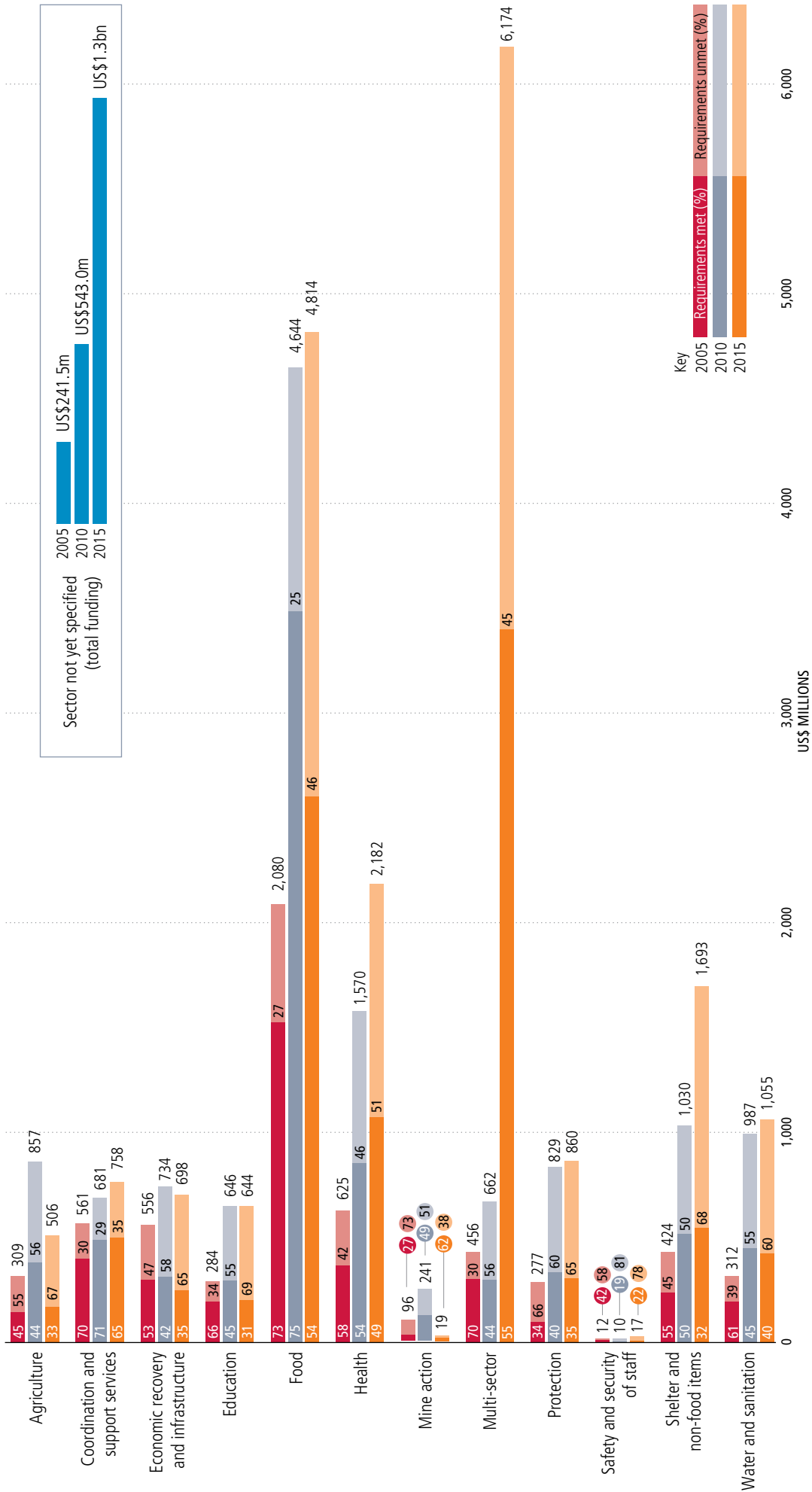
The prevalence of cash programming in recent years has also contributed to increases in multi-sector funding. Cash transfers in humanitarian programming can in some cases be multi-sector, allowing people to choose for themselves what they want to buy to best meet their own needs (see Chapter 7 for analysis of funding for cash programming).

Multi-sector planning and cash programming are welcome advances in humanitarian action. However, humanitarian operations are still largely organised around the provision of goods and services to recognisable sectors and humanitarian clusters, making it relatively easy to identify specific funding categories. Different approaches such as multi-sector planning, area-based programming and cash transfers present a challenge to transparent funding, though surely not an insurmountable one. As humanitarian action evolves to better serve those affected by crises, so must its reporting systems advance to keep track of the increasingly complex flow of resources.

As the number and scale of refugee-related appeals have grown, so has the scale of multi-sector requirements.

