

President's Message

A Global Alliance for Open Society

In 2000, the Open Society Institute and the Soros foundations network continued to take significant steps toward promoting open society at a truly global level—a direction we have been evolving in since the beginning. In the latter part of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, we developed as a network of foundations in the countries of the former Soviet empire. Although that network remains the focus of the largest part of our activities and expenditures, we have over several years expanded our geographical horizons to other parts of the world. Starting in 1993, we established foundations in South Africa, Southern Africa, Haiti, and Guatemala and, in 1996, launched a broad array of programs in the United States. In addition, we created the Burma Project to try to open one of the most closed countries on earth. Now, we are looking further. As a consequence,





it is becoming possible to describe our enterprise as an incipient effort to establish a global alliance for open society. As it proceeds, that effort will not follow the form the network took in the former Soviet bloc countries. The number of national or country foundations will not proliferate. We envision the disparate parts of this alliance united primarily by shared principles and goals.

We established one new regional foundation, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), during the past year. With offices in Abuja, Nigeria, and Dakar, Senegal, OSIWA is committed to supporting independent media, the rule of law, human rights, the promotion of free and fair elections, Internet communications, efforts to combat corruption and promote good governance, and local assessment of economic development strategies. OSIWA's territory covers 18 countries in West Africa. In combination with the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and the Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSF-SA) and a funding initiative for Burundi and Rwanda, the Soros foundations network is now active in more than half the countries of Africa.

The Soros foundations network also agreed in 2000 to provide support to a new independent foundation, Tifa, in Indonesia. Tifa's independence reflects sensitivity over the Soros name in Southeast Asia—due, in large part, to the fanciful but nevertheless effective efforts by Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia to demonize George Soros as the instigator of the 1997 financial collapse (supposedly to punish ASEAN countries for their embrace of the military junta in Burma). Its independence enhances Tifa's chances of obtaining support from other donors.

Tifa's representatives have established contacts with the Soros foundations network. Its activities in support of independent media, legal reform, women's rights, and the development of civil society are in keeping with the network's mission. OSI support for Tifa, however, is limited to programs approved annually for grants, and Tifa is not the exclusive vehicle for OSI funding in

Indonesia. Some OSI programs in Indonesia are conducted separately.

Another way we expect to develop the alliance is through support for nongovernmental organizations in various countries that are promoting the effective operation of a new intergovernmental body, the Community of Democracies (CD). The CD was launched at a June 2000 gathering in Warsaw of foreign ministers and other top officials from more than 100 countries. Poland and the United States initiated the effort, which is directed by a steering group that now also includes Chile, the Czech Republic, India, Korea, Mali, Portugal, and South Africa. The governments represented at Warsaw adopted a declaration of commitment to the building of democratic societies, which are defined to include multiparty elections, free media, and respect for minority rights.

OSI will not support the intergovernmental structures of the Community of Democracies. Rather, we expect to support nongovernmental groups that foster the CD's development as a mechanism for the promotion of democracy. In some cases, these will be established nongovernmental groups. Elsewhere, new groups will be formed.

The redistribution of resources involved in the evolution of OSI and the Soros foundations network is relatively modest. We anticipate that our global expenditures over the next several years will remain at their current level: between \$450 million and \$500 million per year. Of this amount, we expect that roughly 60 percent will be expended on programs focusing on the former Soviet bloc countries; roughly 20 percent on United States programs; and the remaining 20 percent on the rest of the world. Currently, the expenditures in the third category are somewhat short of 20 percent, but we expect that share to rise gradually.

This calculation includes our support to a number of organizations that operate globally. These include the Media Development Loan Fund, Internews, the International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, several other human rights organizations, Penal Reform

International, Transparency International, the International Women's Health Coalition, the Vera Institute of Justice, and Global Witness. These organizations address issues of critical importance to our goal of promoting open societies. They draw their support from multiple sources and are likely to sustain themselves for the long term, after OSI funding runs out.

In the region where the foundations network began, increasing emphasis is being placed on programs that serve the least advantaged. Programs focused on the Roma, the largest and most-abused minority in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, are an important concern for the foundations in that region. OSI Roma Programs include the community organizing efforts of the Roma Participation Program and support for Romani media, Romani women's programs, and cultural initiatives. OSI's human rights grantmaking in the CEE region includes support for the European Roma Rights Center and for several local groups promoting Romani rights. A number of our education programs are designed to reach Romani children and youth, and we are exploring the establishment of a public health program focused on Romani communities.

Other programs for disadvantaged sectors include efforts to protect the rights of the mentally disabled; the International Harm Reduction Development program, which focuses on efforts to protect drug users in the region from HIV/AIDS and others from the

explosive spread of the infection, which is currently centered in the drug-using population; the work of the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute on issues involving prisoners; our continuing efforts to deal with the prison-centered tuberculosis epidemic and multi-drug resistant tuberculosis in the former Soviet Union; the programs of the Network Women's Program dealing with such issues as violence against women; our program on child abuse; and a palliative care program focused on improved care for the dying.

The network's increasing emphasis on programs that address the needs of vulnerable populations is accompanied by an effort to see that these groups also obtain support from other sources. We operate with the knowledge that in 1997 George Soros informed everyone in the network that he plans to support the network only until 2010. Accordingly, 2001 marks the start of the network's final decade. With the end of the network in sight, if not close at hand, the importance of ensuring the sustainability of certain programs is acquiring heightened urgency. Our hope is that, by the decade's close, both the global alliance for open society and essential programs of the foundations network will be able to continue without Soros support. An important criterion for measuring our success will be the extent to which that goal is reached.

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