



[Michael Bastasch](#) 10:08 AM 08/17/2016

Soros Paid Al Gore MILLIONS To Push 'Aggressive US Action' On Global Warming



LE BOURGET near PARIS, FRANCE - DECEMBER 7, 2015 : American politician and environmentalist Al Gore at the Paris COP21, United nations conference on climate change. Credit: Frederic Legrand - COMEO / Shutterstock.com

Liberal billionaire George Soros gave former Vice President Al Gore's environmental group millions of dollars over three years to create a "political space for aggressive U.S. action" on global warming, according to leaked documents.

A document published by DC Leaks shows Soros, a Hungarian-born liberal financier, wanted his nonprofit Open Society Institute (OSI) to do more to support global warming policies in the U.S. That included budgeting \$10 million in annual support to Gore's climate group over three years.

"U.S. Programs Global Warming Grants U.S. Programs became engaged on the global warming issue about four years ago, at George Soros's suggestion," reads a leaked OSI memo.

"There has been a budget of \$11 million for global warming grants in the U.S. Programs budget for the last several years," the memo reads. "This budget item captures George Soros's commitment of \$10 million per year for three years to Al Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection, which conducts public education on the climate issue in pursuit of creating political space for aggressive U.S. action in line with what scientists say is necessary to put our nation on a path to reducing its outside carbon dioxide emissions."

It's unclear what year the memo was sent, but the Gore co-founded Alliance for Climate Protection (ACP) was established in 2006 and lasted until [it became The Climate Reality Project](#) in July 2011. In 2008, the Alliance launched a \$300 million campaign to encourage "Americans to push for aggressive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions," [The Washington Post reported](#).

ACP got \$10 million from the Open Society Institute (OSI) in 2008, according to the nonprofit's tax filings. OSI handed over another \$5 million to ACP in 2009, according to tax filings. The investigative reporting group ProPublica [keeps a database that has OSI tax returns](#) from 2000 to 2013. The DCNF could not find other years where OSI gave money to ACP.

OSI is primarily a grant-making nonprofit that hands out millions of dollars every year to mostly left-wing causes. Now called the Open Society Foundations, Soros's nonprofit has [handed out more than \\$13 billion](#) over the last three decades.

OSI didn't only plan to fund Gore's climate group to promote global warming policies in the U.S., OSI also planned on giving millions of dollars to spur the "youth climate movement."

"This budget item also allows for the renewal of U.S. Programs' long-standing support of the Energy Action Coalition, which is the lead organizer of the youth climate movement in the U.S., the memo reads.

"We are also including a placeholder for an additional \$2 million, pending discussion about and development of OSI's global warming agenda," the memo reads. "There is a memo from Nancy Youman in the strategic plans binder that recommends pathways forward for OSI on the climate issue – in the U.S., as well as in other parts of the Open Society Network."

Memorandum

To: George Soros, Aryeh Neier, Jonathan Soros
From: Nancy Youman
Re: Recommended next steps for OSI on climate
Date: July 10, 2009; revised August 10, 2009
Cc: Ann Beeson, Tawanda Mutasah, George Vickers

Over the last few years as OSI has begun to engage on the global warming issue, our grantmaking has risen to more than \$22 million per year across ten or so organizations, and this is before OSI has made any major commitments in relation to the adaptation issue in Africa. During these years, significant interest in seeing OSI get more active on the global warming issue has bubbled up from within the Open Society Network and also from partners one or two steps removed from the OSN. We have arrived at a place where by imposing some structure on what we are doing we could strengthen our impact and avoid unintended consequences.

The intent of this memo is to present a plan of action that would allow OSI to establish over the next few years a set of priorities, a clear rationale, and greater coherence for its activities related to the climate crisis. Some suggested areas to start include working closely with existing OSN programs and partners:

- Broadening the global climate movement through turning young people's concern about and moral authority on the climate issue into a vibrant global movement for action that develops young people's leadership and advocacy skills; and also through building greater voice for Africa and other parts of the OSN in the climate movement.
- Building a climate transparency and accountability field within which the Climate Policy Initiative can operate and thrive along side other OSI partners such as Revenue Watch, Global Witness and the International Budget Project.
- Drawing out and deepening the connections between a climate-constrained world and OSI's equality, opportunity, justice, accountability and governance priorities – there are significant opportunities in relation to U.S. Programs, and quite likely also in relation to the network programs, national foundations and perhaps also the Soros Economic Development Fund.
- Continuing and expanded efforts related to the adaptation issues facing Africa, where considerable OSI investments could be at risk directly or indirectly as a result of climate disruptions and dislocations.
- It's also important to preserve the flexibility to make investments in projects like the Climate Policy Initiative, the Alliance for Climate Protection, and Avaaz's climate team, which are of great interest to the foundation – and certainly touch on open society themes of transparency, accountability, governance and innovation – but don't fall naturally within any established OSI program area.

Embedded in these areas, and others OSI might take on in the future, are both sides of the climate equation: making contributions to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation, in policy parlance) and building resilience in places where global warming's impact will be most severe (often referred to as adaptation).

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Time is quickly running out. The debate has turned from science to the economic, technological and quite practical facets of addressing global warming. These next few years are critical for establishing low-carbon growth pathways in key emitting countries that will slow and cap global emissions and unleash climate solving technological innovation. A key moment is just six months away: the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) in Copenhagen in December 2009 at which a successor to the Kyoto Treaty is to be agreed. In the U.S., we have a president who, like George Soros, sees solutions to the economic crisis in addressing the climate crisis and is eager to transform the U.S. from a laggard to a leader but lacks the political support to go as far as is required.

