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# Employees express concern over HB 5095 and SB 2396



Rep. Roseller L. Barinaga (second from left) talks with Atty. Rico de Guzman (back to camera) of the ACCRA Law Office and Dr. Padolina after the House Committee on Labor and Employment executive session on HB 5095 on February 26 as CIE vice chair Rollie Torres listens.

**I**RRI employees, through the Council of IRRI Employees (CIE) have expressed concern over two proposed bills filed in the House of Representatives and in the Senate that could have far-reaching implications on the future of IRRI in the Philippines.

House Bill (HB) No. 5095 and Senate Bill (SB) No. 2396 seek to amend Article 3 of Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1620 that will remove the Institute's immunity privileges as an international organization with respect to labor rights.

The CIE has been in the forefront of this issue since last year when it started undertaking a communication and

information campaign for the staff about PD 1620 and other vital issues related to labor and workers' rights.

At this writing, 586 of the 671 nationally recruited staff (NRS) have signed the CIE-initiated *IRRI employees' position paper on HB 5095 and SB 2396 otherwise known as the IRRI Workers' Rights Act* for distribution to congressmen,

senators, and other sectors.

The CIE and its umbrella organizations—AISAS, AIRESS, IFSA, and SINoP—also collaborated with NRS in producing the pamphlet entitled *Why IRRI workers say NO to House Bill 5095 (IRRI Workers Act) and Senate Bill 2396* and the flyer *Pakiusap: Pigilan ang Senate Bill 2396* (Appeal: Stop Senate Bill 2396).

HB No. 5095 is being sponsored by Representatives Satur C. Ocampo, Crispin B. Beltran, and Liza L. Maza of Party List-Bayan Muna, Roseller L. Barinaga (Zamboanga del Norte, 2<sup>nd</sup> District), Krisel Lagman Luistro (Albay, 1<sup>st</sup> District), Ernie D. Claret (Misamis Occidental, 1<sup>st</sup> District), Berthobal R. Ancheta (Bukidnon, 2<sup>nd</sup> District), Victor R. Sumulong (Antipolo City, Lone District), Gerry A. Salapuddin (Basilan,

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## IRRI expenditures in the Philippines

- IRRI spent an estimated P811 million in the Philippines, overall, in 2002.
- Of that, P210 million was spent on the salaries of nationally recruited staff working in Los Baños.
- Another P50 million was spent on other staff such as Kabesilya, janitors, and security guards.
- P314 million pesos was spent on equipment, as well as goods and services etc. in Laguna, mainly in Los Baños.
- Overall, the Institute estimated it spent about 34% of its budget in Laguna. That is P574 million, or about P1.57 million per day.

"We should fight for our labor rights and not allow others to dictate upon us their selfish agenda. We are the legitimate workers of IRRRI. I believe that the approval of the bill will affect the harmony of the present and future workers at IRRRI. We should initiate mass action to let our legislators understand that the passing of the bills has already bypassed and abused IRRRI workers' rights," IFSA president **Carlos Huelma** said.

"I attended yesterday's (March 20) full-house seminar at Chandler Hall. I was impressed with the open forum after Atty. Gloria's presentation. It is apparent that most of the IRRRI staff are not in favor of the proposed bills (HB 5095 and SB 2396) aimed at removing the immunity of IRRRI as far as labor rights are concerned.

"I agree to the suggestion that CIE must initiate a signature campaign among the IRRRI employees to show that majority of the employees are not in favor of this amendment. This is in support of the CIE Resolution No. 2003-003 approved on 2003 March 18. Another idea is to conduct a referendum among the IRRRI staff to determine the true stand of the employees who are the ones who will be directly affected by the proposed amendment to PD 1620.