FIGURE 3.4

Requirements and funding levels in UN appeals by sector, 2005, 2010 and 2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service (UN OCHA FTS)

Notes: The term 'multi-sector' is predominantly used for multi-sector assistance to refugees. In the FTS, contributions are tagged with both 'standard sectors' and clusters. Cluster names vary across different appeals, whereas sectors are standardised into 12 categories and allow for comparative analysis across countries, years and appeals. 'Protection/human rights/rule of law' has been abbreviated to 'protection'. 'Safety and security of staff and operations' has been abbreviated to 'safety and security'. For this analysis we use the FTS summary tables, therefore totals may not match appeals analyses using custom download data. Data is in current prices.

Funding outside of UN-coordinated appeals

Just as the UN-coordinated appeals do not represent the totality of humanitarian needs, so not all international humanitarian funding is channelled to the projects included in them. International government and private donors contribute significant amounts to crises, agencies and projects that are outside the scope of the appeal frameworks, either bilaterally or through implementing organisations. In 2015, approximately 45% of humanitarian funding reported to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) alone was not reported as directed to projects inside of UN appeals; in 2014 this was 49%. However, the figures may include some funding that is actually directed to appeal projects but not reported as such.¹⁰ The total figure might be higher if the volumes of international humanitarian assistance not reported to the FTS are taken into account.¹¹

In 2015, the countries receiving the largest volumes of international

humanitarian assistance reported to the FTS as channelled outside of appeals were Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, Iraq and South Sudan – perhaps not surprisingly, since they also received the most international humanitarian assistance overall. However, of the emergencies covered by UN-coordinated appeals, the crises that received the largest proportions of their funding reported as outside of UN-coordinated appeal processes were Kenya (83% of funding was received outside of the UN appeal), Ethiopia (80%) and Haiti (77%). This can be explained by the fact that Kenya and Ethiopia were part of regional appeals (regional response plans) that only addressed the specific needs of South Sudanese refugees, rather than all needs in these countries. Haiti also had a small appeal to cover most urgent needs.

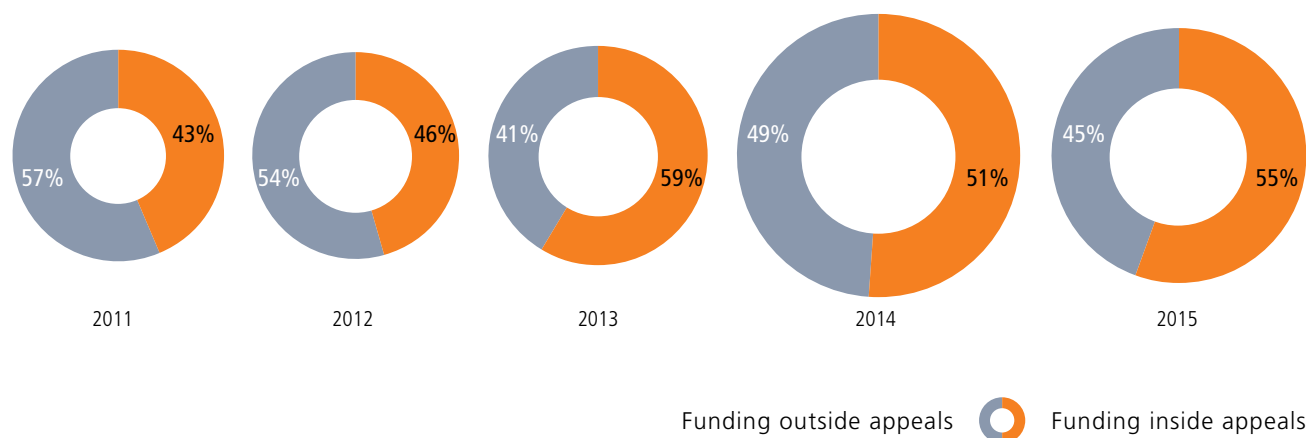
Certain donors demonstrate a preference for funding outside of appeal processes. Collectively,

governments in the Middle East and North of Sahara reported proportionately more of their funding outside of appeals than did any other region (57%). South America and North and Central America also gave close to 50% of their total funding outside of UN appeal processes.

In 2015, 22% of funding to UN agencies was reported as outside of appeals, compared with 56% for NGOs. Within the NGO category, it is worth noting that local and national NGOs rarely participate in UN-coordinated appeals (international NGOs do so more). Nor do all international NGOs consistently include their funding requirements within appeals – Médecins sans Frontières is particularly well known for remaining independent of UN appeal processes. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement also remains independent of UN appeals, maintaining separate appeal processes (see Figure 3.6).

FIGURE 3.5

Funding reported to UN OCHA FTS inside and outside UN-coordinated appeals, 2011–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service data (FTS)

Notes: For this analysis we use the FTS custom download function and totals may not match appeals analyses using summary tables data.