Clearly, there is much important work to do, where OSI has much to contribute, to build the capacity and political will to realize the opportunities and overcome the challenges of this moment in history. Even though significant new resources have come into the climate field in the last few years, there continue to be major gaps in the climate advocacy ecosystem and insufficient resources available to fill those gaps and build up existing efforts to the scale that is required to break through. George Soros's personal engagement on the climate issue has created expectations, and people are looking to OSI for funding and leadership. Given OSI's resources, reach, and expertise, OSI has real contributions to make.

OSI also has much to gain, since climate ripples through so many of the issues and regions on which it focuses. As we have seen over the few years OSI has been watching the issue closely, the phenomenon of climate change is transformational. There is probably no field of policy, or priority of OSI, that will be untouched by its effects. We can already see links to OSI's work in the U.S., Europe, Africa, China and in relation to governance, transparency, accountability, justice, equality, civil society capacity, etc.

So, what is OSI's role? With encouragement from Aryeh Neier, Jonathan Soros, Ann Beeson, and Tawanda Mutasah and George Vickers I have attempted below to lay out where OSI's climate-related interests may lie, and to suggest how we can build on and leverage George Soros's and OSI's activities thus far. This memo is my attempt to spur a discussion of the scope and ambition of OSI climate activities over the next few crucial years, and to lay out suggestions of how we can jumpstart a process to fully root what has been an opportunistic and ad hoc area of OSI interest in the open society mission and programs. OSI's culture of catalyzing change, finding niches and making unique contributions, and preserving a posture of nimbleness that allows it to respond to opportunities inspired the suggested activities that follow.

Having consulted extensively with people inside and outside the Open Society Network, I offer the following plan of action to focus and intensify our efforts to make an impact on the climate problem. (See attachment for a list of people who have been consulted.)

Ann Beeson and I discussed this proposal with Aryeh Neier on July 28, 2009. Aryeh plans to discuss it with George Soros at a meeting before the end of August 2009. Next steps also include meetings among relevant OSN staff (Tawanda Mutasah, George Vickers, Ann Beeson, Bronwen Manby, others from network programs, etc.) and with OSI advisors and partners who know the global warming issue (Tom Heller, George Polk, etc.). What follows is fodder for those conversations.

I. Build on OSI's expertise, programs and activities

Since George Soros became interested in global warming a few years ago, we have gotten up to speed on the issue and what is required to meet the climate challenge, learned about other funders' efforts, and intervened here and there. OSI has made or is in the process of making a couple of substantial investments in key climate initiatives:

- a) George Soros pledged \$10,000,000/year for three years, beginning in 2008, to the Alliance for Climate Protection, founded by Al Gore;
- b) George Soros pledged \$10,000,000/year for five years, and, after review, another five years, to establish the new Climate Policy Initiative (CPI). Tom Heller is launching CPI later this year with a focus on the accountability and transparency of governments and international agencies in the regulation of climate change and energy policy.

OSI currently funds a few additional efforts that are showing real impact. Open grants include:

- \$500,000/year during 2008-2009 in support of the Energy Action Coalition, which has built a robust youth climate movement in the U.S. and is routinely cited as one of the most effective and influential advocacy forces on the issue;
- Earlier this spring we added \$300,000 to Avaaz's general support grant from OSI to enable it to intensify its campaign to combat climate change;
- The Asia Society received \$250,000 for its project of developing a roadmap for coordinated action by the U.S. and China;
- U.S. Programs' Criminal Justice Fund supports Green for All's efforts to gain access to green jobs for formerly incarcerated people;
- As part of the Connect US Fund, OSI works with other donors interested in responsible global engagement to link development and climate change policies;
- A special grant to the IIED's Strengthening Awareness on Climate Change in African Universities project was made to increase the engagement of scientists in the context of the UNFCCC negotiations and the Copenhagen COP;
- A small grant to Stamp Out Poverty supports the development of innovative adaptation financing mechanisms;

- The OSI Youth Initiative has been working closely with 350.org to provide leadership development training and opportunities to young people from around the world.

In conversations with staff around the OSN, I have learned that many people see climate as deeply connected to the open society mission and to individual programs and campaigns: As discussed in more detail below, climate work is already underway in the OSN, there is pent up interest in doing more, and OSI is looked to as a leader and partner. The question is how to knit OSI's efforts together to form a broader plan of action, draw on OSI's special expertise and resources, and deepen our involvement in the climate issue to have a greater impact. Strong foundations for extending OSI's democracy and accountability agenda into the emerging field of climate and energy policy/politics already exist within OSI, which provide good places to build climate into existing OSI priority areas. In the near-term, we should give strong consideration to expanded activities in the following areas:

Immediate opportunities

Youth. The climate issue is reviving student activism, and a new movement is forming fast. It's more than just a good feeling or activism for activism's sake. In the past few years, major youth coalitions have sprung to life: the Energy Action Coalition, which OSI has supported since its birth (U.S. and Canada-based), the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, the U.K. Youth Climate Coalition, the African Youth Initiative on Climate Change, and, most recently, the Indian Youth Climate and the Chinese Youth Climate Action Network. The last two arise in areas of the world where climate change awareness and action are greatly needed. The presence and voice of 500 young people from 54 different countries at the Poznan COP in December humanized and energized the chaotic and bureaucratic venue with pleas for serious progress, and even survival for the countries and peoples most threatened by climate change. The stark implication for young people's futures was lost on no one. It was terribly important they were there to offer a tangible conscience for the climate negotiators and other decision makers.

