

World-renowned social scientist conferred National Scientist Award

World-renowned social scientist, Dr Gelia T. Castillo, was conferred the rank and title of National Scientist by Philippine President Joseph Ejercito Estrada recently. Dr Castillo has been an IRRI consultant for many years. She is known in international circles for her expertise in the social sciences and for her work on women in rice farming.

The award recognized her “distinguished individual achievement in the social sciences and outstanding contribution to national development.” Dr Castillo was also cited for her “excellence in sociological research and achievements that have contributed immensely to the acceptance and growth of empirically based social science both in the Philippines and abroad.” The citation also noted her “rare ability to synthesize existing works and to elucidate difficult theories and concepts so that they become accessible to policymakers and ordinary citizens.”

The award also highlighted Dr Castillo’s “commitment to put science in the service of equity and ethics, manifested in her work that puts into practice her belief that the best of science and scientists must be devoted to the problems of those who have less in life.”

As IRRI consultant, Dr Castillo, served as chair of the outstanding Young Women in Rice Science project in 1994. She is a member of the Institute’s Ethics Review Committee and advises IRRI on the socioeconomic and cultural impact of rice research and specific country-related issues.

Dr Castillo is professor emeritus of rural sociology at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and an early advocate of the concept of participatory development. She authored *All in a grain of rice* and has served on the board of the International Development Research Centre (Canada), International Potato Center (Peru), International Service for



G.T. Castillo



R. Wang

National Agricultural Research (The Netherlands), International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (Kenya), and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (Italy).

Ren Wang: new IRRI deputy director general for research

IRRI has a new deputy director general for research. Dr Ren Wang, former vice president of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), joins the Institute in January 2000.

Director General Ronald Cantrell said in an announcement that, “Dr Wang brings to IRRI not only impressive leadership experience and an excellent scientific background but also a direct link to China’s valuable contributions and traditions of scientific excellence in rice research. His joining the Institute will undoubtedly strengthen ties between IRRI and China and provide our research efforts with an important boost at the start of the new millennium.”

Formal links with China were established in 1982 with CAAS as the lead agency. In 1987, the China-IRRI liaison office was formally established in Beijing.

As CAAS vice president, Dr Wang was responsible for strategic planning, priority setting, and developing major

agricultural research programs. He also served on the expert advisory panel that drafted China’s national guidelines for the development of agricultural science and technology (2001-2015). He was likewise a member of the expert committee charged with developing guidelines and making strategic plans for the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Before joining CAAS, Dr Wang was deputy director of the International Institute of Biological Control of the Commonwealth Agricultural Research Bureaux in the United Kingdom. He was also a member of a specialist panel on science and strategy that was part of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) System review in 1998. He was a Rockefeller Foundation PhD fellow from 1982 to 1985. In 1991, he received an award for his outstanding contribution to China’s modernization from the Education Commission and the Ministry of Personnel Management.

Emil Q. Javier appointed as TAC chair

Former IRRI board member and former president of the University of the Philippines (UP) System, Dr Emil Q. Javier, is the new chair of CGIAR’s Technical



E.Q. Javier

Advisory Committee (TAC) effective January 2000. Dr Javier was the unanimous choice of the search committee whose recommendation was fully endorsed by the CGIAR system.

Dr Javier's distinguished national and international career as a scientist, administrator, and government leader and his involvement with the CGIAR system as chair of the Secretariat Review Team and vice chair of the IRRI Board of Trustees, will help reposition the international panel as an important mechanism for scientific research and economic development.

The CGIAR advisory committee provides independent but strategic scientific advice and guidance to investors in setting their agricultural priorities and resource allocations.

"Dr Javier is naturally suited to join the eminent line of TAC chairs established by the renowned Australian scientist, Sir John Crawford. He is particularly suited to provide the CGIAR with strategic advice and guidance as it confronts the challenges that lie ahead," said Dr Ismail Serageldin, CGIAR chair, in formally announcing the appointment in Washington.

