

*M. F. Strong*

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August 2, 1989

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan  
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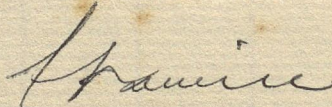
Dear Dr. Swaminathan:

I was so pleased to receive your letters of June 22nd and June 26th respectively and to hear the good news of your election as a Trustee of the Ford Foundation as well as of the recent inauguration of the new National Headquarters for WWF India in New Delhi. I was delighted, too, to hear that you used the latter occasion to launch a Community Biodiversity Conservation Program named after India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharal Nehru.

Thank you so much for taking the trouble of informing me of these important developments. It is especially encouraging to know that your unique experience, wisdom and insights will be available to help guide the Ford Foundation as its policies and programs have an extremely important influence on the environmental, development and other related international areas in which we are both so interested.

Thanks again and warmest personal regards.

Yours sincerely,



Maurice Strong



United Nations Conference on Environment & Development  
Conférence des Nations Unies sur l'Environnement et le Développement

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10 November 1990

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan  
President  
IUCN - The World Conservation Union  
11 Ratha Nagar  
Teynampet  
Madras 600018, India

Dear Dr. Swaminathan:

As you may have heard from Martin Holdgate I have had, unfortunately, to change my plan for participation in the IUCN General Assembly at Perth. I feel very badly about this as I had been looking forward to being there for what will be an important meeting as well as a gathering point for so many of the people to whom we look for contributions to the 1992 Conference. However, the timing of the report to the UN General Assembly on preparations for the Conference was changed so that it now overlaps with the dates of your Assembly, and I have no alternative but to be in New York during this period.

However, we have arranged that Ambassador Tommy Koh, who as you know is Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, be there instead. He is extremely articulate and knowledgeable and I know he will do a good job. Also, he is in essence my "boss" so UNCED will be well represented.

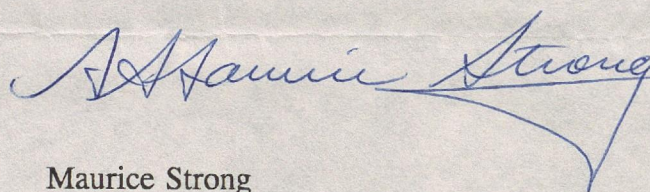
This, however, does not lessen my personal disappointment at not being there, particularly as I had hoped it would provide an opportunity to have the kind of good discussion with you that we have not been able to have since I took on this role. I am most anxious to have the benefit of your guidance and advice and would like at the earliest opportunity to find an occasion on which it would be possible for us to meet. There is no single person anywhere who has more to contribute to the Conference and I would like to discuss with you how you feel this can best be done. Please do let me know when you next come to Geneva and spare some time for a visit with me here. I will certainly be going to India at some point, although nothing is scheduled specifically at the moment, and whenever I do I will let you know.

Dr. Swaminathan  
Page 2

In the meantime, I do hope that the General Assembly goes well and please convey my regrets as well as my greetings and best wishes to all of those who are assembled there.

Warmest personal regards.

Yours sincerely,



Maurice Strong  
Secretary-General

MFS/ds

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## General Assembly

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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON  
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT  
First session  
Nairobi, 6-31 August 1990

### THE UNCED INFORMATION SYSTEM

#### Note by the Secretariat

##### Background

1. The agenda of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) 1/ has been developed on the basis of the activities of the United Nations system, and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The success of the Conference will, in large part depend on the extent to which the preparatory process will be able to develop concrete conference outputs based on these existing activities.
2. The above implied that the ad hoc UNCED secretariat will need extensive access to information about who is doing what in the area of environment and development in the United Nations system and in other relevant organizations. Given the dynamically changing nature of these activities, the information needs to be rapidly updatable, and to be made available for programme development purposes to the UNCED secretariat, the Preparatory Committee, and the agencies themselves.
3. Another important measure of success will be the extent to which the interests of national governments, public opinion, non-governmental organizations, etc., can be brought into and made important parts of the preparatory process. One important element of this is the continuous provision of up-to-date information about the preparatory process, via all possible means.