Youth movements may be particularly important as the December COP in Copenhagen approaches and especially afterward when the decades of advocacy and hard work take off to transform the world's economies in ways that decrease and eliminate reliance on carbon-based energy sources. The moment is ripe to transform a loose global network of youth climate activists into a powerful social and political force. There is also an opportunity to knit young people into a broader movement for action on global warming. Continuing support for the Energy Action Coalition is crucial for keeping the pressure on in the U.S. and developing new leaders. And closer collaboration between the OSI Youth Initiative's international network of youth leaders and training programs and U.S. Programs' expertise in supporting youth leadership development and mobilization will add critical value that will pay off now and for decades to come all over the world. A concerted effort to build the skills, networks and power of youth will establish the new generation of leaders to protect not only the climate, but also the justice

and human rights issues that are closely connected. As OSI has long recognized, youth mobilization has value in its own right, and global warming provides a compelling issue around which that mobilization and leadership development are taking place.

Addressing the impact of climate disruption in Africa. Bronwen Manby got a strong endorsement from the Africa Advisory Board to her attached memo, in which she points out that the phenomenon of climate change is certain to affect all areas of OSI's work in Africa. Thus, even though OSI has traditionally had limited involvement in environmental issues, the network will need to become more engaged, even if grantmaking and operational work remain, broadly speaking, within current parameters. This applies as much to Africa as elsewhere in the world. (See Bronwen's memo, attached.)

Africa's higher-level education institutions are currently a primary target for OSI's engagement in climate change. Tawanda convened a meeting of pertinent OSI staff in January to plot ways forward, and Rhett Bowlin is recently back from a fruitful fact-finding trip to universities in Africa. The Higher Education Support Program and Network Scholarships Program will be key actors together with the Africa Foundations in designing OSI's strategy for engagement on climate change issues. We have also been and will continue consulting with colleagues at the Central European University and its new school of public policy. One of the key steps toward addressing climate change will be to nurture knowledge on the ground in the very communities that will need to adapt. HESP and NSP are working together on a plan to create multi-disciplinary think-tank-like centers whose function will be to inform the academic community of the multiple knowledge areas needed to address climate change. NSP is also considering how the Earth University model, a four-year program currently operational in Costa Rica but attracting students from all over the developing world, might serve more students from Africa.

China. Says Bill McKibben about China-U.S. relations on climate: "Negotiating away the results of these eight years will be Obama's biggest environmental task, bigger even than figuring out how to limit our own emissions. By Copenhagen [in] December, the Americans and the Chinese will need to have rechoreographed entirely the poisonous dance they've spent the last decade perfecting. If they can't, the possibility of a breakthrough agreement is nil." The Asia Society, under Orville Schell's direction, has been working with the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, to lay out "A Roadmap for U.S.-China Cooperation on Energy and Climate Change" that is similar to the posture regarding the climate issue taken by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her climate team during recent visits to China. Coaxing along the U.S.-China relationship, and/or focusing specifically on helping to create a low-carbon development path for China may offer interesting opportunities. Aryeh, Orville, Tom Heller, Tom Kellogg, OSI Global Fellow Mark Hertsgaard and others within the OSN can be great guides. And since George is recently back from a China trip, this is a good moment to convene an OSI conversation to discuss China-climate opportunities.

Transparency and accountability. The Climate Policy Initiative Tom Heller is establishing will make a powerful analytical and watchdog contribution, but it does not plan to do traditional advocacy of the kind that OSI supports in many other areas. Once the CPI is up and running, Tom and his team are eager to advise us on the broader set of market and regulatory transparency and accountability issues, where other organizations might step in as advocates, and how to fill out the field to maximize impact and our investment in the CPI. This element requires further development. We will learn from the Revenue Watch model, work closely with the CPI, and seek out other OSI partners (the International Budget Project, for example) for advice in the development of a strong network of organizations focused on transparency and accountability in climate regulation to ensure that policies are having their intended effects. In the U.S. context, there is a need to monitor the green aspects of economic recovery efforts to be sure that a) the money is actually going toward green uses; and b) that those activities are having the desired green impact. Likewise, once the U.S. enacts climate legislation or takes targets under a treaty, there will likely be a need for advocacy in the U.S. to ensure climate-related commitments are achieved.

Reducing OSI's own environmental impact. The volunteer Greener OSI Working Group has been keen to align the foundation's operations with its interest in stopping global warming. We have completed an audit of OSI's contributions to the global warming problem and will soon present results and a plan of action for curtailing OSI's impact on the climate or compensating for the impact we cannot avoid.

Longer-term opportunities

Equity is another area of OSI interest that has real implications within the climate issue and which other funders may be reluctant to enter. For the most part, the countries and communities most affected by climate change have contributed little or nothing to the current crisis, yet they are saddled with its burden. (This is also true in the U.S., where the low-income communities most at risk of the effects of global warming have frequently contributed least to the problem.) This is where the conversation about reducing greenhouse gases (mitigation) intersects with the conversation about how to build up resilience to inevitable changes in the places that are experiencing climate change first and worst (adaptation). One emerging area of intellectual inquiry and campaigning is around the concept of climate justice. I picked up little activity in the OSN related to this idea, other than at OSISA and OSIWA, but because of OSI's deep and abiding interest in human rights, we ought to educate ourselves about climate justice and evaluate whether and how to integrate it with other OSI priority areas.

In addition, there are questions about economic and social development and how to address climate without increasing inequality. Interesting coalitions are forming, made up of unusual bedfellows (environmental activists and humanitarian aid activists, for instance). Few funders are giving real attention or resources to the intersection of climate and development. The Connect US funders collaborative, of which OSI is a founding member, is one of the few doing so.

OSI's **Migration Working Group** has identified climate change and environmental devastation as important points of intersection with migration that need further exploration to advance our thinking on how to integrate the impact of climate change, environmental degradation, and emergencies into our efforts related to migration. The kinds of questions the working group is asking include: How are climate change and migration connected? Who is likely to be most affected? What are the possibilities of creating a protection status (and system) for those displaced by extreme climate change?

