PROPOSAL FOR GENERAL SUPPORT TO THE [ FUND ]

I. INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 1948, [ country ] has achieved spectacular successes and brought to life the dreams of millions of people around the world. It was founded on the values of freedom, justice, equality, and peace as envisaged by the people of [ country ]. However, it has struggled to maintain those values through decades of military tension and immigrant absorption, and today continues to face unique challenges in balancing the needs of its diverse religious, ethnic, and political groups.

In this setting, The [ Fund ] works to strengthen democracy and promote social justice in [ Country ]. The Fund, a unique working and philanthropic partnership of North Americans, [ Country ] is, and Europeans, is today [ Country ]’s foremost social-change institution, providing hundreds of [ Country ]’s non-profit organizations with financial and technical support each year. Since its founding in 1979, [ FUND ] has granted over $120 million to more than 700 [ Country ]’s non-profit organizations who work in three areas:

- Fighting for civil and human rights;
- Narrowing the social and economic gaps in [ Country ] society; and
- Promoting tolerance and pluralism.

In tandem with its grantmaking, the Fund implements projects of its own, conducts public education on issues related to [ Country ]’s democracy, and sponsors leadership development programs for young [ Country ]’s professionals in civil rights law. [ FUND ]’s aim is to help build institutions able to stand on their own, while continually investing in new organizations and taking on new challenges.

In 1982 the Fund established [ DEPARTMENT ], the [ Fund ]’s Training and Capacity-Building Center for Social Change Organizations. [ DEPARTMENT ] provides [ FUND ] grantees and other social change organizations with hands-on assistance, training, written materials, and workshops in the basics of non-profit management. Over the past two decades, [ DEPARTMENT ] has grown from one staff member serving twenty organizations to nearly 60 ethnically diverse staff members and consultants, working with more than 750 non-profit organizations each year through offices in various cities. [ DEPARTMENT ] also brings organizations together in large coalitions to accomplish what no single group could achieve on its own, and carries out special projects to foster citizen action on issues and among populations neglected by other institutions. Through [ DEPARTMENT ], [ FUND ] maintains a strong presence in the [ Country ]’s civil sector, responsive to changing needs, under-served communities, and the constant flux of political, social and economic forces.
II. [COUNTRY] IN CONTEXT

This is one of the most difficult times in [Country]'s history. The war of attrition between [Country] and the Palestinians is inflicting terrible costs on both sides. In addition to lives lost and families shattered, the continuing violence is taking a deep toll on [Country]'s society and democracy. To meet increased defense needs, the government continues to slash spending on health, education and social services. Today, over 1.3 million people (about one in six) live below the poverty line. Not surprisingly, the number of hungry people from all population groups is also on the rise. Some 400,000 families suffer from what researchers call “nutritional insecurity” caused by economic distress, and, of that number, 60 percent are veteran local families, 20 percent are foreign families, and 20 percent are new immigrant families.

With the government retrenching and the political opposition in shambles, efforts to confront these disheartening realities are being led by dozens of dynamic, resourceful organizations that the [Fund] has seeded and nurtured over the years. These [FUND] grantees, plus hundreds more groups that receive [DEPARTMENT] support, strengthen [Country]'s democracy by helping to shape government policies and enabling weaker segments of the population to make their voices heard. The NGO or “civil society” sector has, in effect, become an important part of the system of checks and balances within [Country]'s democracy, and [FUND] has been the engine that helped catalyze this sector’s development and growth.

[FUND] believes that it is essential to invest, through grants and consulting services, in the [Country]'s organizations safeguarding civil and human rights, promoting social and economic justice, and fostering tolerance and religious pluralism in order to help [Country]'s build a more just, tolerant and democratic society. In the coming year, [FUND] will aggressively seek targeted opportunities to advance its agenda. In concert with allies in government, business, and the non-profit sector, we will work with local activists and leaders in neighborhoods and development towns throughout [Country] to protect the basic rights of all citizens and promote a culture of tolerance and non-discrimination.

III. ACTIVITIES IN THE [FUND]'S CORE FUNDING AREAS

1. Safeguarding Civil and Human Rights: [Country] was founded as a democracy committed to universal values of individual liberty and the rule of law. [FUND] works to ensure full equality of rights for all of [Country]'s citizens and complete protection of human rights for all non-citizens under [Country]'s jurisdiction. This includes the broad enforcement of laws, policies and procedures to promote equality and justice, and efforts to increase the cultural value of democracy and human rights. In 2004, the Fund will continue to provide grants and consulting services designed to:

- Encourage the establishment of organizations that use legal strategies to advance the rights of women, new immigrants, other citizens of [Country], and other vulnerable populations;
• Safeguard the rights of disadvantaged populations in various areas of the legal system, including expanding legal representation for these groups through pro-bono legal services;
• Generate strong public pressure for the enforcement of existing laws in areas such as the environment, freedom of information, housing, compulsory education, and employment;
• Expand [FUND]’s Education for Democracy Project to more schools by winning changes in official policy regarding the teaching of democratic ideals and civics as part of the school curricula; and
• Monitor [Country]’s compliance with international charters to which it is a signatory, and create an apparatus for promoting adherence to these principles.