4. One of the important outputs of the Conference may be an agenda for the future, or Agenda 21, which in a structured way could hold a new kind of plan of action to deal with environment and development issues into the next century. Agenda 21 would be a dynamically changing agenda, growing directly out of the information base representing the activities of the international community now.

A computerized information system

5. The above suggests that the UNCED secretariat needs to develop a comprehensive information base on who is doing what in the various organizations of the United Nations system, and in other relevant international and national organizations. The information needs to be in a form which is rapidly and easily accessible, updatable, and transformable into various kinds of reports, to be communicated to a broad range of audiences, such as the Preparatory Committee, the secretariat itself, United Nations agencies and the interested non-governmental organization community world wide.

6. This can be achieved by developing a computerized information system at the UNCED office in Geneva, called the UNCED Information System. The information system will consist of:

(a) Data base. The data base will hold information on the main activities and process going on in different organizations (who is doing what, with what planned outputs, all organized according to the main issues and cross-sectoral objectives defined by General Assembly resolution 44/228), as well as information on the progress of the preparatory process in appropriately adapting these activities to ensure meeting the objectives of the 1992 Conference.

(b) Reporting facility. A computerized facility will enable UNCED staff to rapidly prepare different kinds of reports (text as well as graphics) to be used to inform different constituencies, such as Governments (i.e., the Preparatory Committee), the press, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, etc.

(c) Global electronic network. This facility will allow world-wide electronic access to the UNCED Information System using computers and modems, both directly, and also indirectly by accessing UNCED information provided to existing electronic networks. 2/ Data could also be provided on diskettes for computer users without access to international electronic communications. Other, non-computerized media will also be used to disseminate information to those without access to computer hardware.

(d) Electronic conferencing and communications. With the computer hardware and software which will be necessary for the above, the UNCED secretariat will be in a unique position to explore to a fuller extent than ever before for a United Nations Conference the possibilities offered by electronic communications and conferencing, both during the preparatory process, and the Conference itself. This will allow the secretariat to communicate inexpensively and very efficiently with Governments in the development of certain Conference agenda items, with other special interest groups, and last but not least between the different UNCED offices (Geneva, Nairobi and New York), located on three continents.

Requirements for success

7. The UNCED Information System will not be successful without considerable support from the UNCED preparatory process, the United Nations agencies and other relevant organizations. In particular, the secretariat will need to develop efficient and functional ties with the relevant organizations to ensure the appropriate flow of information both into and out of the UNCED Information System. This process has already been started.

8. The UNCED Information System will be successful only if it will be used. While it will be an essential tool for the Secretariat in its programme development during the next two years, its main objective is to be useful to Governments and all the relevant organizations, which together are the foundation for the 1992 Conference.

Timetable

9. The global electronic network phase of the UNCED Information System has already started with the supplying of information to the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) networks and Telecommunications Co-operative Network (TCN). All the documents of the Preparatory Committee are available on these networks.

10. We expect to start developing the rest of the UNCED Information System immediately after the first session of the Preparatory Committee. The first major step will be extensive consultation with United Nations agencies, other relevant organizations and especially existing information networks.

11. Following such consultations, the UNCED secretariat will develop the UNCED Information System, which should be operational by the end of 1990. During 1991, the data base will be considerably expanded and refined.

Notes

1/ See General Assembly resolution 44/228.

2/ The UNCED secretariat is already providing information on a regular basis to the APC networks (via Econet) and to TCN. Copies of a concise guide to accessing these networks (prepared by members of these networks) are available to delegations upon request.

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9 February 1991

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In December 1989 the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene a UN Conference on Environment and Development which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. It will be a gathering of the entire community of nations represented by their Heads of State or Government. This will make it the largest summit conference ever, and potentially the most important.

