

THE HUNGER PROJECT GLOBAL NEWSLETTER

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A monthly communication to Hunger Project staff, key volunteers, donors and National Board members around the globe and other individuals interested in the work of The Hunger Project.

“Planning-In-Action” — A Breakthrough in India

Excerpts of a speech delivered by Joan Holmes, global executive director, to a conference of European Hunger Project participants in London.

INTRODUCTION

I would like to update you on a recent breakthrough in your Hunger Project — a new and additional expression of The Hunger Project.

This breakthrough has been expressed first in India.

Just like each earlier expression — from enrolment, to fund-raising, to education, to the launching of The Hunger Project in India, to our initiatives in Africa — this expression comes from, is empowered by and empowers all the previous accomplishments of you and your 6.2 million colleagues around the world.

It very directly expresses and builds upon the principles you have made real in the world — the principles of every individual making a difference and the power of a stand; the principle of building a context of respect for divergent viewpoints and contributions; and the principles required to galvanize effective action in the face of a seemingly insurmountable challenge.

While building on the strength of the deepest principles of The Hunger Project, this new work fulfils a long-term commitment: to develop a truly authentic expression of The Hunger Project that can make a decisive contribution to ending the

persistence of hunger “on the ground” — in countries where chronic hunger persists. As such, it represents the beginning of a dramatic transformation of The Hunger Project. It expands the scope of The Hunger Project’s work to include not only initiatives that create the context “the end of hunger as an idea whose time has come” and shape the thinking and opinions of decision makers, but also initiatives that directly empower people in the work of ending their own hunger.

This breakthrough could not



Hunger Project global director Dr. M. S. Swaminathan chairing the Tamil Nadu design meeting. To his right is Joan Holmes; to his left, Hunger Project global director Ramkrishna Bajaj.



Mrs. Ela Bhatt, president of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and then member of the India Planning Commission, which co-sponsored the national strategy meeting with The Hunger Project.

have been more timely. Coming as it did just a few weeks after the World Summit Declaration, it provides a promising and practical approach for transforming the declarations made at the summit into an achievement.

WHAT WE PROMISED

The work in India is fulfilling a major commitment made at the 1987 "era of opportunity" satellite events to transform ending hunger from a possibility into a concrete, viable project to provide hungry people with the opportunity they need to end their own hunger.

We promised to provide a strategy that would transform ending hunger into a viable project "that empowers and enables every person, community, village, town and city, nation and region to act within their own situation and from their own commitment."



Hunger Project global directors Ramkrishna Bajaj (centre) and Dr. Wayne Fredericks with Professor Ramlal Parikh, vice chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapith.

Initially, I think many of us thought that this strategy would turn out to be a "thing" — a physical plan written on paper. As we consulted with more than 100 experts from many fields, we realized that the purpose of strategic planning is not to produce a plan, but a dynamic process.

In short, the central recognition of this work is that plans don't make things happen, people make things happen.

In 1988, we articulated conditions of satisfaction that had to be fulfilled in a strategic planning process for the end of hunger. Such a strategic planning process must:

- create a vision for a world without hunger;
- alter people's perceptions of the end of hunger from something that is merely possible and desirable to something that is realistic, doable and achievable;
- originate with the people in countries where hunger persists, and include the thinking and contribution of people in the rest of the world;
- take into account the perspective of individuals working at the grass roots, as well as the global perspective of the expert community;



Dr. Devaki Jain of the Institute of Social Studies Trust, at the national strategy meeting in New Delhi.

- recognize the unique contribution of women in development;
- unify what we are already doing, while identifying what is still missing;
- recognize and respect different commitments, opinions, points of view and schools of thought;
- convince can-do people in the business world that this is an issue worthy of their best efforts;
- and win support at the highest levels of government.

These are the conditions for the breakthrough we wanted to create, and in 1990 in India, these conditions were fulfilled.

RESEARCH INTO WHAT WAS NEEDED

Following the 1987 launching event, a small task force within The Hunger Project undertook the work of researching what was needed to fulfil the promise of strategic planning for the end of hunger. This

work took place at four levels.

One level of research was carried out through interviews with dozens of top experts in fields related to ending hunger to discover what technically needs to be included in the strategy.

A second level of research was conducted through meetings with experts in the discipline of strategic planning, as it is applied to fields as diverse as corporate strategy and the Apollo Project, and in locations from Helsinki to Washington, D.C.