Dr Javier was president of the UP System from 1993 to 1999 and served as Philippine minister of science from 1985 to 1986. He also served as director-general of the Taiwan-based Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center and a member of the World Food Prize Selection Committee. He is a member of the Philippine Academy of Science and Technology, the Third World Academy of Science, and the World Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Padolina appointed as DDG for partnerships

Dr William G. Padolina was recently appointed by the IRRI board as the Institute's new deputy director general for partnerships.

Before this appointment, he served as IRRI's director for external relations, where he led several different units, all of them involved with the Institute's many different partners and collaborators. His responsibilities included resource mobilization, relations with the Philippines, IRRI's research activities with other countries, and matters relating to intellectual property rights, training of rice scientists, science publishing, and public awareness.

IRRI's partnerships include relations with national agricultural research systems, technology evaluation networks, research networks and consortia, bilateral national and shuttle research programs as well as joint ventures.

Under Dr Padolina's leadership, IRRI expects to increase, strengthen, and enhance national research capacities in the region, and ensure greater collaboration across political borders and national barriers.

Dr Padolina was a former Cabinet member in the Philippine government, where he served as secretary of Science and Technology from 1995 to 1998. He has also served as assistant to the president of the University of the Philippines System, vice chancellor of academic affairs of UPLB, and director of the National Institutes of Biotechnology and Applied Microbiology of UPLB.

W. G. Padolina



E. Javier

New INGER coordinator

Dr Edwin Javier was recently appointed as the new coordinator of the International Network for the Genetic Evaluation of Rice (INGER) based at the Genetic Resources Center, IRRI. Dr Javier was the plant breeder of the Cambodia-IRRI-Australia Project from 1993 to 1998.

Prior to that, he served as the FAO rice breeder in Sri Lanka (1981-87, 1989-93); FAO consultant to Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and DPR Korea; project leader on rice activities and tobacco breeding in several national agencies in the Philippines; and instructor, assistant and associate professor at UPLB.

The plant breeding and genetics specialist has received several national awards for his breeding work and teaching in crop science.

Angara and Nemenzo join IRRI Board

Former Senator Edgardo Angara, secretary of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, and Dr Francisco Nemenzo, the new president of the University of the Philippines System (UP) joined the IRRI Board of Trustees as a result of their appointment in their new positions.

Secretary Angara and Dr Nemenzo succeeded former Acting Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar and former UP President Emil Q. Javier, respectively. Dr

Javier will assume his new post as chair of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) on 1 January 2000, while Dr Dar has been appointed as director general of another CGIAR center, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT) based in India.

In welcoming the two new Board members, Dr Ronald P. Cantrell, IRRI's director general, said that the Institute was very fortunate to have access to the experience, knowledge, and expertise of both Secretary Angara and Dr Nemenzo. "We are looking forward to working with them because of their excellent educational credentials. I am sure they will make a big difference to the Board and to IRRI's operations, especially in the Philippines," Dr Cantrell said.

Secretary Angara served as Senate president from 1993 to 1995 and is best identified with landmark laws in education, health, and culture and the arts. He was the principal author of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act. He served previously on the IRRI Board of Trustees (as UP president) from 1981 to 1987 as well as on the Board of Trustees of the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management.

Dr Nemenzo was dean of the UP College of Arts and Sciences from 1976 to 1981, a senior research fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra from 1982 to 1985, UP faculty regent from 1988 to 1989, and served as chancellor of UP Visayas from 1989 to 1992. He coauthored the books *The Philippines After Marcos* (London/New York 1985) and *The Sovereign Quest: Freedom from Foreign Military Bases* (Manila 1988).

Dr Roelof Rabbinge of The Netherlands heads the 15-member Board of Trustees that governs IRRI. Dr Cantrell, Secretary Angara, and Dr Nemenzo are *ex officio* members.

International experts make up the Board's other 12 members-at-large. They come primarily from rice-producing countries and donor entities.