The "Earth Summit" coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, which put the environment issue on the agenda of the world community. But it will be no mere commemorative or nostalgic event. It is expected to produce agreement on the basic principles and broad range of actions required to make the kind of transition to a sustainable future envisaged in the report, "Our Common Future", of the World Commission on Environment and Development issued in 1987.

The 1992 Earth Summit is about environment and development. This recognizes the important reality that environmental impacts arise as a result of our economic behaviour and can only be addressed effectively by changes in that behaviour. Thus the main task of the 1992 Conference will be to move the environment issue into the centre of economic policy and decision-making and to take decisions that will effect the major transition in our economic life and behaviour required to place the world community on the pathway to a sustainable environmental and economic future.

The World Commission on Environment and Development called for a transition to sustainable development through the full integration of the environmental dimension into all areas of economic and sectoral policy and decision-making. It made clear that only environmentally-sustainable development can meet the future needs of the world community, and particularly developing countries, for continued development. It rejected "no growth" as a goal, while making it clear that "no growth" would be the inevitable result of continuing on the current pathway of environmentally-destructive and unsustainable development.

The organizational meeting of the Preparatory Committee established by the United Nations General Assembly to oversee preparations for the 1992 Conference met in New York from 5-16 March 1990. It reached a consensus on the organization of its work. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly approved the budget of the Conference and the staffing arrangements for its Secretariat, which is headquartered in Geneva. Ambassador T. Koh of Singapore was elected Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif of Algeria as Rapporteur; and 39 Vice-Chairmen were elected forming the Bureau of the Committee.

The Preparatory Committee established two Working Groups as the principal means for addressing in detail the main individual issues on the Conference agenda. The first deals with protection of the atmosphere, protection and management of land resources; conservation of biological diversity and environmentally-sound technology. The second deals with protection of the oceans, seas and coastal areas; protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources; and environmentally-sound management of wastes. Provision was also made for the future establishment of a Working Group on legal, institutional and related matters. The Committee decided that a series of major issues which cut across each of the individual agenda items, e.g. access to and transfer of environmentally-sound technology, financial resources requirements, economic instruments, institutional arrangements, and the integration of environment and development, would be considered on an issue-by-issue basis in respect of each agenda item and then more comprehensively by the Preparatory Committee itself.

The first substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee, established by the United Nations General Assembly to oversee preparations for the 1992 Conference, met in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 1990. During the same period, the two Working Groups established by the Preparatory Committee at its organizational meeting in New York in March 1990 held their first meetings. Ambassador Bo Kjellen of Sweden was elected Chairman of Working Group I and Dr. Bukar Shaib of Nigeria was elected Chairman of Working Group II. No decision was taken in respect of the terms of reference for the working group to be established on legal, institutional and related matters which is expected to be decided at the next Preparatory Committee meeting.

The two Working Groups examined in depth each of the subjects allocated to them in relation to the integration of environment and development and a series of related issues which cut across each of the individual agenda items. These include access to and transfer of environmentally sound technology, financial resources, economic instruments and institutional arrangements. The reports of the Working Groups, as approved by the Preparatory Committee, provide the primary basis for the continuing work of the Secretariat and other UN agencies and organizations contributing to the preparatory process.

The Preparatory Committee considered the proposal of the Secretary-General of the Conference that the issues to be addressed by the Conference be organized in six principal components and asked the Secretariat to continue its work on this basis. The six components are:

- (i) An "Earth Charter" or Declaration of basic principles for the conduct of Nations and peoples in respect of environment and development to ensure the future viability and integrity of the Earth as a hospitable home for human and other forms of life;
- (ii) Agreements on specific legal measures, e.g. conventions for the protection of the atmosphere and biological diversity and possibly forestry which would be negotiated prior to the Conference and signed or agreed to at the Conference;
- (iii) An agenda for action, "Agenda 21", establishing the agreed work programme of the international community for the period beyond 1992 and into the 21st century in respect of the issues to be addressed by the Conference, with priorities, targets, cost estimates, modalities and assignment of responsibilities;

and the means to implement this agenda through:

- (iv) New and additional financial resources;
- (v) Transfer of technology;
- (vi) Strengthening of institutional capacities and processes.