A third level of research took place on the ground in the countries where hunger persists. This involved meetings not only with leaders of government and international agencies, but also with villagers, farmers and grass-roots workers in Africa and India. Consistent with all of our work in developing countries since the launching event, our top priority in these meetings was to discover a breakthrough in strategic planning. It was in Senegal, in fact, at a meeting of village-level NGO leaders and government officials, that we first saw the possibility for the kind of collaborative work now underway in India.

The fourth level of research took place with you, the volunteers and donors of The Hunger Project. As we prepared to work in India, we recognized that much of the "technology" of making things happen in The



Dr. C. Gopalan, director of the Nutrition Foundation of India.



Participants at the New Delhi national strategy meeting.

Hunger Project, which we have developed together over the past 14 years, was precisely what was needed for this new work. It now became urgent to rigorously “decode” this way of working so that we could make it available in an entirely new discipline.

WHAT WE DID IN 1990

At the beginning of 1990 I met with one of our global directors, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, who, as you know, was the father of the green revolution in India, and is one of the most respected scientists and development experts in the world.

In the lobby of the UN Plaza Hotel in New York, I met with him to look at what was needed to make strategic planning for the end of hunger a reality.

Dr. Swaminathan shared his thinking on the importance of directly involving the hungry people themselves in creating the strategy.

At the same time, our other Indian director, the great industrialist and Gandhian social activist, Ramkrishna Bajaj, was thinking about the possibility of a conference that would bring together NGOs and businessmen and women for the end of hunger.

At our April 1990 board meeting in New York, there

was a synergy of the thinking of these two great leaders with the other members of the board for what could be created in India. In the space of a two-hour meeting, a complete set of steps for launching strategic planning for the end of hunger in India was identified.

On their return to India, Ramkrishna-ji and Dr. Swaminathan met with leaders from India’s Planning Commission — the distinguished group of experts charged with charting the course for India’s development for the next five years. At that time, a commitment was made to hold a

national strategy meeting on 9-10 November in India’s capital city of New Delhi.

As the November date approached, it looked to many observers as if we should postpone the meeting. India was erupting in political and ethnic turmoil, including a parliamentary vote of no confidence that resulted in a new government on 8 November, the very day before our meeting.



Amadou Moktar Diack of the Ministry of Rural Development of Senegal, expressing his commitment that the planning-in-action process will be initiated in Senegal this year.



The first meeting of the Tamil Nadu Council at Dr. M. S. Swaminathan's institute, the Centre for Research on Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development.

It is a tribute to India's commitment to human development that these dramatic changes in no way thwarted this work. The national strategy meeting was held on schedule, with even more people attending than expected.

THE DELHI MEETING

The meeting in Delhi was impressive. The 40 participants sat at a great round table in the very room where The Hunger Project was first presented in India in 1977.

Chairing the meeting was Mrs. Ela Bhatt, then a member of the Planning Commission and the person who, just six weeks earlier, had represented India at the World Summit for Children at the UN in New York.

Ela Bhatt is one of the most highly respected individuals in India. I first met her in Ahmedabad in 1983, where she leads one of the most successful grass-roots

projects for the empowerment of women, the Self-Employed Women's Association.

Sitting around this table were:

- Dr. C. Gopalan, one the most respected nutritionists in the world;
- Professor Ramlal Parikh, the man who created the Bayad Taluka project;
- Mr. R. K. Bhargava, chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh, the most populated state in India;
- Other members of the Planning Commission including Lakshmi Jain, one of the greatest Gandhian thinkers, and noted economist J. D. Sethi.

Also at the table were senior officials of the three largest international agencies working in India:

- UNICEF,
- the World Health Organization,
- the UN Development Programme.



Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala, former governor of the State of Tamil Nadu, accepting a copy of The Hunger Project's book, *Ending Hunger*, from Joan Holmes.

In addition, a senior official of the government of Senegal observed the meeting. President Diouf of Senegal, one of our first Africa Prize laureates, had expressed great interest in this work for his own country and sent Mr. Amadou Diack of the Rural Development Ministry as an observer.

The purpose of this meeting was to bring together experts from all sectors to formulate a common agenda — a national plan of action — for the eradication of the worst aspects of endemic hunger and malnutrition in India by the end of this century.