A number of people outside the foundation have mentioned a need for journalist training to improve climate and energy coverage in places like Eastern Europe, China, and Africa. Gordana Jankovic and Algirdas Liptas confirm that there are opportunities to use the **Network Media Program's** journalism training assets to improve coverage of climate and related topics in key places where coverage is minimal or weak so that journalists from developing nations can hold their governments and climate negotiators accountable, while also increasing awareness in the business and financial sectors and more general populations. And George Soros is a featured speaker at a Project Syndicate global editors forum that will bring together hundreds of editors and journalists from around the world in Copenhagen in October to learn about the climate crisis and the state of international climate negotiations.

Another possibility is working with the **Network Information Program** to translate policy research they seeded in 2007 on innovation and diffusion of climate change technologies into practical proposals. Tom Heller and others tell us that IP issues may be pushed off the table in Copenhagen; but if IP and other technology transfer issues are not addressed, they could stand in the way of successful innovation and affordable access to the technologies that can address global climate change.

Climate is an issue that spans both the U.S. and international aspects of OSI's philanthropy, and it could strengthen the impact of OSI's contributions to view our activities in a more comprehensive, global framework. How to do this will require additional exploration within the OSN, with particular attention to the **regional programs and national foundations** where I have done less prospecting than I have done within network programs, to understand the most fruitful strategies and tactics. We could and should explore adaptation issues in regions other than Africa – Latin America or Southeast Asia, for instance – where OSI has expertise and networks to build on.

OSI's operational role. During this crucial period for progress on climate, it would be valuable to ramp up OSI's operational role to complement our grantmaking strategies. We are already well networked in the climate community and routinely serve as an information conduit for our grantees, other organizations, and funders. Calling upon OSI's internal resources and external partners, we could host conversations that would draw out the linkages between climate and other OSI issues such as justice, transparency, youth leadership development, public health, the global food crisis, etc. – to inform our own grantmaking, as well as inform the advocacy and funding communities in which we work. There may also be a role for OSI-DC to assist with Washington-based advocacy

and for OSI's International Advocacy office to consult on global campaigning, and I have already had preliminary conversations with Stephen Rickard and Fiona Napier.

Through the OSI Global Fellows Program, OSI supports innovative thinkers who can work with OSI staff and grantees to expand our perspectives, inform our grantmaking, and develop transformational policy and organizing proposals. For example, current Fellows Evgeny Morozov and Zack Exley could consult with OSI grantees Avaaz and Alliance for Climate Protection and others in the climate field, to develop innovative organizing strategies that call upon the most advanced technology tools and best practices. With Mark Hertsgaard as an OSI Global Fellow, we now have additional climate expertise inside the foundation. Mark is the author of *Earth Odyssey*, one of the first works to detail China's emergence as an environmental superpower, and he will finish up a book on adaptation, *Living Through the Storm*, over the next 12 months. This is wonderful timing for his laymen's approach to the adaptation issue, as well as to contribute to OSI's emerging thinking on how it can help address the impacts of climate change. While Mark is affiliated with OSI, he could help us plan discussions with relevant staff and key experts to draw out the linkages between public health concerns and climate or women's issues and climate; he might also lead a study group to advance OSI's understanding of how a rights, justice and/or equity framework might be applied to climate work.

II. Seize opportunities that make international agreement more likely and more effective, globally and in the U.S.

The next few years are make or break years for the Earth's climate. After decades of awareness building there is widespread concern about global warming. This is a huge asset. It has not yet, however, been converted into stiff political pressure for radical action to reduce carbon emissions. The policy solutions are complex, the financial implications huge, and the politics are no less brutal. Under these current conditions, policy actions are likely to fall far short of what scientists tell us is necessary. Even with the new funding that has moved toward a climate focus in recent years (though there is less of it given current economic conditions), there is still no massive, coordinated, and effective campaign to press for action and break the paralyzing impasse. And there is precious little funding or philanthropic attention paid to adaptation.

As President Obama has pointed out, real change comes from the grassroots, from outside government. Britain's Secretary for Energy and Climate Change Ed Miliband made a similar observation when last December he called for a "popular mobilization" to pressure political leaders. During the next few years, it is essential to build the political will and economic arguments to make it possible for the inside players and policy makers to take aggressive action in the United States, in other major carbon-emitting countries and internationally. OSI should provide resources now to develop the economic arguments for action and produce the mass mobilization and political pressure that policy makers need to hear to put strong policy into effect in the U.S. and achieve a breakthrough in international and bilateral negotiations, to carry that momentum through

subsequent negotiations, and to enact and implement national low-carbon growth plans like those laid out by the Catalyst Project and McKinsey & Co.

... in the U.S. Support from OSI could help link up the free floating pieces of the climate movement in the U.S to demonstrate public demand for change and create the political space necessary to capitalize on the Obama administration's interest in making up for the last eight years that the Bush administration fiddled away. Since Maggie Fox took the helm of Al Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection in April, it has quickly put in place a major organizing effort to educate and mobilize Americans to demand solutions to global warming. We have scheduled a meeting for George Soros and the Alliance team on July 15th to determine the future of OSI's relationship to the Alliance.

The Alliance, however, cannot get the job done on its own. OSI grantee Energy Action Coalition (EAC) has quickly grown into a huge power in the climate movement, working across demographics and issue specializations, to develop and refine effective strategies for the whole movement, not just for the youth of North America who are its members. EAC's Power Vote initiative during the 2008 election season registered and turned out new young voters on campuses and in communities all across the country on Election Day. In a massive show of energy and concern, 12,000 students descended on Washington, DC, for an inspiring weekend of workshops, trainings, visits to policymakers and a demonstration against a coal-fired plant that powers the Capital (Feb. 27-March 2). EAC has grown beyond its own outsized expectations. Continued support for EAC is crucial in the next couple of years to keep the pressure on for a clean, just and sustainable energy future.