"The proposed referendum can be duly supervised by representatives from the Department of Labor and Employment, the House Committee on Labor and Employment (Lower and Upper Houses of Congress), and the Department of Foreign Affairs. The result of the referendum will then be forwarded to the Committee on Labor and Employment for deliberation and consideration. The legitimate IRRRI employees must show unity more than ever at this critical time because the future of IRRRI and its staff and their families is at stake here.

"It is dismaying to note that the sectoral congressmen heeded the complaints of the disgruntled minority group of former IRRRI employees who have an axe to grind against IRRRI and are now out to sabotage the Institute. This minority group is drum beating the rights of labor to justify their hidden agenda.

"These sectoral congressmen railroaded the bill in their closed-door meeting and which is now going on second reading in Congress. Since the Philippine Congress will be on its Lenten season recess, we still have the time to conduct both the signature campaign and the referendum to show the real pulse of the IRRRI employees who will be directly affected by the proposed bills if they

will be enacted into law.

"I hereby pledge my support to the CIE in whatever moves it will make to counter HB 5095 and SB 2396. More power to the CIE!" **Rey Rodriguez** of CSWS said.

**Pat Borlagdan** of AEU said: "The first logical step is to know what are the objectives of these bills. If one objective is to raise the NRS salary to international level, then IFSA must support it 1000%. If the objective is to put IRRRI under local labor laws—allowing the establishment of a labor union, then it will be a matter of individual or collective decision making with due participation of IRRRI management."

"It is very important for us to know the bases or reasons why the two bills were introduced in both the House and the Senate so that we can accurately address the concerns expressed therein. If necessary, I think, all sectoral organizations (other than CIE) should respond (for or) against the bills and send the responses to the House and the Senate. This should be in addition to CIE's reaction or answer to the bill's claim. It will be very nice if all of us sign the petition for sending ASAP to both the Senate and the House TO EXPRESS OUR CONCERNS. Therefore, I and other concerned IRRRI employees favor the existing PD 1620 and oppose the proposed amendment of Congress. But we request that management respect the pronouncement of the late Dr. Marcos R. Vega when he said that PD 1620 should not be used against employees and should respect the rights and prerogatives of the CIE," **Domingo Tabbal** of CSWS, a former CIEM chair, suggested.

**Gigi Caballero** of VIS/CPS agreed that "it's really good to have protection on labor rights." However, Ms. Caballero said, "we must also consider the possible consequences of the bills, e.g., IRRRI transferring to another country that could provide complete immunity. If that happened, the purpose for which the bills were created will be of no use."

"I'd like to think that retaining IRRRI's immunity with respect to labor rights is still better if the long-term implication would be losing the confidence of our donors. I'm not sure if I understand matters correctly but this is what I 'heard' during the presentation. However, I wish that while IRRRI enjoys the immunity in many ways, I hope that the staff will also enjoy some of the more important privileges of being in an international organization such as tax exemption," **Gina Zarsadias** of the Training Center said.

"Looking at the bill on the surface

conveys a message that it is truly for the good of employees. But, upon knowing the people who are working for its passage, the possible consequences are scary," **Mila Ramos**, head of Library and Documentation Services, said.

"The groups that are lobbying for this bill are not the true representatives of IRRRI employees but they enjoy the support of party list representatives in Congress. They are also the leaders of activist groups holding rallies very often, and they carry placards saying negative things about the Institute and suggesting IRRRI's ouster from the Philippines," Ms. Ramos said.

"With unrest being sown in the hearts of IRRRI employees, it is possible that the bill will encourage the holding of frequent strikes in the future. This will cause work stoppage and, presumably, with many activist groups supporting the strikes, these would last very long. With this scenario, our donors might change their minds and give their money to other institutions that are more stable. This might lead to the closure of IRRRI," she said.

"Without international immunity, IRRRI might be subjected to political pressures. With pressure from local politicians, the Board might decide to transfer IRRRI to another country like what the ICLARM Board decided to do. What will happen to 671 NRS who are now relying on IRRRI for their basic and other needs? What about those who were hired through agencies, like security guards, janitors, laborers, etc.? At this time when jobs are scarce and most of the IRRRI employees are not young anymore, getting a new job is a remote possibility," Ms. Ramos said.

