

# INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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January 13, 1989

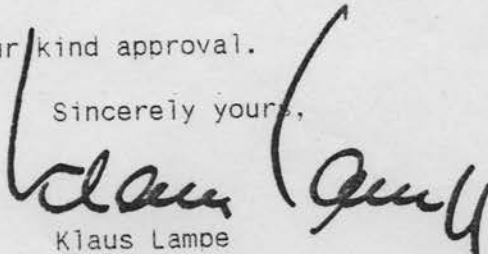
Dear Chancellor de Guzman:

In order to start implementing the Biosafety Guidelines formulated by the joint UPLB-IRRI-DA committee, I wish to organize the IRRI Biosafety Committee to be chaired by Dr. B. S. Vergara. The Biosafety Guidelines specify that any Institutional Biosafety Committee should include two members not affiliated with IRRI apart from their membership in the IBC. In view of this, we wish to request the services of Dr. D. A. Ramirez and Dr. Gil Divinagracia as members of the IRRI Biosafety Committee.

Attached is a copy of the functions of the IBC for your information.

We will gratefully appreciate your kind approval.

Sincerely yours,

  
Klaus Lampe  
Director General

Chancellor Raul P. de Guzman  
University of the Philippines  
at Los Banos  
College, Laguna

Attachment

KL/ner

IRRI Biosafety Committee (IBC)

Proposed Composition:

Dr. B. S. Vergara, Chairman  
Dr. Pierre Roger  
Dr. D. A. Ramirez (UPLB)  
Dr. Gil Divinagracia (UPLB)  
Dr. J. M. Bonman  
Mr. Jed Natividad

Functions of the IBC (Based on the proposed Biosafety Guidelines):

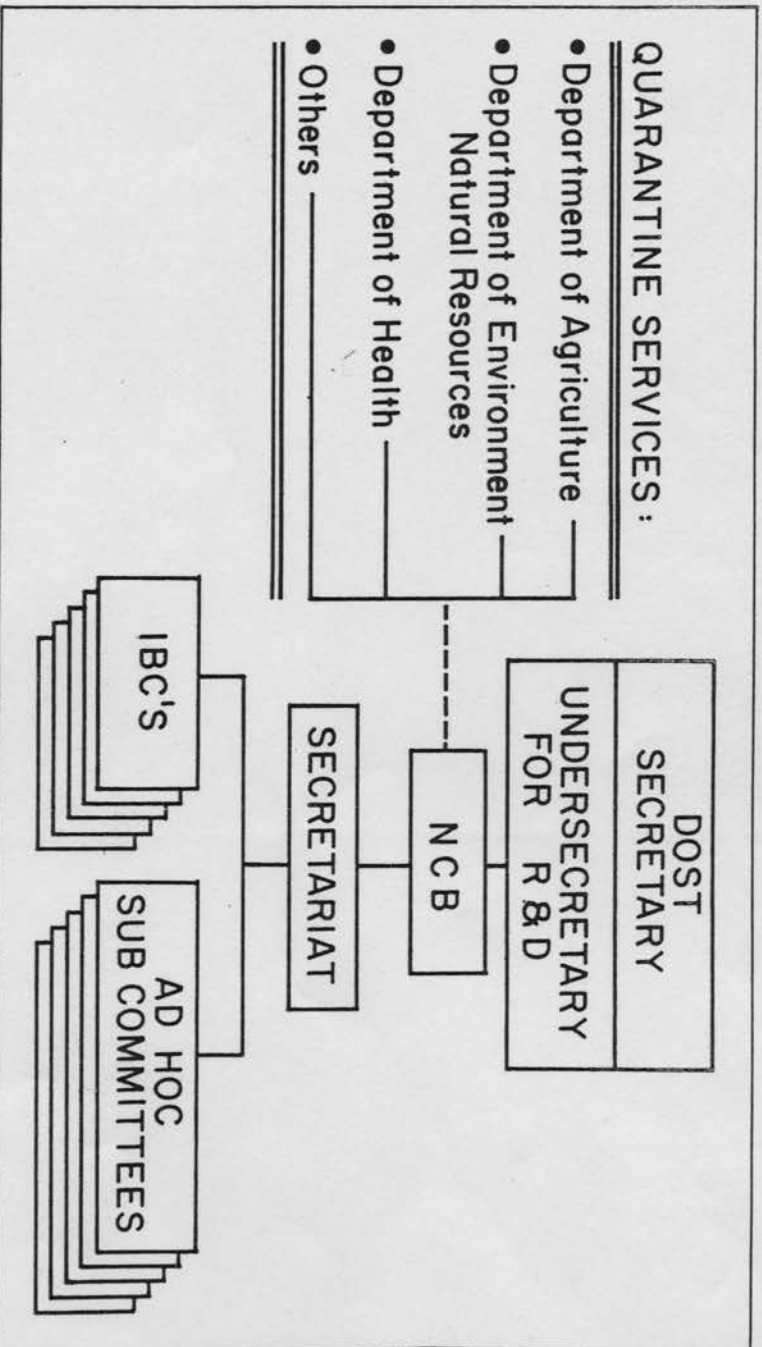
1. Review work conducted at or sponsored by the institution and recommend to the National Commission on Biosafety (NCB) for approval. The review shall cover only:
  - 1.1. The containment levels required by the guidelines for the proposed work.
  - 1.2 The facilities, procedures, and practices, and the training and expertise of personnel assigned to the work.
2. Notify the project leader/proponent/investigator of the results of the review.
3. Review periodically work with potential risks being conducted at the institution to ensure that requirements of the Guidelines are being fulfilled.
4. Formulate and adopt emergency plans covering accidental spills and personnel contamination resulting from work.
5. Report within one week to the appropriate institutional official and to the NCB any significant problems with or violations of the Guidelines and any significant research-related accidents or illnesses.
6. Perform such other functions as may be delegated to it by the NCB.