In several informal sessions the Preparatory Committee began its examination of the central environment-development theme of the Conference and other important cross-sectoral issues including financial resources, technology transfer, economic instruments and institutional arrangements, and provided direction to the Secretariat for its future work in these critically important areas.

Other important decisions taken by the Preparatory Committee included:

- (i) A recommendation to the UN General Assembly that States be represented at the Conference at the levels of Heads of State or Government;
- (ii) Recommendation to the United Nations General Assembly that the Conference be held from 1-12 June 1992;

- (iii) Arrangements for the broad participation of non-governmental organizations in preparations for the Conference and special measures designed to facilitate participation by NGOs of developing countries;
- (iv) Guidelines for preparation of national reports.

The report of the Preparatory Committee was considered and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1990.

The second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee and its two Working Groups will be held in Geneva from 18 March to 5 April 1991 with provision for extension to 12 April 1991 if necessary. The third session will be held, also in Geneva, from 12-30 August 1991 with provision for extension to 6 September 1991 if necessary. The final meetings will be held in New York in January or February 1992.

Of particular importance to the preparations for the Conference are the regional meetings. The first of these, for the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, was held in Bergen, Norway, in May. The meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 13-16 October 1990; the meeting of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) region will be held in Mexico City, in March 1991. Meetings will also be held in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) region and in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Africa (ECWA) region at times and venues yet to be finally decided.

Special measures are being undertaken to facilitate and support participation by developing countries in preparations for the Conference. A Voluntary Fund has been established to support participation by developing country representatives in meetings of the Preparatory Committee and its Working Groups. In addition, extra-budgetary funding is being sought by the Secretariat to support the substantive contributions of developing country experts and institutions to the preparatory work and preparations at the national level, including preparation of national reports. The full and active participation of developing countries is regarded as essential to the success of the Conference and the implementation of its results.

Staffing of the Conference Secretariat, which is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, has been largely completed. Offices have also been established in New York and Nairobi, Kenya.

The UNCED Secretariat has established a Global Electronic Information Network to provide all interested parties with access to information related to preparations for the Conference.

The Conference Secretariat has established very close co-operation and working relationships with the United Nations Environment Programme, the Director-General for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, UNCTAD, the World Bank, and other agencies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system as well as other concerned inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. Many of these organizations are being invited to participate in the working parties being established by the Secretariat to undertake the work called for by the Preparatory Committee and its Working Groups.

A wide range of other activities is being undertaken or planned by the non-governmental community including scientific, environmental, development, educational and cultural organizations, business and industry, trade unions, religious leaders, women, youth and indigenous peoples. These will make an important contribution to Conference preparations and the Conference Secretariat is actively encouraging and facilitating this process. Each of these groups and constituencies is also being challenged to produce its own action agenda for the 21st century as a contribution to "Agenda 21".

The Nairobi meetings of the Preparatory Committee and its Working Groups underscored the difficulty and complexity of the issues to be addressed by the Conference. Especially critical is the issue on the provision of financial resources, particularly "new and additional resources" to developing countries to enable them to participate fully in international environmental co-operation and integrate the environment dimension into their own development plans and practices. Related to this is the issue of ensuring their access to environmentally sound technologies. It seems clear that the biggest single challenge facing the Conference will be that of bridging the formidable gaps of political will which will be needed to achieve agreement on these central issues.