Civil Liberties Law Program: In 2004, two new Fellows will enter [FUND]’s prestigious [Country]-U.S. Civil Liberties Law Program. Cosponsored with the Washington College of Law of the American University in Washington, DC, the Civil Liberties Law Program offers two years of academic and professional experience to [Country]’s lawyers specializing in civil rights advocacy.

The program’s hallmark is the intensive exposure it provides to both the theory and practice of civil rights law. Participating attorneys spend one year in the United States, obtaining a Master's in Civil Rights Law and pursuing internships with American public interest groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Children's Defense Fund. Fellows spend their second year working full-time with [Country]’s public interest organizations, on a stipend from [FUND].

Since 1984, the program’s 43 alumni have created new bases for legal advocacy, both within existing organizations and as completely new organizations; transformed legal training by establishing law clinics in each of the country’s five law schools; and won an impressive number of precedent-setting rulings including decisions to:

• Outlaw the use of torture in interrogations;
• End the practice of discriminating against Arabs in the allocation of state lands;
• Establish equal rights for people with disabilities under the law; and
• Win passage of a Freedom of Information Act for [Country].

2. Bridging Social and Economic Gaps: [FUND] is committed to ensuring that all citizens of [Country] have equal access to essential social rights, including education, healthcare, housing, employment, and assurance of a basic standard of living. Our work in this area has taken on new urgency due to the rapidly growing gap between rich and poor, which is now among the widest in the western world. One in six adults and one in four children now live below the poverty line, while an economy now in negative growth fuels a continuing rise in unemployment. Deep budget cuts for social services and government support payments have also dramatically weakened [Country]’s longstanding social safety net. [FUND] works not only to narrow these gaps, but also to foster a tradition of citizen action so that disadvantaged people can help themselves.
In 2004, [ FUND ] will work to:

- Train social change organizations to influence the allocation of government resources;
- Strengthen community-based initiatives that address poverty, unemployment, and the decaying physical and economic infrastructure in poor communities;
- Develop the leadership qualities and skills of various minority groups, including Bedouin and Ethiopian women, single-parent heads of households, and Russian immigrants; and
- Run media campaigns, issue statements, publish articles, and sponsor conferences to raise public awareness of the plight of specific population groups.

3. **Religion and Society:** Religion permeates every aspect of [ Country ]’s society, from national identity and governance, to politics and economics. In a society in which the majority considers itself secular or traditional, the religious element still retains ultimate power over key questions of everyday life. Particularly at a time when [ Country ]’s are experiencing mounting frustration and despair, diverse religious and spiritual options should be available to all those seeking support. [ FUND ] works to achieve state recognition of and equal allocation of resources for diverse expressions of their identity. In 2004, through financial and consulting support to pluralism organizations and coalitions, we will intensify our efforts to:

- Expand public knowledge and use of alternative services for life-cycle rituals and ceremonies (marriage, circumcision, burial);
- Strengthen liberal elements within [ country ] to attain greater equality for women;
- Support [ Country ]’s seeking to change the legal structure that limits religious freedom;
- Ensure participation of Russian and Ethiopian immigrants in spiritual life; and
- Press for implementation of pluralistic curricula that incorporate a diversity of approaches to religion and culture.

IV. **The Impact of Your Support**

By partnering with the [ Fund ], you are supporting [ Country ]’s pre-eminent social change institution. Since 1979, [ FUND ] has provided $110 million to more than 700 [ Country ]’s non-profit organizations. Our accomplishments include:

- Establishing important safeguards to protect the civil rights of all [ Country ]’s, and working effectively to eradicate many discriminatory laws, regulations, and practices;
- Providing access to the justice system for people who lack the economic, legal, or political resources to seek vindication on their own;
- Placing critical social and economic issues on the public agenda, including violence against women, child abuse, the treatment of the disabled, human rights violations against all citizens, environmental justice, gay rights, and the explosive potential of neglected populations in the rural areas. By drawing attention to “unpopular” issues, we have also expanded the agendas of other philanthropies and agencies; and
- Nurturing individual organizations from “seedlings” into effective, influential, and self-sustaining advocates for progressive social change.

Against the background of [Country]’s deteriorating security and economic situation, [FUND] is committed to improving the status and quality of life for [Country]’s most disadvantaged populations through financial and technical assistance to social change organizations. Cultivating effective leaders and organizations has never been more urgent as security demands and domestic social problems vie for increasingly scarce government resources, strain the ability of NGOs to respond, and put the strength of [Country]’s democracy to the test. In the year ahead, [FUND] will add to our record of achievements and remain at the forefront of civil sector change so that a future age of peace will also be an age of social justice.