

MSS/UK/ 12825
December 12, 1994

Ms. Mary E. King
Global Action Inc.
2119 Leroy Place, Northwest
Washington DC 20008-1848
U.S.A.

Dear Mary,

I am very grateful to you for the letter you have so generously written to Dr. Federico Mayor recommending the establishment of a Chair for Ecotechnology at our Centre. I thank you for this kindness.

Gary Jacobs will be shortly going to Amman to finalise with Queen Noor the details of the Jordan meeting. There can be no meeting in Jordan without you. I shall therefore request Gary to keep you informed and ensure that the dates chosen suit your convenience. I hope before long we will have the privilege of having you and Peter again in Madras at our Centre.

With warm personal regards

Yours sincerely



M.S. Swaminathan

Back to me



GLOBAL ACTION, INC.

November 28, 1994

Dr. Federico Mayor
Director General
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris, France

Dear Dr. Swaminathan —
I have tried to follow
up to be sure this is not
forgotten. May I mention here
that if there is indeed a meeting
of ICRF in Jordan, I should very much

Attention: Tom Forstenzer

Dear Federico,

like to be included. Perhaps you
could watch this for me. Yours,

Thank you very much for your gracious and generous interest in the report of the *International Commission on Peace and Food* including the lovely lunch on a day when you were already heavily obligated to your executive board.

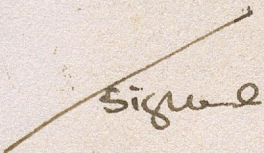
May I remind you of the interest you expressed in the endowment of a chair at Dr. M. S. Swaminathan's institution in India? I first met Dr. Swaminathan in 1978 when we were both serving on our respective governmental delegations to the World Conference on Desertification, and he distinguished himself among thousands of delegates. I have been dedicated to his cause ever since. He is truly one of a kind.

I hope that you can ensure that proper follow up was made and that the wheels are now in motion for UNESCO to establish a chair at the *Centre for Research on Sustainable Agriculture*, which Dr. Swaminathan founded in Madras. As one of the globe's leading plant geneticists, Dr. Swaminathan has a large following world-wide. Even if he were not a humanitarian with such a long and distinguished record, and even if he did not have such a deep heart, this step would still redound well to UNESCO's benefit because of his scientific contributions.

Attached you will find a few notations on Dr. Swaminathan's background which I have prepared in haste, although you must bear in mind I am not a scientist and, therefore, cannot put this aspect of his enormous work in proper focus. I thought it terribly important, however, to let you know as soon as possible after our October 31 lunch discussion how significant I believe it would be for UNESCO to endow such a chair.

With warmest best wishes.

Sincerely,

 Signature



COPY

ATTACHMENT:

M. S. SWAMINATHAN

Faced with very low agricultural productivity levels and a population of several hundred million persons living near or at the starvation level, Dr. Swaminathan sought a way to increase dramatically the level of food production in India. The resulting accomplishment led him to be called the Father of the "Green Revolution." Not content with this accomplishment, he continuing pushing up against the limits of knowledge and its application. One of the world's foremost plant geneticists, he discerned that merely increasing food production is insufficient because poor households in India, a country of over 600,000 villages, often spend as much as 80 percent of the family income on food. The immensity of the unemployment problem and persistence of low uncertain wages, when linked to nutritional need, the flight of educated youth from the villages, and the devastating burdens and drudgery of life for women, made him press for further action.

Dr. Swaminathan instituted a program using imported hybrid seed, fertilizer, irrigation, and extension workers to train farmers that resulted in a spectacular increase in food production thereby rescuing millions of people. Later, he sought to use his position as an international authority tangibly to improve the quality of life for individuals throughout the developing world. Most recently, he established and chairs the *International Commission on Peace and Food*--an independent body of distinguished scientists and eminent persons--in advocating a bold global program of using military expenditures for creation of jobs based on combining increased food production with environmental cleanup. By discovering solutions to complex problems right at the point where the problems connect with each other, he is searching for catalytic solutions to produce definable results in the lives of millions of people--this time including the advanced industrialized countries. The government of India has, once again, adopted his ideas and has been testing his strategy to create 100 million jobs over ten years through agro-industries to increase food production linked to environmental preservation.

After his retirement from the International Rice Institute in Manila, and his still earlier retirement from serving as his country's highest civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture and, before that, chair of its Agricultural Research Council, he established the *Centre for Research on Sustainable Agriculture* in his home city of Madras. Reasoning that New Delhi had facilities enough, he deliberately chose the more difficult route of founding a research center in Madras. It is an extraordinary feat and, monthly, growing at a dizzying rate. Having convinced a broad variety of national and international partners to join in his quest, he has launched a variety of programs including experiments with solar energy, gene banks, and protection of species of flora that are in danger of becoming extinct. While his interest in pure science is paramount, he never forgets the importance of application to the immediate problems he sees around him and, consequently, has developed a series of experimental programs that introduce biotechnology at the village level. Over the years, he has proven himself to

be remarkably prescient in understanding that there is no such thing as development if women are not central to it.

One of the most critical problems facing the globe is the difficulty of translating ideas into action. Ideas abound. The impediments are to be found in the transformation of thoughts into performance. In addressing this human predicament, Dr. Swaminathan is almost in a class by himself. He is a modest person of gentle demeanor and limitless humility whose father, a physician, worked with Mohandas K. Gandhi. His wife is a clinician who works with children in poverty; one daughter is a pediatrician and another daughter an economist. Remarkably, he has bonded individuals to him all over the world. They are not only inspired by his scientific prowess but are motivated by (1) his moral vision and (2) his ability to discern the *links* between chronic problems thereby unlocking their solution. The problems of poverty, hunger, environment, joblessness, and high military expenditures cannot be solved as discrete and separable components, yet Dr. Swaminathan has shown himself to be a visionary in searching for *joint* and *collateral solutions*. Groups, movements, and constituencies are working on each of these problems as single issues. Yet a sectoral approach cannot result in definable change in human destiny over the next millennium.

His experience in India had taught Dr. Swaminathan that it is the *connections* between problems that contain their solution. It was when he *combined* seed, fertilizers, irrigation, and extension workers in India that he achieved stunning results. On the premise that it is in the *meeting points* between dilemmas that new answers can be found for age-old questions, he is steering the *Centre for Research on Sustainable Agriculture* in such a way that it can demonstrate to leaders, heads of government, and UN officials that it is in the links or the nexus between problems that the world will find the answers to the four quandaries of joblessness, hunger, environmental destruction, and military adventurism.

A UNESCO-endowed chair at the *Centre for Research on Sustainable Agriculture* will be beneficial for decades to come as his work has spawned a generation of young scientists to take up the issues to which he has devoted his life.