Other OSI grantees are also at the table. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is tracking the impact of climate proposals on poor and working people. Van Jones, formerly of the OSI grantees the Ella Baker Center and Green For All, has moved to the White House as Special Adviser for Green Jobs to implement on a national scale the vision of green pathways out of poverty for low-income people and the formerly incarcerated. The Center for American Progress is promoting novel policy options – down payments on many of which were embedded in the stimulus package – with John Podesta himself taking the lead.

Reversing U.S. contributions to global warming is going to be the work of millions of Americans, not just the environmental community that to date has shown the most interest. The shift to a sustainable economy will require massive support and action from people at the social, cultural, political, business and community levels. The environmental community, from which many climate campaigners come, is notoriously undiverse and upper income and has poor or tense relationships with the communities OSI is most concerned with. Fragile bridges have been built, and there is a lot OSI could do to foster greater collaboration between movements for economic and racial justice and climate campaigners. OSI must ensure that green economy proponents actively include and pursue alliances with people of color and people of all classes. This is not an easy task, but U.S. Programs and its grantees are uniquely positioned to coax and support the building of these bridges. With a well-developed strategy, many more OSI communities

could (and should) be harnessed to the effort. It is crucial that these communities are brought into the fold so that they can fight for the economic opportunities inherent in transforming our energy economy, as well as work to insulate their communities against unreasonable economic impact that could come from higher energy prices.

A connected question revolves around green jobs and the green economic stimulus. These programs are largely untested, certainly at the scale and velocity required by the economic recovery act and the climate imperative. There is an opportunity, and a need, to assist with and monitor implementation through working with communities and cities to design programs, train city officials in how to establish programs, and connect green dreamers with workforce development experts to design real programs, etc.

In a different vein, there is a need to study the economic impact of greening the U.S. economy and refute economic arguments thrown out by opponents to change. It is universally understood in the climate advocacy community that there is a huge need for research and messaging around the positive economic impact of taking action on climate (development of new industries, jobs, more efficient use of resources, savings from efficiencies, etc.), and also “war-room” capacity to get those messages out and refute doubters in the business community and influential commentators like George Will in the *Washington Post* and John Tierney in the *New York Times*.

... and accelerating action in the international arena. With the formidable task of getting the U.S. to act aggressively and decisively in progress, the real heavy lifting has begun: fighting for rigorous international action. This task is made tougher because in most of the world there is little pressure coming from people outside the environmental, climate and scientific communities.

The Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP) in December and other key decision moments (meetings of major emitters, the G8, etc.) are unlikely to result in successful outcomes unless civil society greatly increases its pressure on the process. I went to a COP for the first time last year in Poznan, Poland. I was struck by the bureaucratic, chaotic, and complex nature of the proceedings. What should have been the main climate event of the year was hard to follow and overshadowed by the negotiations over the European Union energy package, which took place at the same time. The EU's last minute decisions, which essentially undermined the framework that had been set forth at the previous COP a year earlier in Bali, were a wake-up call. Unprecedented lobbying by the fossil fuel and energy-intensive industries, along with worsening economic realities, resulted in Germany back-pedaling, and Poland (the host of the COP) putting a wrench in the works. The stakes are much higher now for international negotiations and shifting the world's major emitters to low-carbon growth plans, not to mention addressing the impacts that climate change is already having the places least able to adapt. It's past time to help a global movement coalesce and organize to insist on aggressive action.

A group of environmental and development NGOs, faith-based groups and social justice civil society organizations met in the spring of 2006 and concluded that a large

concerted effort to mobilize citizens across the world is essential for achieving the ambitious and equitable international agreement(s) that the world needs to keep climate change well below 2 degrees. This understanding led to the creation of the Global Campaign for Climate Action (GCCA) in 2007. The GCCA brings voices from the South and the North and from the development, faith based, social justice and environmental networks and communities. The GCCA is starting to share intelligence and coordinate action, but it needs additional support very quickly to make an impact. GCCA will facilitate civil society to undertake massive public organizing, intelligence gathering and dissemination, nimble collaboration, and targeted, effective campaigning at all levels in order to bring public pressure to bear on government decision-makers. Participating organizations include large international networks including World Wildlife Fund International, Greenpeace, World Council of Churches and Oxfam, as well as specialists like the Union of Concerned Scientists, E3G, and Pew Environment Group. GCCA has identified specific political target countries for activities on the ground – those that are core dealmakers, potential deal disrupters, and important swing states. Apart from financial support, OSI could offer George Soros's personal support and intervention if he could be influential in specific venues, meetings or locations.

OSI is well-positioned to support these efforts. In addition to our interest in the climate issues, there are good opportunities to strengthen the GCCA's efforts by connecting them to OSI grantees with related capacities or expertise on relevant issues – public health, transparency, campaigning, etc. And some of GCCA's target countries are in regions where OSI's networks are strong. Other key elements of the international mobilization include Avaaz, which is already an OSI grantee and close collaborator. Avaaz provides agile, online campaigning capacity in the international arena. Climate has emerged as one of the Avaaz community's top issues, and Avaaz is poised for making a big impact because of its sophisticated organizers, great reach, and huge (and growing) international base of members. 350.org and the global youth climate movement, mentioned earlier in this memo, will play a crucial role both inside GCCA and also outside it by re-setting the conversation to focus on the seemingly impossible goal of 350 ppm of carbon dioxide that science tells us is required to avoid the most devastating impacts of global climate disruption. There is also a need to give voice to those who are most vulnerable to and already affected by climate change – not just because they must be part of an equity conversation and will humanize what is often a technocratic conversation -- but also because pressure from them will push policymakers toward more ambitious goals. OSI's exploration of the adaptation side of the equation will likely surface additional initiatives and players that can connect climate to poverty and justice concerns, and the constituencies who can be activated on those issues.