"**HB - Hotta Bañamos!** If IRRRI's going to get out of the Philippines, it's going to be Hotta! Hotta! Bañamos! It will put Los Baños and IRRRI under a hot shower! It will strip Los Baños of its title as an 'international town'. Others might say that Los Baños is thus less worthy to be a Special Science and Nature City of the Philippines. IRRRI is one of the obvious reasons why Los Baños was proclaimed as an Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences Community," **Emmy Ballefin**, head of Central Registry Services, said.

"**SB - Shrinking Bread and Butter!** It will mean **Shrinking Bread and Butter** for many because of unemployment for the staff and less livelihood opportunities for the neighborhood," Ms. Ballefin added.

**Jun Nimedez** of MMS emphasized: "Losing immunity would be bad for IRRRI because our sponsors/donors would be given limitations in providing us with their utmost support. I think when immunity is removed, taxes would be charged upon the donations, and

would likely drive our sponsors away. Their support is essential to the progress of our research since without it, our finances would not be able to hold up our current employment.”

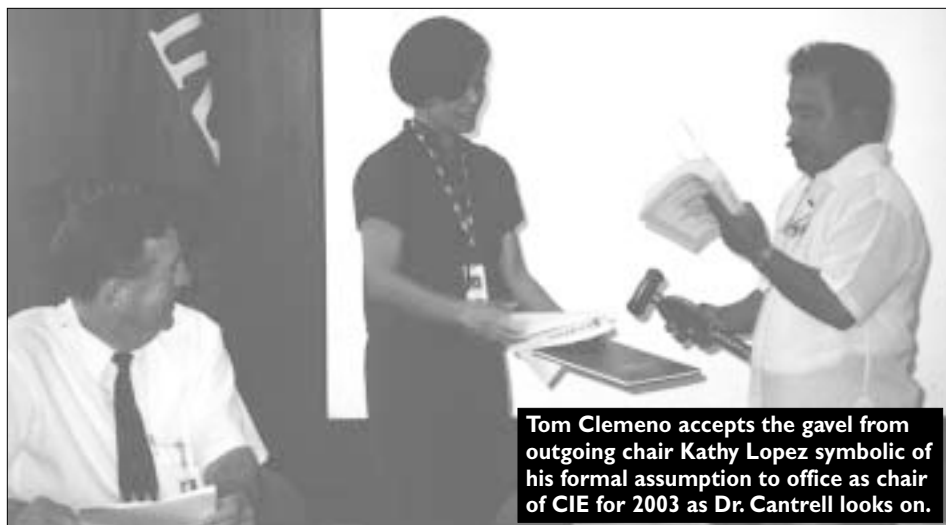
“We all want labor rights, but labor unions in IRRRI, I think, will not be good for us,” **Nestor Malabuyoc** of PPS said. “Labor disputes could only scare away the already small number of donors. Delays in research will not produce good results, only additional costs. Although IRRRI believes that it has protected the rights of its employees and provided them with the benefits according to law, I think that these rights should be reviewed thoroughly,” he added.

“Generally, I believe the bills (HB 5095 & SB 2396) have impending negative impact on IRRRI as an international organization. This may sound mean, but the research functions of IRRRI may be unintentionally affected by difficulties such as court disputes, donor pullout, and others. If the law is supposed to be for the benefit of IRRRI workers, then there should have been clear and proper consultation with legitimate IRRRI employees first before the amendment. This issue requires careful scrutiny as well as established communication with the authority (congress/senate) so that IRRRI’s voice will be heard,” **Reycel Maghirang** of PBGB said.