Meetings - The Committee shall meet regularly every month and may hold special meetings to consider urgent matters upon the request of the Chairman or any three members thereof.

Quorum - Three members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Compensation - The Biosafety Guidelines provide that IBC members shall be entitled to an appropriate compensation which shall be determined by the NCB.

# NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON BIOSAFETY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



## REPORT

To : Dr. Klaus Lampe  
From : F. A. Bernardo  
Subject : Actions Being Taken for the Approval and  
Implementation of Biosafety Guidelines

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### 1) Status of Biosafety Guidelines proposal:

- o The National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) has created subgroups to review the different chapters of the proposal.
- o One subgroup, to be convened by Nena F. Campos, will meet for the first time on January 27.
- o The medical group in Manila has its own protocol on biosafety. It is short and simple. The group feels that the UPLB-IRRI-DA Biosafety Guidelines are comprehensive enough to cover research activities of the medical group in biotechnology.
- o The UPLB Institute of Biotechnology and Applied Microbiology, headed by Dr. W. Padolina, its Director, raised objections to the proposed legislation creating the National Biosafety Board in a letter to the Chairman of the House Committee on Science and Technology.
- o During a hearing with the House Committee on Science and Technology, the Los Banos group appealed for deferment of action on the proposed bill until the NAST and DOST have held a workshop to review the Biosafety Guidelines.

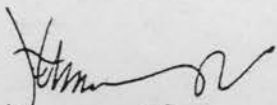
### 2) Dr. F. A. Bernardo convened some UPLB, PCARRD, and IRRI scientists at SEARCA on January 11, 1989 to discuss possible courses of action to expedite the approval of the Biosafety Guidelines and implementation mechanism. The group agreed on the following:

- o Dr. D. L. Umali, who is a member of the NAST Executive Committee, will convince the committee to make the following decisions:
  - All chairpersons of the subgroups should be asked to submit their reports to the NAST Chairman before February 1, 1989.

- Revision of the Biosafety Guidelines based on subgroup recommendations shall be made in the 1st week of February.
  - DOST, instead of NAST, under the leadership of Secretary Jose Arizabal, will hold a Workshop in the second or third week of February to discuss the revised draft. Different scientific organizations and the private sector will be represented in the workshop. Contributions from UPLB and IRRI to support the workshop may be necessary.
  - The assistance of DOST Undersecretary Ricardo Lantican shall be sought to plan and implement the workshop ASAP.
- o Approval of the revised Biosafety Guidelines by the Secretary of Science and Technology should be sufficient since the matter is strictly scientific. (Legislation may not be necessary, provided the Departments of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, Health and Education, Culture and Sports recognize and respect the Biosafety Guidelines).
  - o The proposed legislation to create a National Biosafety Board is too expensive (P10 million a year) and unnecessary.
  - o Regarding implementation of the Biosafety Guidelines, self-regulation is preferable. Any research agency worthy of its name should be able to observe strict standards and follow the guidelines to the letter.
  - o "Policing powers" should remain with the Quarantine Service Unit.
  - o DOST may issue guidelines on implementation.