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MFS/seg

11 February 1991

Dear Dr. Swaminathan

I am pleased to invite you to become a Special Adviser and to make available to us your advice and assistance in respect of preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. As you know, the UN General Assembly has now decided that the Conference will be held at the level of Head of State or Government which makes it an unprecedented opportunity for world leaders to take decisions that will shape, perhaps decisively, the future of life on our planet.

Your acceptance of this invitation does not commit you to dedicate any specific amount of your time to this role but indicates your willingness, in principle, to make yourself available for advice and assistance to us from time to time as you may agree in response to specific requests from us. In all such assignments you will be entitled to an honorarium and travel and subsistence allowances in accordance with the applicable United Nations levels and conditions.

We may, but will not necessarily, ask that you attend meetings of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference or its Working Groups and while special consideration will be given to Special Advisers who wish to attend the Conference itself in Rio de Janeiro we are not in a position at this time to know what arrangements we may be able to make in this respect.

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan  
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Dr. M.S. Swaminathan  
11 February 1991

The first substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, and its two Working Groups, held in Nairobi recently, took a number of important decisions which will now guide us in undertaking an extensive programme of work in preparation for the Conference. This work programme will largely determine the nature and extent of the calls we may make on you for advice and assistance and we will endeavour always to give you as much notice as possible in each case. In the meantime, we are enclosing some material on the Conference and the current state of preparations for it and we will send you copies of relevant documents and other material as available. You can also access this material through the Global Electronic Information Network we have established, as described in the attached memorandum.

I am extremely grateful to you for your interest in and support for the Conference and do hope you will now be able to confirm your acceptance of our offer to become a Special Adviser on the basis outlined above. Let me say how very much I and my colleagues are looking forward to the association with you which this will involve and to having the benefit of your extensive knowledge and experience in preparing for what promises to be one of the most important conferences of our times.

Many thanks and best personal regards.

Yours sincerely,



Maurice F. Strong  
Secretary-General

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MFS/seg

FIXED

14 JUL 1992

11 July 1992

GENEVA

Dear Dr. Swaminathan,

Thank you so much for your letter of 7 July 1992 and your generous comments concerning my own role in respect of UNCED. As you know, this was certainly not a "one-man-show" and I had a great many allies, both within our Secretariat and outside of it. And none did I appreciate more than you. Although we did not have as much direct contact as I would have liked, your own pioneering role and leadership over the years contributed immensely to the intellectual and policy foundations of UNCED and your fulsome support and engagement throughout the whole UNCED experience meant a great deal to me.

Having said this, I feel very sorry, indeed somewhat embarrassed, to have to tell you that I am not able to join you at the next meeting of the International Commission on Peace and Food, to be held in Oslo from 31 August to 2 September. This comes precisely at the period in which I am leaving UNCED at the conclusion of my UN contract and returning to Canada. It is not possible to alter my plans in this respect at this point and I very much regret that this means that I cannot accept your invitation, much as I would like to be able to do so. I would particularly welcome the opportunity of seeing you and other friends and colleagues there and hearing more of the work and plans of ICPF. It would also have been a useful opportunity to compare notes on the follow-up to UNCED which, of course, will be the ultimate determinant of its success.

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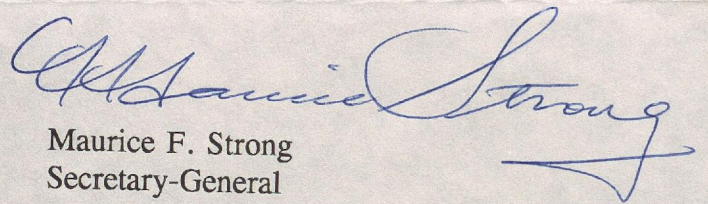
IN OUR HANDS

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan  
11 July 1992

I do hope there will be another opportunity to see each other again before long to discuss these matters. In the meantime, again many thanks for this invitation as well as for all of your help and support.

Warmest personal regards.

Yours sincerely,



Maurice F. Strong  
Secretary-General