For **Fermin Junsay** of PPS: “If and when HB 5095 and SB 2396 are passed into law, the immunity of IRRRI with regard to labor rights will be waived and all sorts of problems may result. This may be a success for those workers who initiated the bills but a bad sign for those people who are still at IRRRI. If the BOT and other CGIAR top brass decide to move IRRRI out of the country, who do you think will be the victors? Who do you think will lose?”

“*Isa lang po ang aking panalangin at pakiusap, kasabay ng panawagan sa lahat ng ating mga kasamang manggagawa: Hindi po natin dapat pahintulutang wasakin ang katahimikan ng ating maayos na paglilingkod. Ito po ay hindi para sa ating kinabukasan kundi para sa kinabukasan ng ating mga anak, ng lahat ng mamamayan ng Los Baños, ng Laguna, ng Pilipinas at maging ang buong Asya at mundo na umaasa sa pagkaing mula sa bigas* (I have only one prayer and appeal, including a call to all coworkers: Let us not allow others to destroy our peaceful work. This is not for our future but for the future of our children, the citizens of Los Baños, of Laguna, of the Philippines, and the whole of Asia and the world who depend on rice),” **Boyet Aldipollo** of Food and Housing Services said.

## Staff involvement in 2003 activities needed, says DG



**Tom Clemeno accepts the gavel from outgoing chair Kathy Lopez symbolic of his formal assumption to office as chair of CIE for 2003 as Dr. Cantrell looks on.**

**T**he current congressional deliberations on House Bill No. 5095, research and training programs, accelerated fund raising, the formation of “Team IRRRI,” and the External Program Management Review (EPMR) are the major activities that will require considerable involvement by IRRRI staff this year.

Director General Ronald P. Cantrell said during the turnover and induction of 2003 CIE representatives on March 14 that House Bill 5095, which seeks to strip IRRRI of its immunity granted under Presidential Decree 1620, would jeopardize the Institute’s research operations and have a direct impact on all international organizations.

Dr. Cantrell expressed concern over the possibility of relocating the IRRRI headquarters in another country should congress pass the bill. “The Board of Trustees would have to look at this very carefully and make a decision because basically, the Philippines would be saying that it didn’t want us here,” he said.

The removal of IRRRI’s immunity would also jeopardize the world’s largest genebank at IRRRI. “It is not a national genebank. It belongs to everyone. We have to make sure that it is protected and that it would never fall within any regulation that would prohibit access to it,” Dr. Cantrell said.

IRRRI is also accelerating its fund raising activities this year. “We are also looking at ways to raise new project

funds. We think that there are good opportunities for that. We also have some good news about projects that are approved in principle that will help our funding base,” he said.

“Team IRRRI” aims to have a continuing dialogue on how the Institute can make changes to operate under a new environment. “We have to make change as part of our culture. We have to start looking and making sure that our staff understand the situation that we are in, and how we can communicate the need for becoming more agile,” Dr. Cantrell explained.

The CGIAR will appoint an External Program Management Review (EPMR) panel, now called External Evaluation (EE), to look into IRRRI’s finances and management. The yearlong process starts in September 2003 and ends in October 2004, Dr. Cantrell revealed.

Mahabub Hossain, head of Social Sciences Division, has been appointed as *ad hoc* IRRRI EPMR committee chair to start preparing information that will be requested by the EPMR panel.

“I would like to ask all members of the IRRRI staff to cooperate fully with this



committee and provide, on a timely basis, the information that is being requested. IRRRI's programs and staff are first rate and we want this review to accurately reflect this fact," Dr. Cantrell said.

CIE chair Tomas P. Clemeno, in accepting the chairmanship, admonished the CIE representatives "to look further into the future on how much we

**The CIE officers will have their hands full in 2003 responding to various issues affecting IRRRI and its employees under a new environment.**

can do for IRRRI as we have done in the past. The conditions during the early and middle part of IRRRI's existence were different. We have external factors to respond to such as donor fatigue and issues raised against the Institute such as its immunity privileges and labor rights violations."