They are Ms Makiko Arima-Sakai (communications and journalism, Japan); Dr Sjarifudin Baharsjah (agricultural



E. Angara



F. Nemenzo

economics, Indonesia); Dr E.A. Siddiq (genetics and plant breeding, India); Dr Hiroshi Fujimaki (genetics and plant breeding, Japan); Ms Angeline Saziso Kamba (public service and human resource management, Zimbabwe); Dr Lene Lange (microbiology, Denmark); Dr Calvin O. Qualset (genetics and genetic resources, United States); Dr Siene Saphangthong (agronomy, Lao People's Democratic Republic); Dr Emanuel Adilson S. Serrão (agronomy, Brazil); Dr Jian Song (engineering and education, People's Republic of China); and Dr Mechai Viravaidya (population and community development, Thailand).

Time names Swaminathan influential Asian

Dr M.S. Swaminathan, IRRI director general from 1982 to 1988, was named by *Time Magazine* as one of the 20 most influential Asians of the 20th century. In naming Swaminathan to the exclusive list, *Time* editors stated that "as father of India's Green Revolution, he brought blessings to the service of a hungry Asia."

As head of IRRI, Dr Swaminathan was cited for developing new and innovative approaches to training and technology sharing. He also forged stronger collaborative research ties with national agricultural programs and universities, sharpened the Institute's focus on sustainability, and had a sincere concern for the environment, equity, and the role of women. He was also praised for his constant

attention to the livelihoods and nutritional security of the poor.

Dr Swaminathan's work in crop genetics and sustainable agricultural development in India and the Third World earned him the first World Food Prize in 1987, the Tyler and Honda Prizes in 1991, and the UNEP Sasakawa Award in 1994.

Before joining IRRI, Dr Swaminathan had been the director of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (1966-71), director general of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (1972-80), and India's secretary of agriculture (1980-81). As secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation, he developed a strong food security system in India.

After leaving IRRI, he created the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation initially using funds from the prizes he received as part of the awards. The foundation is devoted to promoting environmental protection and sustainable agriculture.

The others on the *Time* list include Mohandas Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Corazon Aquino, and Emperor Hirohito.



M.S. Swaminathan



Dr Luisa P. Ejercito-Estrada, Philippine First Lady (on podium), keyed the Nutrition Conference held at IRRI on 5-7 October 1999. Others in the photo (from left to right) are Dr Samson C.S. Tsou, director general of the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center; The Hon. Minister Mahiuddin Khan Alamgir, state minister for Planning, Bangladesh; Dr Per Pinstrup Andersen, director general of the International Food Policy and Research Institute, and Dr Ronald P. Cantrell, IRRI director general.

IRRI hosts nutrition conference

Improving human nutrition through agriculture: the role of international agricultural research was the theme of an international conference on nutrition organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) at IRRI in October. The First Lady of the Philippines, Dr Luisa P. Ejercito-Estrada, keyed the opening program.

In her keynote address, the First Lady, a medical doctor, stressed the importance that the government has put on nutrition and health concerns. She said that food security is one of the key priorities of the current government administration. She cited some of the strategies that the government has undertaken to combat the problem of malnutrition, such as various food fortification projects and the national

advocacy movement on ending hidden hunger.

Dr Estrada challenged the participants in coming up with strategies for using agriculture as a valuable input in the campaign against micronutrient malnutrition. She enjoined international research organizations, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), the academe, and the industry represented in the conference to (1) breed and develop more nutrient-dense and nutrient-filled crops, especially staples, and (2) promote and encourage the production of micronutrient-rich food products.

The underlying goal of the conference was to bring international nutrition and international agricultural communities together to evaluate current partnerships and to identify promising areas for future partnerships. More than 60 scientists, nutrition experts,

policymakers, and representatives from international research centers, national agencies, academic institutions, NGOs, the donor community, and the private sector participated in the 3-day meeting.

During the conference, recent results from CGIAR efforts to enhance the nutrition impact of international agricultural research were presented and discussed. In particular, the results of 4 years of work evolving from the CGIAR Micronutrient Project were featured. This project, which involves four CGIAR centers (IFPRI, IRRI, CIMMYT, and CIP), seeks to breed food staple crops that are dense in micronutrients.

Source: *Public Awareness Unit and IRRI Hotline*