Hewlett Foundation Letter of Inquiry

This Letter of Inquiry from the Association for the Tree of Life (ATL) is submitted to the Environmental Program at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation after consultation with the Environmental Program on June 6, 2018.

The purpose of this Letter of Inquiry is to request Funding for consequent action from the Climate and Energy Program ($128 million currently awarded).

Specifically, we are responding because of Hewlett Foundation's stated fundamental logic guiding their grantmaking.

To wit, on Hewlett's Climate and Energy page June 6, 2018:

1. **"We should focus our charitable dollars on mitigating climate change. The window for effective mitigation is rapidly closing, and the more society can reduce future warming, the less it will need to adapt."**

5. **"The dramatic emissions reductions we need will not be possible unless we shift our thinking. We must get beyond our present focus on near-term, incremental efforts that reduce emissions today, and identify the longer-term, scaled-up, step-changes needed to mitigate the climate problem. To do that, we looked farther into the future—to 2050, rather than 2025 or 2030, and asked: What will energy and economic systems need to look like in 2050 to achieve the well below 2°C goal? And how can philanthropy support this transition?**

In Hewlett's Climate and Energy Program, the overview in part states: **"To safeguard human health and the environment, the Hewlett Foundation supports work to ensure that energy sources are clean and efficient, and that global average temperature rise is kept well below 2° Celsius."**

Please note that in our LOI, we highlight the above for consequent reasons.

Next, we include in our LOI considerations of Hewlett's *Climate Initiative Strategy 2018-2023.*

Specifically, we refer to the first paragraph of the third page wherein the Climate Strategy discusses time horizons related to the climate problem and states, "**to keep the rise in global temperatures "well below" 2◦C as called for by the Paris Agreement, we must cut global GHG emissions by 60% or more by 2050—something that cannot realistically happen without cutting emissions in developed countries by more than 80 percent over the same time period."**

Again, the above are highlighted for consequent reasons.

Discussion and Consequent Reasons for a Funding Request

In the discussion that follows, the substantiation for our LOI relies on the plain analysis, based on Hewlett quoted statements, that Hewlett's Strategy, and therefore its tactics followed are critically and tragically flawed. In essence, the Hewlett Foundation bases their current five-year Strategy and fundamental flaws.

Hewlett is using the wrong assumptions and following the wrong timeline. The world has both: (1) far less time to mitigate, and (2) requirements to mitigate much more substantially than Hewlett assumes.

To make a concise LOI, our analysis will rely on parts of three documents in the public domain: (1) the *UN Emissions Gap Report 2017* (the short Executive Summary is crucial here), (2) ATL's publication *Delusions and Contradictions*, and (3) its five-page summary article "*We Are All in the Clutches of the Delusion Dragon*," which links to ATL's four-minute film explaining the centrality of philanthropy addressing climate change as an utmost priority.

While a library could support our simple and current numerical arithmetical analysis, because it is based on facts and numbers, we rely in this LOI on these three sources alone before submission of a more extended request.

Tragic Flaws of the Hewlett Strategy Illuminated

A simple review of the *2017 UN Emissions Gap Report* delineates the following:

A. Executive Summary, page xiv: "…it is clear that if the emissions gap is not closed by 2030, it is extremely unlikely that the goal of holding global warming to well below 2°C can still be reached. Even if the current NDCs are fully implemented,[1] the carbon budget for limiting global warming to below 2°C will be about 80 percent depleted by 2030." Moreover, current carbon budget estimates explain that much more ambitious NDCs will be necessary by 2020.

B. Not only does the UN data indicate that reductions of 80% overall will need to be made by 2030, not by 2050, but also this necessary mitigation "assumes" successful deployment of a massive amount of carbon capture and storage. This is measured in "hundreds of billions of tons" of unproven Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs), explained by our second source, *Delusions and Contradictions* on pages 10-19.

   Quoting from page 17, "it would be necessary to capture and bury more than 3 million 'elephants of CO2' each and every year from 2030 to 2100—about ten times the weight of all elephants alive today."[2] This assumption, built into the UN Paris models is delusional; this particular delusion is what ATL calls the "Tinkerbell-Effect."[3]

[1] Page xvi points out that a number of the G20 nations, including the US and Canada, are falling far short of their current NDCs.
[2] The total is 1000 gigatons, that is, over 31 billion tons of carbon dioxide captured and sequestered per year from 2030 to 2100 and continuing well into the 22nd century.
[3] Any number of top-level climate scientists would be happy to present this information on the quantity of Negative Emissions Technologies needed and the inherent challenges involved to the Hewlett Program Staff or Board of Directors, including the ones referenced in the Tinkerbell-Effect.

C. Pages xxii-xxiii discusses NETs—principally bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), and the assessment is that such engineered CO2 removal options will have no effect through 2030, yet they are built into the models as working at that very point. The report concludes ominously, because of numerous complex uncertainties, "Mitigation action in other sectors should therefore not be delayed."

D. Page xv explains and reiterates that nations will need to significantly enhance their NDCs and do it before 2020. Otherwise, "Missing the 2020 option of ***revising*** NDCs would make closing the emissions gap practically impossible.

E. Page xvii and its Gap chart shows that the current "gap" for 2030 is about 2 tonnes, or 4,500 pounds for each human alive today.[4]

   The point is again, we need faster and more substantial emissions reductions to meet 2◦C than Hewlett is Strategizing. Far more, and that does not account for the uncertainty of NETs.