III. What's needed to put these recommendations into practice?

We will leave specifics to be worked out once we determine OSI's level of engagement on the climate issue. There are four items on the list of what is needed:

1. Direction from OSI leadership and indications of parameters, scope and rollout of OSI's climate philanthropy

2. Dedicated staff to monitor and maintain existing efforts, to develop new strategies, and to coordinate across the Soros Foundations Network
3. Budget dedicated to climate change activities
4. A governance system and process for vetting strategies and individual grants (an advisory board, a strategy and grant review process, etc.)

Clearly, we can't ramp up OSI's activities until we have clear guidance from OSI leadership. In reference to the second item, there is a tremendous amount of climate work going on already at OSI. We could greatly increase our impact in this important period if we concentrated our energies. Just overseeing OSI's existing climate activities requires more oversight and staff support than has been available. I squeeze in almost weekly contact with the Alliance for Climate Protection, provide regular fundraising and technical assistance to the youth-led Energy Action Coalition, and am helping the Climate Policy Initiative get itself up and running. In addition, I oversee a handful of other climate-related grants, meet frequently with significant numbers of organizations and people in the field to keep up with developments and identify opportunities, and I regularly consult with OSI colleagues to assess opportunities, help make connections and coordinate OSI activities where necessary. OSI is now an active participant in the Climate and Energy Funders Group, and I sit on the Council of Connect US, in part to provide climate funding expertise. The Greener OSI environmental impact assessment is making headway because I am steering the voluntary, self-formed team; it will be difficult to take the initiative forward without endorsement from the highest levels at OSI, which the Greener OSI group will soon seek. In addition, I am always available to George Soros, Andrea Soros Colombel and Michael Vachon as needed to meet with their contacts and keep up with their climate interests.

While there are budget allocations to cover the Alliance for Climate Protection and also the Climate Policy Initiative and Energy Action grants, there is currently no money in the 2009 budget to explore new OSI areas of interest or to respond to opportunities that arise. And I'm eager to get a sense of what we ought to be planning for the 2010 budget. There is a real opportunity to build a youth climate movement; we know there is the need for targeted campaigning in the U.S. and internationally; OSI efforts are in development in relation to Africa and adaptation; and exploratory opportunities related to China, adaptation more generally, accountability and governance, and other areas of interest to OSI are already on the near-term horizon.

Were we to step up our activities regarding climate, we need to create a more formal board of advisors to guide the work, to formalize inter-OSI working group(s) to maximize collaboration and cross-benefits between and among OSI priorities, and develop a regular grant review and approval process.

Conclusion

Philanthropists and foundations have a historic role to play in addressing the climate crisis. With the stakes incredibly high, philanthropic engagement is stunningly small in the international climate arena – and mostly focused on the inside strategy of

developing policy and directly influencing the U.N. negotiations. There are very few resources going toward the outside strategy and the development of campaigning capacity. In the U.S., where there is a vibrant environmental sector and seemingly large new inflows of money to work on climate questions, and a new willingness in Washington to take action, it is again the inside strategy that gets most of the resources. There are still significant needs to push from the outside to move policy in the right direction and pilot innovative programs that will turn the promise of a green economy into an economic reality.

George Soros's identification of the climate issue in early 2005 came at a perfect time. Momentum on the climate issue has picked up, as has the urgency of addressing it. But aggressive action on the timetable required is not assured. Climate's impact on the open society mission is becoming clearer and clearer, but the intersections of climate and open society concerns will not automatically get the attention they deserve. OSI's exploratory interventions on climate have made positive contributions. There is plenty more to do to build on our assets and investments and magnify their impact. George Soros and OSI are looked to for leadership, expertise, reach and resources. Now is the time to firm up OSI's commitment to the climate issue.

Attachments:

Draft work plan for 2009-2010

List of people consulted during the preparation of this memo

Bronwen Manby's memo "OSI Work on Climate Change Adaptation and Africa"

Draft Work Plan for 2009-2010

1. Certain items are ongoing: Work with Tom Heller to establish the Climate Policy Initiative; work with George Soros and the Alliance for Climate Protection to determine under what terms to continue the relationship; make and monitor grants to the Energy Action Coalition, Avaaz, the Asia Society, etc.
2. Monitor the development of U.S. climate policy and international discussions to watch for last minute opportunities to improve the chances of effective policies in the U.S. and successful outcomes in international negotiations.
3. Build in-house capacity to work on climate change. Create appropriate staffing, processes and structures to establish grant guidelines and grantmaking procedures, make and monitor grants in a more regular fashion, manage consultation and collaboration within the OSN; share information and contacts.
4. Form an advisory board and/or working group(s) that would include both key staff and trusted partners such as Tom Heller, George Polk, Orville Schell, etc.
5. Solidify and sharpen the focus of OSI efforts and increase the impact of existing and future efforts through consultation with OSI leadership, key staff in the OSN and partners. Identify goals, develop a detailed strategy with near-term priorities and longer term priorities, identify benchmarks for measuring success.
6. Continue exploratory conversations with OSN staff about the intersection of climate and public health, climate and migration, climate and women's issues, climate and security, climate and justice, etc.
7. Explore advocacy opportunities with OSI-Brussels, OSI's International Advocacy office and OSI-Washington.
8. Collaborate with OSI staff developing Africa climate strategy.
9. Explore and make best use of George Soros's leadership and convening power.
10. Launch plan to reduce the environmental impact of OSI operations.
11. Collaborate with and organize other donors to achieve maximum impact.