"We are now put on the defensive end trying to respond to these allegations like a sword hanging above our heads. CIE is sponsoring a series of information campaign activities on PD 1620 and labor rights in international organizations," Mr. Clemeno said.

## **Council of IRRRI Employees CIE Report for 2002**

In 2002, a retrenchment year, the Council of IRRRI Employees (CIE)—the main channel of information between staff and Management, along with the sectoral organizations—continued to represent the interests of employees and served as the employees' voice in articulating their needs.

### **I. Health and medical benefits**

CIE representatives sit in the Institute's Medical and Insurance Task Force. In 2002, CIE participated in evaluating three health insurance carriers, including Aetna, Pryce Care, and PhilAmCare, which presented packages about coverage and premiums. Based on the presentations, the Task Force evaluated the offers and recommended the renewal of the contract with PhilAmCare until the end of June 2003.

CIE actively sought feedback from the staff about the performance of the current HMO provider. Through CIE intervention, several meetings were held with the provider and the broker, addressing some problems, including difficulty in obtaining letters of authorization (LOA), lack of information and prior notification about changes in procedures, need to accredit additional doctors and dentists, and other perennial issues.

### **2. Retrenchment concerns**

CIE was heavily involved in negotiation and liaison work between Management and the staff. Two CIE representatives were made members of Task Force One, the Institute committee that was tasked to prepare the guidelines for the retrenchment.

CIE arranged dialogues between staff and management to discuss retrenchment issues, including the retrenchment guidelines, retrenchment package, the multiplier and other benefits, and related concerns. Likewise, CIE initiated talks and met with management representatives, the DG, and BOT members to discuss the retrenchment package and the employees' requests. The Council also sought external legal opinion about retrenchment issues and concerns.

### **3. Personnel policies and procedures**

The Manual of Personnel Policies and Procedures, which was reviewed by CIE chairs, was uploaded on the Intranet in 2001, but underwent further revisions in 2002. The updated file is now available in the public folder under HRS or in the Intranet at <http://cpssrv2/hrs/HRSPolicies/policies20-20nrs20policies20and20procedures20updated20january202003.doc>. The Standing Committee on Personnel Policies further reviewed the Code of Discipline. The Code, which was appended to the Personnel Policies, was finalized and copies were distributed to CIE for dissemination. The updated file has also been uploaded on the Intranet at: <http://cpssrv2/hrs-er/hrserpolicies/irri20code20of20discipline.doc>.

### **4. Employee assistance program**

CIE worked with the Employee Relations (ER) group to draw up a program of interventions for retrenched employees and remaining staff in consultation with the sectoral organizations. The employee assistance program included livelihood training programs, counseling, job fairs, investment forums, focus

group discussions, and other interventions.

### 5. Voluntary assistance program (VAP)

A voluntary assistance program was set up with the help of Employee Relations, which initiated the project in 2001. VAP is an independent fund intended to help address the need for financial loans for medical and hospitalization of staff. It seeks to encourage volunteerism among employees by asking them to donate the money equivalent of their excess sick leaves or donate cash for the funds. The mechanics and implementing guidelines of the program were finalized in 2002, and VAP was launched in December 2002.

An initial fund was set up with the help of Management, who pledged P100,000 for the fund. Cash donations from staff were also received. CIE also organized a musical concert in December to produce some funds for the program. CIE decided to regularly undertake such fund-raising activities in collaboration with the sectoral organizations to raise money for the program. The VAP Committee was organized and an initial organizing meeting was held in December to discuss the committee's terms of reference and plans.

### 6. Retirement savings program (RSP)

The RSP Committee (with 2 members from CIE) invited Miravite and the two banks managing IRRI's funds—Equitable PCI Bank and BPI—to discuss in a seminar in November 2002 how the retirement fund is being managed. The RSP Handbook for employees was finalized, printed, and distributed during the RSP seminar.

