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THE INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

January 22, 1983

Dear Alban,

I enclose for your information a copy of a letter written by Dr. Norman E. Borlaug nominating IRRI for the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize. I shall discuss with the members of the Programme Committee on the evening (7 p.m., at the IRRI Guesthouse) of Sunday, 23rd January possible methods by which independent support can be generated in favor of this nomination.

With my best regards.

Yours sincerely,

*M. S. Swaminathan*

M. S. Swaminathan  
Director General

Dr. Alban F. Gurnett-Smith  
c/o IRRI Guesthouse

Enclosure:  
a/s

:eby

*Similar letters sent to Programme Com. members.*

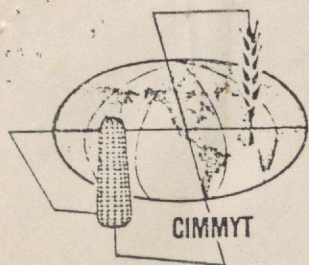
DR. NORMAN E. BORLAUG

(CONFIDENTIAL)

CENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE MEJORAMIENTO DE MAIZ Y TRIGO

INTERNATIONAL MAIZE AND WHEAT IMPROVEMENT CENTER

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December 11, 1982

Dear Professor Sverdrup,

I have great pleasure in enclosing details of the work done by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) located at Los Baños in the Philippines for being considered for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1983.

The International Rice Research Institute was established in 1960 at a time when many experts had concluded that the densely populated regions of South Asia will face some of the worst famines in human history during the 1970s. Most of the countries in South and Southeast Asia have rice as the major staple. Also, rice farming systems provide most of the jobs to landless labor families in rural areas. Thus, the status of nutrition as well as quality of life of rural families are closely linked to the fate of the rice crop. In the developing nations of Asia, rice yields had remained stagnant between 1 to 1.5 tons/hectare for over a century. The average annual growth rate in rice production was as low as 0.1% before 1950. It is in this background of an impending human tragedy of unprecedented dimensions that the International Rice Research Institute was established. The scientists of this Institute have worked with single-minded devotion during the last 20 years and have succeeded in converting despair into hope. The enclosed documents including the assessment made by an independent panel of eminent experts on the work of the Institute would show the widespread impact of the new technologies developed by IRRI. In most countries of South and Southeast Asia, the rate of growth in food production has remained above the rate of growth in population during the last decade. Also, several crops of rice are grown in a year where only one uncertain crop grew before. The principal contributions of IRRI could be summarized as follows:

1) Development and popularization of new technologies which have helped to elevate and stabilize the productivity of rice and rice-based cropping systems

2) Development of technologies which can help to improve the production under drought-prone and flood-prone conditions as well as in soil environments affected by problems such as salinity and alkalinity

3) Improvement of the income and employment potential of rice farming systems

4) Human resource development leading to the training of about 3000 rice scientists who are enhancing national R & D capability

5) Analysis of the constraints responsible for the gap between potential and actual yields in the fields of small farmers

6) Study of the consequences of new technologies from the ecological, energy consumption and employment and income generation aspects

Above all, IRRI's great contribution has been in developing a well-knit family of rice research workers in the entire rice growing world, all bound together by a determination to serve rice farming families. The Third World Foundation for Social and Economic Studies has brought out the value of such teamwork in the following words in the Citation relating to the Award of the Third World Prize, 1982 to IRRI:

"Over the last two decades when so much else faltered in the struggle against hunger and poverty, IRRI's quiet, persistent, highly professional and wholly dedicated work touched the lives of millions in the Third World, improving the human condition in truly practical and lasting ways. That such a contribution should have been the result of fruitful cooperation between scientists and food technology experts from developed and developing countries alike is in itself a cause of satisfaction and encouragement."

The following extract from a statement made by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Director General, IRRI while accepting the 1982 King Baudouin Award for Agricultural Research on behalf of IRRI would bring out clearly the power of cooperative endeavour among farm scientists located in developing countries. The example taken is the disease and pest resistant rice variety IR 36 which is cultivated in over 10-million hectares all over Asia.

"IR 36 represents the unusual power and opportunity which the birth of IRRI has conferred upon rice scientists. It has in its parentage 13 varieties, including a wild species, Oryza nivara, drawn from six countries. Even more significant is the fact that the actual selection for pest resistance was done in 'hot spot' locations in several countries.

Thus, a part of the selection work was done at different locations in the Philippines; seeds of F<sup>5</sup> lines were sent to Indonesia where this disease occurred in a severe form in the South Sulawesi region. Seeds of promising F<sup>6</sup> lines were sent to the Central Rice Research Institute in Cuttack, India, for screening for resistance to gall midge. In this manner, lines which were resistant to blast, bacterial blight, grassy stunt, tungro, green leafhopper, brown planthopper, stem borer and gall midge were selected. The actual naming and release of IR 36 were done by the national research systems and the variety testing and release authorities of the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, Kampuchea, Laos and Malaysia. Testing of IR 36 is in progress in Burma, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, China, Malagasy, Mozambique and Zambia."

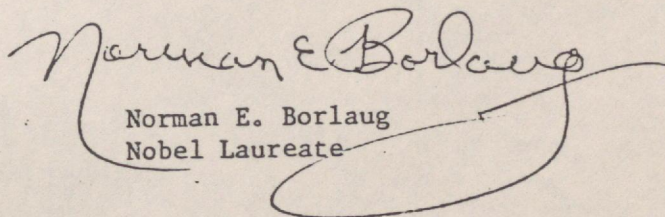
"Thus, there would have been no IR 36 had there not been a collaborative network of rice scientists working in different countries as members of a well-knit family. The organization of such cooperative networks of research workers, all working towards the same goal represents one of the most exciting and fruitful adventures in applied agricultural research in human history. The 'heterosis effects' generated by the spread of "genes for cooperation" among rice scientists as well as the opportunities opened up for the planned piling up of desirable genes and for the rigorous rejection of susceptible material through screening for reaction to pests and diseases at natural 'hot spot' locations and under artificial conditions, have enlarged the frontiers of accomplishments possible through agricultural research."

It is my conviction that but for the progress made in improving the well being of rice farming families in rural Asia, many countries in this region where over 60% of the world's population live would have been beset with socio-political chaos. Peace in this region is largely due to agricultural progress. IRRI's work is a significant contribution in fighting the famines of food and jobs. It would therefore be appropriate to remind, once again, world leaders that agricultural progress holds the key to agrarian and rural prosperity and socio-political stability. In addition, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Rice Research Institute will be a symbol of the value of cooperation among nations in harnessing science for human happiness without consideration of race, color, religion, and political ideology. The world needs such a message urgently.

I shall be happy to provide any other information you may need.

With my regards.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Norman E. Borlaug". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Norman E. Borlaug  
Nobel Laureate

Professor Jakob Sverdrup  
Director  
The Nobel Institute  
Oslo, Norway

Enclosures