

OPEN SOCIETY
JUSTICE INITIATIVE



24 August 2010

Ms. Mariama Saidou-Djermakoye
Senior Planning Officer, UNESCO
UNESCO Headquarters
7 Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP
France

Cc: Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General

Dear Ms. Saidou-Djermakoye:

We write you in your capacity as a member of the Working Group on Prizes that Director-General Irina Bokova established to recommend «amending criteria» for UNESCO prizes and future activities. We wish to inquire about the scope and status of the Group's work, and also to forward to you and your fellow members information we believe may be relevant in your considerations.

In June 2010, the Open Society Justice Initiative, EG Justice, Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos and Association Sherpa, four non-governmental organizations based in the United States, Spain and France, filed the attached complaint and request for investigation with UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service. The document and its annexes detail serious factual grounds for concern regarding the source of funding of the UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences. The complaint also explains why, even if not bound by national law, it is appropriate for an institution like UNESCO to conform its conduct to internationally accepted anti-money laundering best practices to ensure that receipt of large donations from heads of state and other politically exposed persons, or entities in which they may be interested, does not unwittingly entangle it in undue legal, political or reputational risk.

The controversy provoked by the UNESCO-Obiang Prize should serve as a clear lesson for UNESCO as to the myriad risks the organization faces when ignoring the hard realities and potential perils that financial institutions and other similarly situated commercial actors have been obliged to address. This is now the right opportunity for UNESCO to develop internal processes to mitigate against such dangers.

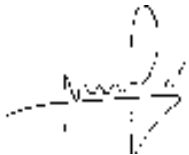
The attached document details several recent or ongoing criminal and regulatory investigations related to suspected money-laundering and other acts of corruption by the Prize donor or persons closely affiliated with the donor. It also explains how certain of the 40 Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force/Groupe d'action financière (FATF/GAFI) should be used to inform improvements to UNESCO's internal due diligence policies and practices regarding acceptance of prize donations.

Please let us know of your availability to meet to discuss your work and the other matters mentioned above. Erica Razook, of the Open Society Justice Initiative, and Maud Perdriel-Vaissiere, of Association Sherpa, will be in Paris 6-7 September and are available to meet with you, at your convenience. You may reach Ms. Razook at erazook@justiceinitiative.org and Ms. Perdriel-Vaissiere at maud.perdriel-vaissiere@asso-sherpa.org.

Sincerely yours,



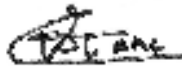
James A. Goldston
Executive Director, Open Society Justice Initiative



Manuel Ollé Sesé
Presidente, Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos



William Bourdon
Président, Association Sherpa



Tutu Alicante
Executive Director, EG Justice

Cc: Irina Bokova