### 7. Food and monitoring

CIE and the heads of all the sectoral organizations are members of the Institute's Food and Monitoring Service Committee. CIE takes an active part in monitoring the food services of the

concessionaires. This year, a survey of Sallimel's, one of the two concessionaires, was undertaken. Questionnaires were distributed to staff and survey results were collated by CIE and presented to the committee.

### 8. Information campaign on PD 1620 and workers' rights at IRRI

A house bill (HB 5095), authored by Rep. Satur Ocampo and several other congressmen, has been filed and is now in the lower house for consideration. A parallel bill (SB 2396) has also been proposed in the Senate. As a result of this, CIE and some Management representatives attended a public hearing on the bill in October 2002. To promote understanding about PD1620 and other important issues related to labor and workers' rights, CIE and Management decided to undertake a communication and information campaign for the staff and other outside sectors that involve various mechanisms for creating awareness and understanding about IRRI's status as an interna-

tional organization and as a fair employer. A film showing about the congressional hearing was arranged and copies of the various documents related to the issue (diplomatic immunity of IRRI, Supreme Court rulings, CIE documents, etc.) were circulated and posted on the intranet and public folders for staff to access.

### 9. Constitutional amendments

In 2002, an ad hoc committee was created to study the council's constitution and by-laws (CBL). The sectoral organizations were requested to review their own CBLs and that of CIE and to submit suggestions for changes. This is an ongoing activity.

### 10. Sandiwa and other information dissemination activities

Bulletin boards around the campus were revived and were used for disseminating information about the retrenchment and other important staff concerns. A CIE public folder was also set up in Outlook for posting important documents and minutes of previous CIE meetings. In addition, sites for the sectoral organizations and CIE were also activated in the

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## Abengania calls for unity among AIRESS members



Jonathan "Jojo" Abengania of PBGB, president of AIRESS, called on the members to unite in the face of this latest challenge to IRRI's survival in the Philippines. Jojo and other officers of AIRESS were inducted into office on March 21 by Dr. William G. Padolina. He succeeded Artemio "Jun" Madrid. Other officers inducted included: Rolly Santos, vice president; Ruben Chavez, secretary; Ariel Nuque, treasurer; Willy Lanip, auditor; and Joe Marasigan, PRO. Also inducted were the members of the board of directors, namely, Irma Tamisin, Virgilio Ancheta, Joey Talay, Jun Madrid, Efren Viquera, Oca Gonzales, Totoy Ortiz, and Danny Vasquez. CIE chair Tom Clemenno discussed House Bill No. 5095 and Senate Bill No. 2396 during the ceremonies as part of the council's information campaign on the proposed repeal of PD 1620. AIRESS is the largest sectoral organization under the umbrella of the CIE, with more than 300 members.

## IRRI-PhilRice-NIA launch aerobic rice technology in RP



**Dr. Cantrell underscores the holistic approach of the aerobic rice project before farmers, PhilRice, and NIA staff.**

**T**he introduction of aerobic rice technology as a water-saving option for rice production will have a great impact throughout the Philippines because of the holistic approach, the international partnership, and the participatory role of farmers in the project.

The increasing water scarcity, which threatens the sustainability of lowland rice, is the primary reason behind the use of aerobic rice. The aerobic rice project is a joint effort of IRRI, the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), and farmers. IRRI and PhilRice scientists employ integrated weed control, fertilizer, and water management techniques, high (laser land leveling) and low (“lithao”) technologies in land preparation in aerobic rice production.

Speaking during the introduction of the aerobic rice technology to the Philippines in Barangay Dapdap in Paniqui, Tarlac on 2003 March 12, Director General Ronald P. Cantrell said the aerobic rice project sought to address the difficulties that farmers encounter in growing rice profitably while preserving the quality of the

environment.

