



The Climate Action Pledge

New York City Launch Event Communiqué

The Climate Action Pledge (CAP) - an initiative to double climate philanthropy in the course of a year - was launched on 18 September in New York City during Climate Week. The launch event convened approximately 50 climate experts, philanthropists, and investors who agreed on the need to fundamentally change the conversation about global warming, as well as the need to mobilize all donors to become climate activists.

Global warming impacts all of us. It needs to be addressed by all of us, and by every means necessary. The CAP, therefore, is concerned not just with activating the full range of philanthropy, but reaching out to and engaging with the wider public as well. There are two key strategies the CAP is pursuing in this regard. The first entails mobilizing the philanthropic sector to help shape the broader public and political discourse about global warming. The second involves direct outreach in the form of education and the production of media resources.

The CAP recognizes the path-breaking work to address global warming currently being undertaken by a number of foundations. Unfortunately, it is not enough. There are existing solutions ready to be brought to scale, and new solutions waiting to be discovered. Levers for change exist in the policy arena, in technological advancements, in changing consumer behavior, and in the form of diverse investment vehicles. We need institutions and individuals from across the philanthropic spectrum to take an active role in catalyzing, supporting, and expanding solutions to global warming. This is truly an 'all of us' effort in which philanthropy can be the game-changer.

The CAP launch event in New York City was an opportunity to gather a range of climate experts for a new conversation, one that promotes a positive vision of our common future, that is grounded in practical solutions to global warming, and informed by thoughtful consideration of the ways in which we might fruitfully rethink what it means to live, to live well, and to live within planetary boundaries.

What follows is a brief summary of the event:

Following brief opening remarks by the organizers, the program¹, began with a conversation between **Laurence Tubiana** and **Andy Revkin** about the COP process and the role philanthropy could play by engaging in the international processes that are addressing climate change. Philanthropy has been largely absent from these global approaches. Governments are leading the COP process and corporations and civil society organizations have taken active roles, whether by partnering with or lobbying governments, or by making their own commitments in support of the goals agreed at COP 21 (Paris 2015). Tubiana, who has worked on the government side and now leads the European Climate Foundation, noted that philanthropy has been more remarkable for its absence than its presence when it comes to the COP. She nonetheless believes philanthropy has a crucial role to play - in providing the political space for climate actors to operate, in enabling citizen engagement, and in leveraging finance both directly and indirectly. Philanthropy should also be a proactive voice in raising critical questions about government and societal priorities. She called for the sector to move beyond niche activities and to create a cohesive movement.

The conversation moved then to **Paul Hawken** and his *Drawdown* solutions. Hawken's approach is notable for its pragmatic optimism. He emphasized that when he began he was simply seeking practical actions that could be taken to help mitigate global warming. What he discovered, however, was that we already know enough to be able to reverse global warming and to achieve the point of drawdown or de-carbonization. And the solutions, including the ten that are projected to have the greatest return on investment in terms of carbon impact, go far beyond energy and transportation to include food and food waste, education of girls, and family planning among others. This underscores the fact that there are a broad range of investment opportunities for philanthropists who might not previously have self-identified as climate activists.

Later in the afternoon **Ivan Tse** engaged **Fred Boltz**, **Joanna Messing**, and **Laurence Tubiana** in a discussion about climate grant-making. The conversation highlighted the need for a new narrative, one that does not seek to instill fear or simplify the challenges we face, but that provides a vision, is pragmatic about choices, and provides 'signals' that help us adopt much needed behavior changes. The panel agreed that while there have been bold steps taken by some foundations, we urgently need to align around shared

¹ *A copy of the final agenda, including all speaker titles, is attached.



objectives vis-à-vis global warming if we are to build a movement. Philanthropy has the unique ability to provide risk capital that can be used to help fill key gaps in the 'climate community' (i.e., scientific research and innovation) and that can be used to leverage other capital sources. The sector needs to foster a more comprehensive and cohesive funding ecosystem and a more deliberate and coherent approach to systemic challenges.

Following on the point about the funding ecosystem, **Mindy Lubber** was interviewed by **Jens Nielsen** regarding mainstream market vehicles to combat climate change. She challenged foundations and funders to think beyond their grant-making capital and focus on their endowments and investment capital - strategically applying those funds, which often represent up to 95% of the foundation's resources. Leveraging the over US\$1 trillion in foundation endowments would not only make a bold statement, it could also help to transform systems.

A panel that included **David Fenton**, **Miranda Massie**, **Michael Mathres**, and **Torben Wind** shifted the conversation to public engagement, communications, and education. Fenton noted the necessity for simple and repetitive messaging and he urged philanthropists to invest in public messages to raise awareness and build demand for new policies and other approaches to address global warming. Both Wind and Massie are involved in artistic efforts to engage the public in thinking about climate change and what all of us ordinary citizens can do to combat it. They echoed Fenton's call for simple, repetitive messaging, and noted further the deep desire and need for emotional, physical, and social learning that comes with creative exploration. They agreed that changing the public understanding and engagement would begin to change the broader ecosystem in which policy and business decisions are made. Given that projections are that agriculture will be responsible for 75% of emissions by 2050, Mathres spoke more specifically about food and agriculture and the urgent need to transform the food system and move toward climate smart agriculture. Food touches all of us – it is central to the climate change conversation and it demands public engagement.

In the day's final panel, **Nancy Smith** spoke with **Terry Tamminen**, **Shawn Reifsteck**, and **Gregory Lopez** about how to move beyond incremental change to achieve transformation. Echoing the earlier conversation about climate grant-making, all agreed that the philanthropic sector must engage in strategic agenda-setting and in building coalitions and alliances. Tamminen also recalled previous comments about harnessing markets and pointed to efforts underway to design new investment vehicles to bring more investors into the climate space. Reifsteck urged philanthropists to consider other forms of 'capital' at their disposal as well, namely in the form of ideas, influence, and networks that can all be more effectively and strategically leveraged. Lopez agreed, noting the power of individual voices and the need for the philanthropic community to be ready to act when the public gets energized.

The afternoon closed with a brief preview of the Climate Action Platform by **Brad Smith** and an invitation from Ivan Tse to those present to stay involved with the Climate Action Pledge.