### 3. Recommendations:

- o IRRI should now create its Biosafety Unit, after which, UPLB and IRRI may create jointly a Los Banos Complex Biosafety Unit.
- o Copies of the final report of Prof. John H. Barton (of the Stanford Law School) on the status of Biotechnology and Biosafety in different countries should be circulated in order to enlighten all concerned.

  
01-12-89



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January 6, 1989

Dear Secretary Arizabal:

The International Rice Research Institute owes a great deal of gratitude to the Philippines for its continued support in achieving our objectives: an increased and sustainable access to rice by millions of rice consumers in the Philippines, Asia and beyond.

IRRI has been encouraged by its donors and national collaborating programs to secure for national research systems access to and training in the use of the important rice researchers to effectively pursue research that will increase the yield potential of rice and reduce the dependency of rice producers on costly and environmentally hazardous agricultural chemicals.

We urgently need to develop our capabilities in the areas of genetic transformation through the transfer of single genes by vectors (also called "single gene breeding"). Only then will we be able to assist collaborating institutions in the Philippines and in the region through training and research partnerships. Further delays in gaining access to this technology will make it likely that private interest will capture it with considerable exclusivity.

We require urgent access to commercially available cloning vectors and reporter genes. These pose no conceivable hazard and are being widely used in laboratories around the world. IRRI has invested a lot of effort in the establishment of close collaborative links with advanced research institutions, who are prepared to share with us valuable cloned genes such as those for storage proteins and synthetic lysine, which could be of immense benefit to rice consumers in the future.

We request for these reasons, Mr. Secretary, that you give urgent attention to this matter, and that you encourage the rapid establishment of an effective and efficient process of approval for the introduction of this technology. Let me assure you that IRRI, for its part, will apply the necessary controls and scrutiny to assure that all procedures and facilities are in place and satisfy the most stringent safety demands on laboratory and testing procedures.

*Bioscience*

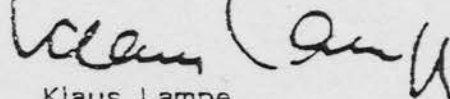
Letter to Secretary Arizabal  
January 6, 1989  
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Through all of its 27 years of existence, IRRI has been extremely careful in handling genetic materials. The most recent acknowledgement of IRRI's efforts can be found in the address by Y. B. Dato' Ahmad Badri Bin Mohamed Basir, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Malaysia, and Chairman of the Plant Board of Directors (please see pages 11-12 of the enclosed copy of his address).

We look forward to your continued interest in our Institute and are grateful for your helpful intervention in this important matter.

Sincerely yours,



Klaus Lampe

Director General

Hon. Jose V. Arizabal  
Secretary  
Department of Science and Technology  
P.O. Box 2596, Manila

cc: Sec. Dominguez  
Pres. Abueva

Encls. a/s

KJL/ner

ADDRESS BY  
Y.B. DATO' AHMAD BADRI BIN MOHAMED BASIR  
SECRETARY GENERAL, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
MALAYSIA  
AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANTI BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
DURING THE OPENING OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON  
INTRODUCTION OF GERMPLASM AND PLANT  
QUARANTINE PROCEDURES  
MING COURT, KUALA LUMPUR  
DECEMBER 14, 1988

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YANG BERTHORMAT ENCIK MOHD. KASSIM BIN AHMED,  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

YANG BERBAHAGIA DATO' ABU BAKAR MAHMUD,  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
MALAYSIA

YANG BERUSAHA ENCIK ABDUL WAHID JALIL,  
DIRECTOR OF ASEAN-PLANTI AND CHAIRMAN OF THE  
ORGANISING COMMITTEE

PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN



IT IS MY PLEASURE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANTI BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH THANKS THE PRESENCE OF YANG BERTHMAT ENCIK KASSIM BIN AHMED WHO HAS KINDLY CONSENTED, DESPITE HIS TIGHT SCHEDULE, TO OFFICIATE THE OPENING OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON INTRODUCTION OF GERMPLASM AND PLANT QUARANTINE PROCEDURES, ON BEHALF OF THE HON'BLE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I AM ALSO HAPPY TO EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS OF THIS SYMPOSIUM.