Dr. M. Karunanidhi, chief minister of Tamil Nadu, meeting with Lalita Banavali, managing director of The Hunger Project in India, Joan Holmes and Dr. M. S. Swaminathan prior to the Tamil Nadu design meeting.

India and captures the essence of the era of opportunity.

They call it “achieving the threshold: the chance for all our people to lead healthy and productive lives.”

CREATING THE STRATEGIC INTENT

One of the most important results of the meeting was the creation of a strategic intent — a powerful, unifying vision that guides the entire strategy.

These distinguished Indian citizens created a new and powerful way of expressing the end of hunger. They voiced it in a way that galvanizes action in

This strategic intent is the commitment to achieve a “critical threshold” in human development by the year 2000. Inherent in this intent is the assertion that progress in human development should not be perceived as a grey continuum — an endless struggle with no decisive milestones and, too often, with no sense that real progress is possible. Rather, it implies that there exists a measurable point at which the quality of human life becomes fundamentally improved for both individuals and society.

This threshold captures the essence of the national vision of India — an India where all human beings live in dignity, and enjoy the opportunity to meet their basic needs through their own constructive efforts. The achievement of this threshold would mean a profound release of human energy, creativity and



Mrs. Jayashree Balachander, additional director of the Department of Social Welfare, speaking at the Tamil Nadu design meeting.



Mr. K. Inbasagaran, member of the Tamil Nadu Planning Commission.

productivity, and that the vast majority of people could turn their attention to something beyond mere survival.

One of the indicators they selected to measure the achievement of the threshold is an IMR of 50 — the same condition of satisfaction used by The Hunger Project to indicate the end of the persistence of hunger.

ACTION FROM THE DELHI MEETING

In addition to articulating a strategic intent to achieve the threshold, the participants launched key actions.

At the national level, they began the process of creating a national policy statement designed to ensure that the government of India implements the commitments made at the World Summit for Children.

In addition, they mandated that the process of strategic planning for achieving the threshold be carried out in each of India's 25 states. This is especially crucial, not only so that people will have maximum ownership of their own strategy, but also because in India, as in the US, it is the states that hold the primary responsibility for action in the key sectors for the end of hunger, including:

- education (particularly job training);
- health, nutrition, clean water and sanitation.

ACTION IN THE STATES

From New Delhi, we went immediately to work in the states.

Ramkrishna Bajaj and Dr. Swaminathan committed themselves to creating the first state strategy meetings in their home states — Ramkrishna in Bombay, Maharashtra, where our Hunger Project office is; and Dr. Swaminathan in

Madras, Tamil Nadu, where he has his own research foundation.

I want us to comprehend the scale we are talking about. We hear "state," and perhaps we think of something relatively small. But the population of Maharashtra is much larger than that of the United Kingdom, and the population of Tamil Nadu is nearly as large as that of France.



Dr. M. S. Udayamurthy of the Forum for People's Power, at the Tamil Nadu design meeting.



A view of the Tamil Nadu design meeting.

Tamil Nadu

We went first to Madras, Tamil Nadu. The contrast between New Delhi and Madras is enormous. New Delhi is like Washington, D.C. — wide streets, giant monuments. The weather in November is mild. All attention is on the business of government. People speak Hindi and ride either on bicycles or in white government cars; and the presence of both the Great Mogul Empire and the British Empire is everywhere.

Madras is in the deep tropics and is a beehive of motor scooters. Very few speak Hindi — the local language is called Tamil — a completely different language. Tamil Nadu was never conquered by the Moguls, and its culture has been unbroken for 5,000 years.

One of our first meetings in Madras was with the chief minister of the state, Dr. M. Karunanidhi, a man who is not only a political leader, but also a poet, a songwriter and one of the great champions of Tamil culture. He gave his full support to what we were doing, and called for the full state planning commission to meet immediately after our state strategy meeting so as to incorporate the strategy in their five-year plan.

With this kind of high-level support, the first state

strategy meeting was a tremendous success. We called this meeting a “design” meeting, and it was held on 19-20 November. Its purpose was to bring together all sectors of the state to reach a common understanding of what was so in the state, and identify the main elements of a strategy for reaching the threshold.

To prepare this meeting, The Hunger Project hired a remarkable young scholar, Dr. Balaji, to work with Dr.