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement appeals

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement has three main components:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which predominantly works in situations of conflict
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), which coordinates and provides international assistance following disasters caused by natural hazards in mainly non-conflict situations
- National Red Cross and Red Crescent societies made up of volunteers and staff in 190 countries across the world providing a wide variety of services to vulnerable people in their own countries and contributing to international fundraising efforts.¹²

This section covers funding generated and spent by the ICRC and IFRC, while Chapter 6 looks at an example of funding channelled through a national Red Cross society.

In 2015, the ICRC requested US\$1.7 billion through its appeals for emergency humanitarian assistance, an increase of 15% on 2014's request and up more than 56% on the amount requested in 2012. Donors

responded to ICRC appeals in 2015 with contributions of US\$1.4 billion, leaving a shortfall of US\$259 million or 16% of requested funding. Funding requirements were dominated by continuing humanitarian need in the Syria crisis (10.3% of appeal requirements), South Sudan (9.7%), and new appeals for Ukraine, Nigeria, Yemen, Colombia and Jordan.¹³ Together the three largest ICRC appeals (Syria, South Sudan and Iraq) accounted for more than a quarter (27%) of the total amount requested.

Combined, all active appeals from the IFRC requested US\$779 million in 2015 – a decrease of 14% from the amount requested in 2014 (US\$903 million). The reduction in requirements was mainly due to the closure of Ebola-related appeals that represented 95% of the IFRC's total appeal requirements launched in 2014.¹⁴ Donor funding, which for the IFRC predominantly comes from private sources, met 69% of those requirements in 2015 compared with 73% the previous year.

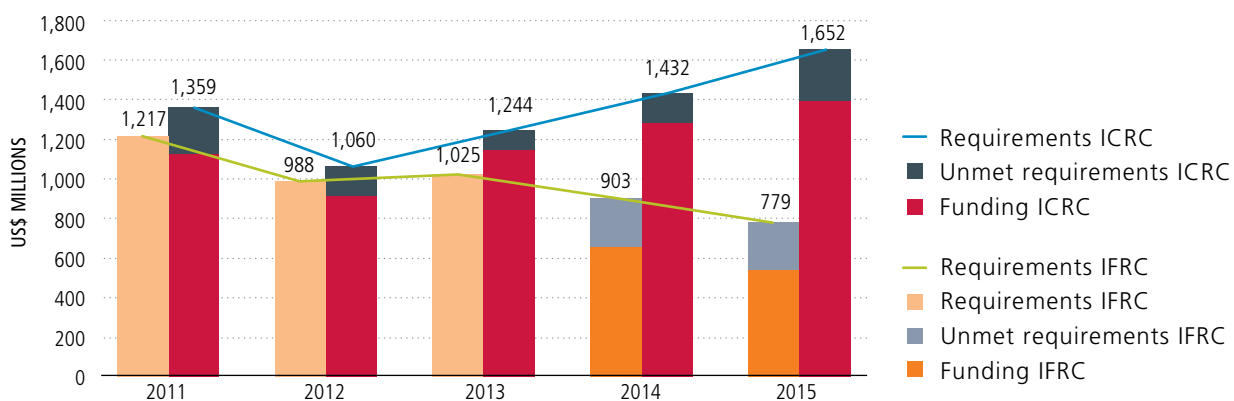
A number of the IFRC's appeals in 2015 were for continued responses to ongoing crises, such as Pakistan's flood and earthquake response. However, new

appeals were also launched, notably for the response to the earthquake in Nepal (US\$78.3 million)¹⁵, Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu (US\$8.5 million), and population movements in Europe and Central Asia (US\$31.4 million). These made up 77% of the total amount requested through new IFRC appeals in 2015 and 87% of the funding received.¹⁶

ICRC appeals were relatively well funded in terms of the proportion of requirements met compared with UN-coordinated appeals, and even compared with those of the IFRC. While there is some disparity between funding levels for different countries and crises, the overall donor response generally came much closer to the amount requested. The more modest scale of ICRC requests compared with those of the UN-coordinated appeals, the clearly defined mandate of the organisation, and trust in the ICRC as an institution may all partially explain why this is the case. However, given the different scale and scope of ICRC appeals compared with UN-led appeal processes, it is not possible to draw clear conclusions.

FIGURE 3.6

Funding to ICRC and IFRC emergency appeals against requirements, 2011–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on IFRC reports, ICRC annual reports and OECD DAC

Notes: IFRC figures in this graph may differ from previous year reports. CHF amounts have been converted to US\$ based on OECD exchange rates. Requirements for ICRC are based on initial requirements and budget extensions/reductions from annual reports. No data is available for IFRC appeal requirements met from 2011 to 2013. Abbreviations: ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross; IFRC: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Data is in current prices.