F. On page xiv, the UN explains there is little or no evidence that the approach the US is taking, the focus on non-state actors and regional/local governments will fill any significant part of the huge extant emissions gap.

G. Page xxi explains that today there are an estimated 6,683 operating coal fired power plants, and with existing policies, coal fired power plants will continue to increase (even with the US "shut down coal" campaigns). There are over 700 GW being built or planned.

The entire Executive Summary of the UN Emissions Gap Report shows how absent mitigation is (how many people ***know*** we continue to increase emissions?), and how far and fast we must reduce if we are to hold to 2◦C. Plus, even this far and fast reduction requires massive NETs.

Hewlett's Crippled Strategic Imperatives

A final area illustrating how the Hewlett Foundation has seriously misconstrued the fundamental nature of the climate crisis is in its "Five Strategic Imperatives" (*Climate Initiative Strategy 2018-2023*, page 3).

The first imperative states, "We must continue to support current efforts to peak global use of fossil fuels as early as possible, including defending recent successes in the face of highly organized political opposition."

Comment: This imperative is misleading for several reasons. First, there is no peaking of fossil fuels; they continue to rise. Far beyond peaking, we must be dramatically reducing fossil fuel use at this point. Second, "recent successes" are only holding actions, not net overall decreases. Third, defending national "successes" is not the same as making the necessary large international mitigation efforts now required. Therefore, a Strategy of accomplishing actual emissions reductions, rather than of holding actions is needed. Fourth, pointing to what could be done, should be done, or might possibly be done sometime in the future is no substitute for actual reduction actions, none of which are detailed. This glaring omission is inexplicable. Fifth,

[4] Specifically, the current gap between nations' pledges versus reductions needed by 2030 to meet the 2°C heat ceiling is 13.5 gigatons of CO2e.

Hewlett's Strategy of gradually "building political will," is far too slow and far too weak to mitigate to the extent called for to prevent catastrophic warming.

Then consider the Fourth imperative: "…nearly a third of global emissions reductions must come from managing our lands, our agriculture, and our forests."

Comment: First, Hewlett does not state that the current management of world land is **adding** prodigiously to GHG increases. Second, the massive amount of mitigation required by this imperative in Hewlett's Strategy means dramatic and comprehensive change across the world in how lands are used, not just a "stoppage" of bad practice. Nowhere is this explained or acknowledged. Nor are the complex and comprehensive changes across land use everywhere acknowledged or expressed, much less showing how such a complete change is actually accomplished, even in one nation or one major ecosystem.

To begin to accomplish this imperative, there is not enough money or collective will to be had anywhere, much less everywhere. Finally, if BECCS are configured into this imperative, this idea is exposed as an unworkable technology repeatedly in all of our included documents.

In this section, we have explained key aspects of how Hewlett misconstrues the scope, the scale, and the urgency of the crisis in its Strategy and the Tactics it is currently employing.

Summary

ATL's document *Delusions and Contractions* and the *2017 UN Emissions Gap* Executive Summary paint a different picture related to our worldwide climate crisis than is explained or expressed by the Hewlett Foundation. We suggest that Hewlett is simply operating, in its Strategy and Tactics from the wrong timeframes and incorrect mitigation requirements. Particularly in the short term.

Thus, the gradual and grassroots nature of Hewlett's "building political will." This would be unfortunate if it were not so tragic. A funding request from ATL would focus much more clearly and effectively on the emergent nature of the crisis, and its scope, scale, and urgency. **The required response is not so much building political will with local and non-state focus, but instead providing warnings and a clear "alarm" to the US public, particularly the vast majority who know we have a climate problem, but do not understand how fast and comprehensively change needs to occur.**

In other words, ATL explains clearly in its cited and linked e-book, *Delusions and Contradictions*, both the more emergent nature of the climate crisis and the required warnings and alarm that philanthropy must sound if humanity is to make it through the bottleneck we have constructed, particularly in the world's developed nations. Most poignantly in our over-consuming USA.

Delusions and Contradictions could be explained as a large part of what a grant request would look like, beyond the cursory explanation of how and why the present Strategy Hewlett has adopted and is currently operating under is insufficient to meet the scope, scale, or urgency of the interconnected climate and ecological crises.

This LOI is absolutely consonant with Hewlett's stated Mission and Goals that are in its Climate and Energy Program. We explain that Hewlett's current Strategy, and accompanying Tactics are dissonant with their own Mission and Goals.

A grant request could explain how to remedy many of the contradictions within that dissonance, and to dissipate many of the delusions that accompany the approach. Our analysis and constructive criticism is based on facts and numbers, transparent if Hewlett follows their delineation.

The beginning one-year grant would be approximately $5 Million, and that ensuing program habilitation that would follow in subsequent years would dramatically expand and include other philanthropies. Hewlett's lead will be followed, as its current operating Strategy is being followed across other philanthropies.

Thus, the tragic nature of the current Hewlett Strategy. Tragic now, and more fatally tragic in years to come, perhaps comprehensively so. However, this LOI does recognize that the Hewlett Foundation is absolutely essential for any Strategic approach that would effectively address the climate crisis.

Thus we allude to here, and can detail in a more formal grant request how that Strategy can be habilitated and dramatically changed, in order to meet the full scope, scale, and urgency we all now face.