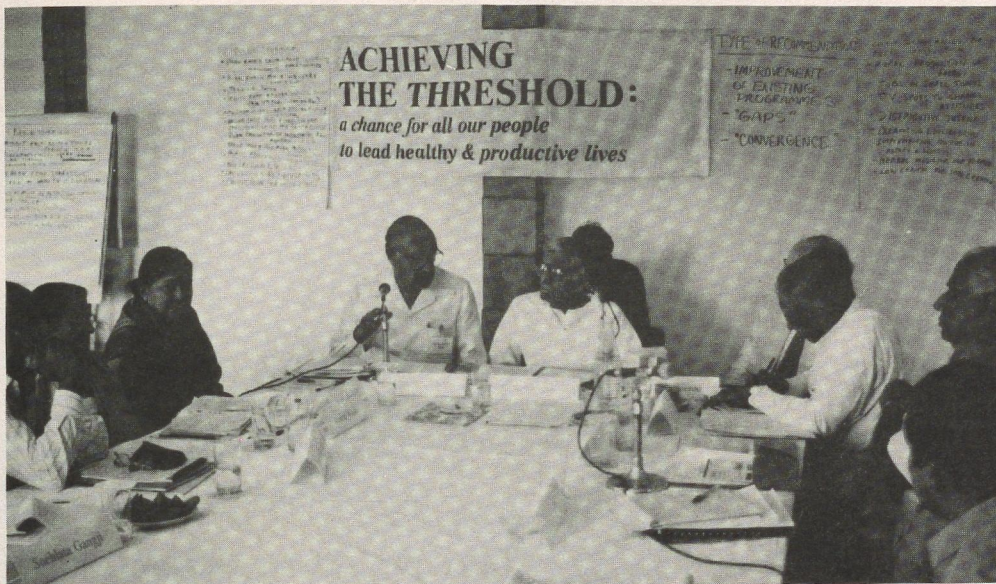
Swaminathan full-time on the strategy.

Dr. Balaji works “Hunger Project” style. As there was a crippling telephone strike while we were there, Dr. Balaji had to go in person to each office in order to confirm each design meeting participant. On the same day he orchestrated our meeting with the governor, he personally reconfirmed 27 participants.

A striking aspect of the meeting in Madras was the great number of women leaders. It is extraordinarily moving to me that women — so widely regarded as



Ms. Sivasankari with Joan Holmes.



Mr. C. Subramaniam, governor of Maharashtra, listening to the discussion among the participants at the Maharashtra design meeting.

the key to ending hunger, and yet so long without an effective voice in decision making, are now playing a leading role in inventing the future of India.

One outcome of the design meeting was that the participants aligned on key strategic objectives to move Tamil Nadu closer to the threshold. These objectives were designed so that, when achieved, they will reveal additional new pathways to reaching the threshold.

In addition, the design meeting established a smaller group, the Tamil Nadu State Council, to begin taking strategic action immediately.

You would be inspired by your partners who participated in the Tamil Nadu strategy meeting and who are now serving on the council. I will mention only a few:

- Dr. Udayamurthy, who, after living in the US for 30 years, returned to India to establish the Forum for People's Power — a grass-roots organization that empowers unemployed young people to train village women to

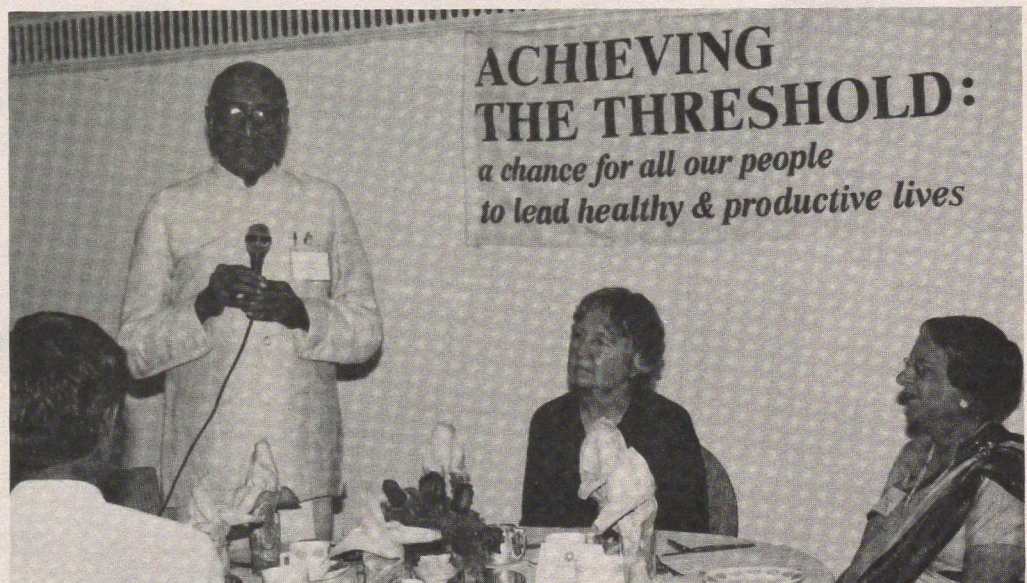
increase their incomes.