IF WE WERE TO ANALYSE THE OBJECTIVES FOR ORGANISING THIS SYMPOSIUM WE WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT PLANTI PREPARED FOR THIS GATHERING OBVIOUSLY TO ADDRESS THE NEED FOR ALIGNING PLANT QUARANTINE PROCEDURES WITH THE PURPOSE OF INTRODUCING GERMPLASM

MATERIALS. I MUST STRESS HERE THAT PLANT QUARANTINE PROCEDURES NEED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN INTENSIFYING THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS FOR PEST-FREE AGRICULTURE. I WISH THOSE FROM THE GERMPLASM BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL OR OTHERWISE, WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT PLANT QUARANTINE REGULATIONS ARE LEGITIMATE MEANS TO FACILITATE, RATHER THAN RESTRAIN THEIR NOBLE EFFORTS OF, FOR EXAMPLE, ESTABLISHING GENE BANKS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. I ALSO WISH THAT THOSE FROM THE PLANT QUARANTINE AND PHYTOSANITATION BUSINESS WOULD INTEGRATE, RATHER THAN PRECLUDE, THE REASONS FOR GERMPLASM EXCHANGES.

THE NEED FOR GERMPLASM IS ON THE INCREASE TO GIRD UP THE COUNTRY'S CROP

PRODUCTION PROGRAMME. INDEED, THE USE OF IMPROVED HIGH YIELDING CROPS IS THE RESULT OF CONTINUOUS INTRODUCTION OF NEW VARIETIES OBTAINED THROUGH RESEARCH WITH IMPORTED PLANT GENETIC MATERIALS.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTRES WORLDWIDE HAVE BEEN EXCHANGING GERMPLASM MATERIALS. SCIENTISTS, RESEARCHERS AND PLANT ENTHUSIASTS ARE AS FASCINATED AS THE COMMON MAN TO BRING HOME EXOTIC MATERIALS, FANCIFUL OR USEFUL, FOR PROPAGATION, CONSERVATION OR PRESERVATION. THE CHANCES FOR PEST ENTRY INTO ANOTHER AREA ARE GREATER IF NOTHING IS DONE TO REGULATE MOVEMENT OF PLANT AND GENETIC MATERIALS. SEEDBORNE VIRUSES HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE PRESENT IN IMPORTED

GERMPLASM COLLECTION. THESE VIRUSES, AS YOU ALL KNOW, CAN EASILY ESCAPE PLANT QUARANTINE INSPECTION UNNOTICED. SINCE VIRUSES CAN ACCOMPANY CROP GENES IN BREEDING PROGRAMMES, THESE PESTS CAN PROVE REAL THREATS TO OTHER BREEDING MATERIALS. CONSIDER THEIR EFFECTS ON GERMPLASM TRANSFER; WE SHALL BE FANNING ECONOMIC DISASTER IF WE ENGAGE IN COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE OF INFECTED GERMPLASM. PLANT BREEDERS AND GENETICISTS MAY AS WELL REITERATE TO THIS BODY OF SCIENTIFIC MINDS THE HORRORS OF INTRODUCING INFECTED MATERIAL INTO OUR VAST AGRICULTURAL LANDS. THE INCREASING INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IS INEVITABLE AND, AS A RESULT, STRICT QUARANTINE MEASURES HAVE BEEN IMPOSED BY THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO

PROHIBIT POSSIBLE PEST ENTRY. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAVE ALSO BEEN IMPOSING PLANT QUARANTINE REGULATIONS, BUT IN MOST CASES NOT AS STRINGENT AS THOSE IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. WE, IN THE ASEAN, HAVE DEVELOPED NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LISTS OF PESTS NOT YET OCCURRING ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION. FOR SUCH PESTS, CLOSE VIGILANCE IS MADE BY THE REGION'S PLANT QUARANTINE SERVICES TO GUARD EACH MEMBER COUNTRY AGAINST ENTRY OF THESE EXOTIC PESTS, WHILE THOSE FOUND IN CERTAIN AREAS IN THE REGION ARE KEPT IN SECLUSION.

WHILE WE ARE CAUTIOUS OF THIS IN THE REGION IN CONSONANCE WITH TRADE REQUIREMENTS, DEVELOPED MARKETS OF THE WORLD HAVE BEEN FOUND TO EXPORT THEIR PESTS TO THE



ASEAN REGION. BASED ON PLANTI'S REPORTS, THAILAND, WHICH HAS A HIGH VOLUME OF TRADE, FOR INSTANCE, INTERCEPTED A NUMBER OF DISEASES IN IMPORTED AGRICULTURAL CONSIGNMENTS FROM SUCH DEVELOPED MARKETS AS AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES - COUNTRIES KNOWN FOR THEIR STRINGENT QUARANTINE REGULATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1988, THAILAND INTERCEPTED 27 GENERA OF PLANT PATHOGENS, THREE GENERA OF INSECT PESTS, 18 GENERA OF PLANT PARASITIC NEMATODES AND FIVE GENERA OF NOXIOUS WEEDS. THESE INTERCEPTIONS WERE TAKEN FROM 434 IMPORTED PLANT CONSIGNMENTS WHICH INCLUDED PROHIBITED, RESTRICTED AND UNPROHIBITED MATERIALS PASSING THROUGH POSTENTRY QUARANTINE IN BANGKOK.