People who have been consulted in the course of preparing this memo:

OSN

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Colleagues

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Peter Barnes, Cap and Dividend
May Boeve, Jamie Henn, Phil Aroneanu, 350.org
Paige Brown, Climate and Energy Funders Group
Gillian Caldwell, 1 Sky
Anne Colley, advisor to Louis Bacon
Stephen Colwell, Sea Change Foundation and C Campaign
Danielle Deane, Hewlett Foundation
David Fenton, Fenton Communications
Maggie Fox, Alliance for Climate Protection
Roman Frydman, Project Syndicate
Marshall Ganz, Kennedy School of Government
Tom Heller, Keven Brough, Climate Policy Initiative
Van Jones, White House Council on Environmental Quality, formerly of Green for All
Jules Kortenhorst, European Climate Foundation
Irene Krarup, V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation
Denise Lee and Don Mohanlal, Khemka Foundation
Josh Lichtenstein, Bank Information Center
Bill McKibben, author and inspiration for 350.org
Nick Mabey, E3G

Alden Meyer, Union of Concerned Scientists and Global Campaign for Climate Action
Jennifer Morgan, E3G, Global Campaign for Climate Action
Billy Parish, Energy Action Coalition, Green for All
Manuel Pastor, USC
Ricken Patel, Avaaz
Bob Perkowitz, EcoAmerica
George Polk, European Climate Foundation
Beatrice Schell, Oak Foundation
Orville Schell and John Delury, Asia Society
Sandra Smithey, Mott Foundation
Betsy Taylor, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, 1Sky
Jessy Tolkan, Energy Action Coalition
Lee Wasserman and Larry Shapiro, Rockefeller Family Fund
Cathy Zoi, U.S. Department of Energy, formerly of the Alliance for Climate Protection

OSI work on Climate Change Adaptation and Africa in 2009

The phenomenon of climate change is certain to affect all areas of OSI's work in Africa, because it will have such a profound affect on the continent itself. Thus, even though OSI has traditionally had limited involvement in environmental issues, the network will need to become more engaged, even if grant making and operational work remain broadly speaking within the current parameters. This applies as much in Africa as elsewhere.

This note sketches out possible initial steps for the Soros Foundation Network in Africa to begin to address climate change during 2009.

1. Build in-house capacity to address climate change issues in the context of ongoing programs

Staff should be encouraged to attend training courses and workshops on climate change, so that they become familiar with the issues involved and their likely effect on their region. While program officers working in the area of economic justice may be the most obvious to send on such courses, all staff may find climate change relevant to their work.

Those staff who are acquiring this knowledge should present what they have learned to their colleagues, and initiate a discussion about how the issues may affect other programs in the foundation. Climate change should be mainstreamed into other work, rather than segregated as a stand alone 'environmental' issue. At the same time, there will be a need to consult a centralised 'focal point' of expertise within OSI, since bringing staff up to speed on the issues will undoubtedly take time.

2. Begin building a network: Identify and inform civil society partners

Both at foundation level and at continental level OSI should begin to identify those groups that are already active on climate change work and also to encourage existing grantees in OSI's traditional areas to become informed. This could therefore include, for example, supporting traditional partners to send their staff for training, joining other funders in supporting regional workshops etc at which OSI foundation staff themselves could also become better informed.

3. Support participation in the international climate change negotiations

The Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will expire in 2012, and negotiations are underway for its replacement, which is intended to be finalised at the 2009 meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009. This is probably the most important international conference in 50 years. Although there is little time for OSI to build up the knowledge and expertise to take proactive steps of capacity building before the Copenhagen meeting, OSI foundations should advertise their willingness to support credible proposals aimed at strengthening African input to these negotiations. This could include support for African governments, as well as regional bodies or civil society groups.

An application from the International Institute for the Environment and Development (IIED) to bring African academics to their pre-climate negotiation training sessions is under consideration.

4. Integrate climate change into existing thematic priorities

International economic justice

Those groups that OSI works with on the trade-aid-debt set of issues should be encouraged to take on board climate change within their portfolios. All the same issues arise, only perhaps more acutely. Climate change will damage those who have not contributed to the warming of the planet: there is

need for new thinking on the obligations of those who are responsible for the damage to assist the victims.

This is true not only at the level of principle, but also in the technical design of climate change architecture. For example, multiple funds are being set up to finance climate change adaptation projects in developing countries, duplicating all the problems with multiple project funds for development assistance in general. Experience from other negotiations should be brought into the climate change negotiations, so that the same mistakes are not made.

Climate change and the extractive industries

There is an obvious thematic link between work on climate change and OSI's existing work on the extractive industries, especially exploitation of oil resources. At a global level, it is clear that the world needs to reduce usage of these resources rather than step up their exploitation, though that cannot be the main message within the African continent, given international economic imbalances. OSI is already supporting groups in Nigeria that are opposing gas flaring, however, and similar support could be extended or integrated into other grant making on extractive industries.

Resource management - Budget transparency

It is proposed that large amounts of funding be made available to developing countries for adaptation. These funds have not yet materialised, but if anything like the projected sums are made available, there will be a need for close monitoring of how they are spent. This means that those groups that currently work on budget transparency, anti-corruption and similar issues will need to be informed about international adaptation finance, so that they can intelligently engage with the discussions about how it should be disbursed. If proper governance structures are not put in place – and perhaps even if they are – the money risks being mis-spent (or never arriving).

This applies equally to potential financial flows from carbon trading, or payments for emission reductions from avoided deforestation etc.