- Mrs. Jayashree Balachander, a state government official who is responsible for one of the most successful nutrition programmes in the world, the Tamil Nadu Noon Meal Programme, which provides nourishing meals to 8.5 million children each day and has greatly increased school attendance.
- Ms. Sivasankari, a brilliant journalist and one of the country's leading activists against drug abuse. In the meeting, when all the facts

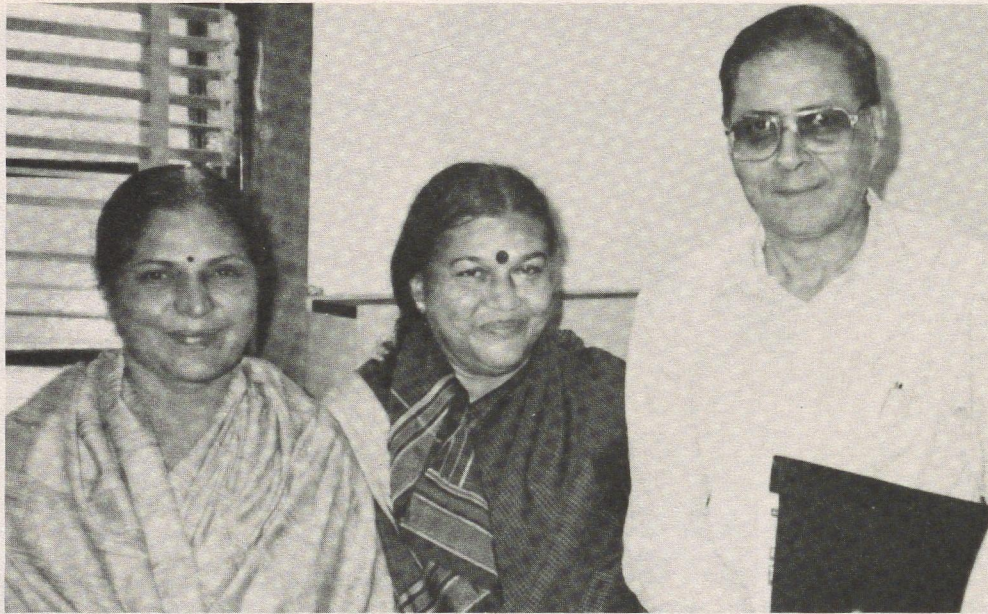
of the persistence of hunger had been laid out, she said, "That's it, I'll devote my life to this work."

- Mr. Rajashekar, a leader in the Rotary club. He listened to all the expert discussion and then said, "I'm not an expert. But when you decide what must be done, give it to Rotary, and we'll make it happen."

The state council had their first meeting in early December, and immediately saw they needed to launch "catalytic projects" to invent and demonstrate new ways of meeting the objectives. These projects



Ramkrishna Bajaj addressing the participants of the Maharashtra design meeting. To his left are Maxine Berntsen of Pragat Shikshan Sanstha and Dr. Avabai Wadia, president of the Family Planning Association of India.



Maharashtra State's minister of health, Mrs. Pushpatai Hiray, and the secretary of health, Mr. P. P. Mahana, following a meeting with Lalita Banavali and her colleagues from The Hunger Project.

Ramkrishna Bajaj. The governor of the state, Mr. C. Subramaniam, participated in the meeting, not merely in a ceremonial capacity, but as one of the most experienced experts on ending hunger in India.

One of the participants, Dr. Indumati Parikh, is a woman who has organized successful women's projects in the slums of Bombay for 25 years.