THE RESULTS OF A STUDY RECENTLY CONDUCTED AT PLANTI ON WEED INTERCEPTIONS IN MALAYSIA REVEALED THAT THERE WERE AS MUCH AS 87 WEED SPECIES FOUND CONTAMINATING IMPORTED SEED CONSIGNMENTS INTO MALAYSIA. BESIDES KNOWN AND ALREADY AVAILABLE WEEDS, THESE CONSIGNMENTS CONTAINED WEED SEEDS WHICH ARE NOT KNOWN IN THIS COUNTRY. THE RECORDS OF PEST INTERCEPTIONS IN THE ASEAN MEMBER ALSO ILLUSTRATE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN PEST EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD. THESE INTERCEPTIONS ARE ~~BOTH~~ ALARMING AND HEARTENING. *in a way*

TROPICAL ASEAN IS LARGELY DEPENDENT ON AGRICULTURE. IT IS OUR ECONOMIC BACKBONE.

IF PESTS COULD SLIP THROUGH PORTS INTO OUR CROPLAND, CONSIDER THE CATASTROPHIES THAT WOULD RESULT. WE CAN JUST IMAGINE THE ECONOMIC HAVOC, FOR INSTANCE, IF BY SHEER ACCIDENT, THE DREADED SOUTH AMERICAN LEAF BLIGHT GETS INTRODUCED INTO MALAYSIA. THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF ONE SUCH ~~FALSE~~ INTRODUCTION, ACCIDENTAL ENTRY IF YOU ~~MAY~~ WILL, ~~CALL IT~~ IS TO SAY THE LEAST, HORRENDOUS AS IT ~~SPREADS~~ <sup>ACROSS</sup> ~~OUT~~ THE BORDERS, INTO THAILAND, INDONESIA OR EVEN INTO THE PHILIPPINES WHERE RUBBER HAS ALL THE PROMISE OF A THRIVING INDUSTRY, PARTICULARLY IN MINDANAO. MISSING OUT ON INTERCEPTIONS CAN TRULY BE ALARMING.

THE HEARTENING NEWS ABOUT THESE INTERCEPTIONS, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS THAT

PLANT QUARANTINE IS VIGILANT IN ITS MANDATED TASK. THOSE IN GERMPLASM WORK ARE AWARE OF PLANT QUARANTINE IN THEIR MIDST. THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY INTERNATIONAL GERMPLASM ORGANISATIONS ARE A BRILLIANT DEMONSTRATION OF THE SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLANT QUARANTINE MISSION. WE SHOULD KEEP IN COUNTENANCE THE WORKINGS OF SOME OF OUR PARTICIPATING INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS HERE - LIKE THE INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IRRI) IN THE PHILIPPINES, THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR MAIZE AND WHEAT IMPROVEMENT (CIMMYT) IN MEXICO, THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE DRY AREAS (ICARDA) IN SYRIA, THE INTERNATIONAL CROPS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE SEMI-ARID TROPICS (ICRISAT) IN INDIA,

11/-

AND THE INSTITUTE FOR PLANT PROTECTION (IPP)  
AND PLANT PROTECTION RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
(IPO), BOTH IN THE NETHERLANDS.