Publish What You Pay coalition members would clearly be natural partners in this work. International organisations such as Global Witness and Transparency International are also beginning to look at the issues.

Resource management – Governance of forestry, water, etc

A natural extension from the OSI network's work on resource management in the area of oil revenues would be support for groups working on property rights in relation to management of forest and water resources, especially river basins. The use of water from Africa's great rivers is likely to become more contested, and each of them has a 'river basin management authority' made up of representatives the states along the watercourse. There is very little civil society interaction with these bodies, especially from the civil society groups that are most interested in governance questions.

Southern Africa Resource Watch is already working on protecting the rights of traditional forest-users in the forests of the DRC, an important 'carbon sink', second only to the Amazon rainforest on a global scale. Forests are going to become an ever increasing source of revenue – even if the source switches to payments for keeping trees standing rather than payments for logs to leave the country. The rights of the traditional owners will still need protection.

It would make sense for OSI to begin to invest in civil society capacity to engage with these resource management issues, as well as to support for work on conflict resolution and strengthened governance structures in relation to land and water rights, especially in the context of competition between nomadic and settled communities.

Participation in national planning processes

OSI has traditionally supported think tanks that engage in policy work aimed at influencing national strategies on a range of issues. The international climate change framework requires countries to

prepare National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs); according to the guidelines established under the UNFCCC this is supposed to be a participatory process and involve representatives of potentially affected communities. OSI should support civil society participation in these plans – and help to create demand that they actually be drafted and implemented – including by those organisations that might not automatically be included. Climate change adaptation (and mitigation) should also be integrated into other national plans, such as PRSPs. It is important that adaptation be seen not only as a job for the science and environmental communities.

Migration

There is an obvious overlap between climate change and OSIWA's existing focus on migration in West Africa – as well as other work of the Network on migration elsewhere in the world. It has also been agreed that OSI's EU and AU advocacy officers should take on board migration as a focus of their work on the EU-AU partnership. Climate change concerns could be introduced into this work.

The EU is framing migration as a threat against which the barriers must be raised. Among our arguments against this position, we should include the need for the EU both to reduce its own carbon emissions and to make substantial contributions to climate change adaptation in Africa.

5. Collaboration with OSI network programs

Media

There is a critical need for greater public awareness of climate change. Good quality media coverage is central to achieving such knowledge. Africa foundations should collaborate with the Network Media Program to ensure that journalist training includes coverage of climate change issues – both in university training schools and ongoing training courses.

Youth

Young people have a particular moral authority in speaking out on the climate change question. The OSI Youth program is already looking to support African youth to engage on climate change questions, and the Africa foundations should think about how best to make use of this commitment. The US Program has also supported youth groups on university campuses etc to mobilise on climate change.

HESP / Scholarships Program support for African tertiary education institutions

This program is already under way. Although more groundwork is necessary before HESP/SP decide to partner with any particular institution in Africa, interim initiatives may include support for:

- Building networks of academics working on climate change both among those based in Africa and between African-based and internationally-based institutions
- Internships for young academics at leading African research institutions
- Curriculum development on climate change adaptation in Africa, including a course competition that would encourage cross-disciplinary approaches to content, critical inquiry-based learning, and creative teaching methods
- Support for African academic participation at international CC workshops and conferences, with a system in place to help ensure that the participants make use of the information obtained at home.
- Collaboration with the African Climate Change Fellowship Program, administered by the global change System for Analysis Research and Training (START), the Institute of Resource Assessment at the University of Dar es Salaam, and the African Academy of Sciences and funded by the IDRC (Canada) and DFID (UK).

HESP-SP-Media-Youth

There could be very useful synergies among these programs: it may be possible to (a) support the creation of an interdisciplinary climate change policy centre at a particular African university, which also (b) has a journalism training school that is open to collaboration on climate change questions, and

(c) has active an student body that could be helped to network with other youth groups working on climate change around the world.

Information

Access to low carbon technology will be critical to enable developing countries to follow a low-carbon development track. The Information Program has already made some grants in the area of open access to patented technology in the field of climate change / low carbon technology.

Fellowships

The OSI Fellowships Program seeks to 'enable innovative professionals — including journalists, activists, scholars, and practitioners — to work on projects that inspire meaningful public debate, shape public policy, and generate intellectual ferment within OSI.' Although climate change is not on its list of focus areas, the Fellowships Program is already actively considering several applications looking at climate change at global or national level. SFN members in Africa could suggest that individuals they think could help them think through their own priorities on climate issues apply to this program with proposals for research that mesh with their own work.

6. A new focus on sustainable development?

Even though most African countries are well below the levels at which carbon consumption needs to be cut, elites have a lifestyle that is as high-carbon as any – and this is the aspirational model. Yet access to energy (to support either this lifestyle or even much less carbon intensive lifestyles) is going to become a problem for African countries as for European or North American countries. Energy security is far from a reality for African citizens (and businesses), even in those African countries that are oil producers.

OSI Africa foundations should begin to think through the integration of questions relating to access to sustainable energy sources as they also think about the effect of climate change on their programming. OSI should aim to establish sustainable development as a working concept across Africa: a model of development needs to adapt to new climate change realities of mitigation and adaptation, aimed at ensuring access to sustainable energy and other resources for all citizens.

7. Integration with OSI work on climate change in the US and globally

SFN work on climate change in Africa should be twinned with OSI work on climate change in the US and globally: so many of the problems are caused elsewhere that a focus on adaptation could not be credible without a paired focus on mitigation.

8. Begin thinking about how to integrate mitigation into grant-making

Promote the use of information technology more effectively in Africa, to increase the possibilities of networking without the need for air travel. This may include including video-conferencing facilities and training in grants; encouraging use of teleconferencing rather than meetings where possible etc.