And another, Dr. Ashok Dyal Chand, is one of India's most innovative health professionals. His village-based health research centre is working to retrain traditional health

workers in more effective techniques. He said:

If I didn't think this process would work, I wouldn't be participating. Over the past 15 years, I haven't seen another effort or institution which could bring about such a tremendous shift in policy and in "achieving the threshold." It has already achieved a lot.

were designed to explore innovative approaches to altering public attitudes (especially regarding the status of women), and to providing sustainable income opportunities for rural people.

Maharashtra

From Madras we travelled to Bombay in the State of Maharashtra.

Bombay is another great contrast. It is a rapidly growing city and a great financial centre. It is now the largest city in India and one of the largest cities in the world, with 10 million people living within the city limits.

Once again, as in Madras, the strategy design meeting was attended by prominent officials, scholars, social activists and members of the business community.

The meeting was held at the Nehru Centre and was chaired by



Dr. Ashok Dyal Chand, director of the Institute of Health Management, Pachod, and Lalita Banavali at Dr. Dyal Chand's institute.



Dr. Indumati Parikh, director of *Streehitakarini*, a women's voluntary organization that works in Bombay's slums, at the Maharashtra design meeting.

As in Tamil Nadu, a state council was formed in Maharashtra. It had its first meeting just one week after the design meeting and launched catalytic projects in many parts of the state.

WHAT WAS DONE IN THE PAST

To fully appreciate the work done in India, it is important to understand how dramatically it departs from traditional modes of planning. In conventional planning:

- A blueprint of goals or outcomes is created by experts and officials who are often removed from local conditions and from the people in various sectors who must implement the plan.
- People are expected to implement the plan.
- Results are monitored and reviewed periodically.

While this framework of planning may be adequate for efforts that require only incremental improvements, we have found that it breaks down when it comes to dealing with enormous, complex challenges like ending hunger.

With conventional planning, people often become alienated from the plans because they feel they had no say in their creation or they believe the plans to be impractical given local conditions.

The result is that plans that are created get put on the shelf and are never realized.

Experts around the world have recognized that something new is needed in planning: Francisco Sagasti, chief of strategic planning at the World Bank, has written:

The conventional approach to planning is most unlikely to be effective in an increasingly turbulent environment. . . . The emerging international context requires innovative thinking and new approaches to development.

THE BREAKTHROUGH, THE RESULTS

The new approach to strategic planning for the end of hunger that we have pioneered in India is a marriage of several insights and recent trends:

- It capitalizes on the recent focus on human-centred development and recent breakthroughs in the science of management.



D. G. Pawar, Agricultural Development Trust, Baramati, offering his views at the Maharashtra design meeting.



Dr. Avabai Wadia, president of the Family Planning Association of India, at the Maharashtra design meeting.

- It combines the best aspects of the power of government and the entrepreneurial creativity of NGOs.
- Most importantly, it has revealed a methodology of planning and action that has already proved replicable in two states of India, under the guidance of two very different styles of leadership.
- While many of the ideas in the process have been talked about by experts, the breakthrough in India is that they have actually been implemented.

The breakthrough for The Hunger Project is that, for the first time and in the country with more hunger than any other:

- The Hunger Project is directly empowering people in countries where hunger persists, to work together to end their own hunger.

When you look at how the people on the state councils are creating the strategy, you will recognize your own fundamental principles at work:

- Council members are empowered in their own personal commitment and responsibility.

- They work as an alignment of wholes.
- They are working in a context — that is, an environment where all points of view and approaches are included, respected, honoured and translated into contributions towards effective action.
- Through launching catalytic projects, they are producing miracles — results that could not possibly have been predicted just a few months ago.

Two examples of the results of these catalytic projects:

- By spending a few thousand dollars in compiling research results on rural drinking water supplies, there is a real possibility that the Maharashtra Council will be able to redirect a giant, internationally funded water project costing hundreds of millions of dollars.
- The state councils are mobilizing powerful new constituencies for achieving the threshold, such as the Medical Association of Maharashtra, which has promised to carry out an information campaign on good nutrition; and the journalists and film makers of Tamil Nadu, who are setting out to transform attitudes that result in the mistreatment of girls and women in their society.

These things are happening, and this is just the beginning.

In your space of love and empowerment, people in countries where hunger persists are finding new courage, new boldness and new effectiveness to invent their own future and realize it.

The principles of The Hunger Project — which you, personally, have pioneered by producing results year after year — are now producing a whole new spectrum of results in India. Just as you have been the wind in the sails of the people of India, their results are now available to empower you, to enrich your work, and to strengthen the global partnership that we all are.

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