THESE REPUTABLE ORGANISATIONS HAVE  
PROFOUND INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PLANT  
QUARANTINE SERVICES IN THEIR COUNTRIES.  
IRRI, FOR INSTANCE, FOLLOWS TO THE LETTER,  
THE QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS OF THE  
PHILIPPINES AND THOSE OF THE IMPORTING  
COUNTRIES IN PROCESSING AND TREATING SEEDS  
BEFORE THE ISSUANCE OF PHYTOSANITARY  
CERTIFICATES. POSTENTRY CLEARANCE,  
FUMIGATION, SEED INSPECTION, SEED HEALTH  
TESTING AND TREATMENTS ARE IN ORDER BEFORE  
SEEDS ARE RELEASED TO IRRI SCIENTISTS. TO  
FACILITATE QUICK AND SOUND ACTION IRRI HAS

12/-



AGREED THAT A PLANT QUARANTINE OFFICER BE  
DETAILED FULL-TIME IN ITS SEED HEALTH UNIT.  
THIS IS A CLASSIC CASE OF COLLABORATION  
WHICH, I THINK, IS WORTH CONSIDERING BY OTHER  
GERMPLASM CENTRES AS WELL. ✓

CIMMYT'S OWN SEED HEALTH UNIT ALSO  
COLLABORATES CLOSELY WITH THE MEXICAN PLANT  
PROTECTION AND QUARANTINE ORGANISATION.  
INDEED, ALL OTHER RESEARCH CENTRES I  
MENTIONED EARLIER HAVE ALSO BEEN COOPERATING,  
LARGELY WITH THEIR QUARANTINE COUNTERPARTS.  
IT IS AN IDEAL SET-UP, ONE THAT FUSES GOALS  
OF BOTH THE QUARANTINE SECTOR AND THE  
SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY WITH REASONABLE MATCHED  
DESIGNS RELEVANT TO THE TIMES AND  
AGRICULTURAL MODERNISATION. IT IS AGREED

THAT CROPPING PRACTICES AND IMPROVED GENETIC MAKE-UP ARE TWO OF THE MAJOR FACTORS FOR IMPROVED CROP PRODUCTIVITY WHICH CAN HELP MEET THE WORLD'S INCREASING DEMAND FOR BETTER AND MORE FOOD.

THERE IS A GROWING ENTHUSIASM IN GERMLASM WORK, AS PROVEN BY THE INCREASING NUMBER OF GERMLASM INTRODUCTIONS IN THE ASEAN REGION. TO COPE WITH THE TIDE OF GERMLASM MOVEMENT IN THE REGION, THERE IS A NEED, I FEEL, FOR EACH MEMBER COUNTRY TO FORM COMMITTEES, WHERE EXPERTS IN ALL FIELDS OF SCIENCES IN THE COUNTRY CAN BE POOLED TOGETHER TO HELP THE PLANT QUARANTINE SERVICE ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE IMPORTATION OF GERMLASM MATERIALS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE

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PHILIPPINES, A BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN CREATED TO FACILITATE APPROVAL OF AN IMPORT PERMIT FOR BIO-ENGINEERED ORGANISMS, WHERE SCIENTISTS INDICATE THE SOURCE OF THE ORGANISMS, PURPOSES OF THE EXPERIMENT AND THE METHODOLOGY ON THE USE OF SUCH MICROORGANISMS. THE PROCESSING OF THE PERMIT TO IMPORT MICROORGANISMS WOULD NEED FURTHER EVALUATION ACCORDING TO PEST RISK CATEGORY,

LIKE OTHER REGULATORY PRACTICES, QUARANTINE EVOKES MEANINGS CORRELATED TO SANCTIONS AND THEREBY APPEARS AS IMPEDIMENTS TO THE FLOW OF GENETIC RESOURCES. QUITE THE CONTRARY, QUARANTINE WHOLLY COMPLEMENTS GENETIC CONSERVATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT. IT BEHOVES THEN, THAT QUARANTINE MEASURES WILL

ALLOW FOR THE EVOLUTION OF PLANT SPECIES IN A  
PEST-FREE ENVIRONMENT.

AFTER OBSERVING AND SHARING EACH  
OTHER'S EXPERIENCES, I HOPE YOU CAN ALL  
CREATE INNOVATIVE WAYS, NOT OBSTRUCTIONS,  
THAT WILL EXHIBIT THE ESSENTIAL IMPORTANCE OF  
PLANT QUARANTINE IN GERMPLASM WORK. I ALSO  
HOPE THAT YOU WILL ALL ADOPT A RESOLUTE MOVE  
TO DISSEMINATE THE OUTCOME OF YOUR DECISIONS  
AFTER THIS TWO-DAY MEET. RECENTLY, THE  
UNITED NATIONS OVERWHELMINGLY RESOLVED FOR  
THE CREATION OF A NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATION ORDER. THIS CALL FROM THE UN  
IS RELEVANT TO MY ADMONITION THAT YOUR  
PARTICIPATION TO THIS SYMPOSIUM SHOULD NOT  
END AFTER ITS OFFICIAL CLOSING TOMORROW. MY

15/-