“There are no simple solutions that can make rice growing profitable and environmentally sound. This particular project addresses the issues on selecting varieties, land preparation, seeding and seedling establishment, water and fertilizer management, and weed management,” Dr. Cantrell said.

“It is very easy for researchers to stay in the laboratory and in experiment stations and design technologies. But these technologies have to work. We have found over time that the farmer has to be a full partner to make these technologies work. The farmer is a full member of this partnership. It is for this reason that I think this project can be



**Department of Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. (left) and IRRI Director General Dr. Ronald P. Cantrell cut the ceremonial ribbon to formally introduce to farmers the mechanical seeder, a machine used for direct seeding. Looking on are PhilRice Executive Director Leocadio Sebastian and Tarlac Governor Jose V. Yap.**



very successful, Dr. Cantrell concluded.

“I appreciate the fact that we are putting into action many of the things that we have talked about when I was appointed in government as presidential adviser. What we are looking for are applied research technologies to help our farmers. I am very appreciative that this partnership between the local government unit, IRRI, PhilRice, NIA, and the Department of Agriculture is really bearing fruit today through this aerobic rice technology program,” Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. said.

Mayor Elpidio P. Ibarra of Paniqui, in an interview with *Sandiwa*, thanked IRRI for introducing aerobic rice technology in his municipality, especially in Barangay Dapdap.

“*Malaki po ang pasasalamat namin sa inyong bagong teknolohiya na itimuturo sa aming mga magsasaka sapagkat ito po, kung magtatagumpay,*

*ay makakatulong sa kabubayan ng aking mga kabarangay* (Our big thanks to the new technology that you are teaching our farmers because this technology, if it succeeds, will help our *barangay* folks in their livelihood),” Mayor Ibarra said.

“*Napakabusay po ng teknolohiyang ito na galing sa IRRI dahil magkakaroon kami ng panibagong kaalaman sa pagsasaka lalo na sa pagtitipid sa paggamit ng tubig. Malaking bagay ito sapagkat 90 porsiyento sa amin ay mga magsasaka* (This is an excellent technology from IRRI because we will gain new knowledge in rice farming especially on ways of using less water. This is important because 90 percent of us are farmers),” Barangay Dapdap chair Felix Cleofas also told *Sandiwa*.

Water scientist Bas Bouman explained that during the past 10 years,

**Secretary Lorenzo (top left) visits the aerobic rice field test site. Top photo shows Dr. Cantrell, Gov. Yap, and Secretary Lorenzo testing the mechanical seeder. Below, a NIA official welcomes Dr. Ruben Lampayan, Dr. Bas Bouman, and Dr. Cantrell.**

IRRI, PhilRice, and NIA have been conducting research that would bring new technologies to farmers.

“The vision that we have is to develop a basket of different technologies from which farmers can choose, adopt, and optimize according to their specific needs and local conditions,” Dr. Bouman said.

Aerobic rice technology reduces the amount of water used in growing rice by as much as 50 percent. “Aerobic rice technology has yielded between 4 to 5 tons per hectare in test sites with water-scarce areas such as Barangay Dapdap and Central Luzon as the target areas. We are now confident in taking this technology out to the farmers. Together, we will develop it into a sustainable and profitable package that will give high yields and save a lot of work,” Dr. Bouman said.

“The best way to do that is through a combination of field experiment and working together with farmers who



**IRRI posters attract members of the media.**

have the experience in growing rice for decades,” Dr. Bouman said.

The executive director of PhilRice, Leocadio Sebastian, stressed before farmers that aerobic rice culture is still in the development process. “However, we have rice varieties like Apo, Magat (hybrid rice), and UPLRI-5 that can be used using aerobic technology,” Dr. Sebastian said.

“We need to do more careful research so that we can develop an aerobic variety that can be as good as hybrid rice or inbred varieties like IR64. This is our real objective. We thank IRRI

as our partner in propagating and in doing research in food technologies in the Philippines,” he said.

Secretary Lorenzo also ceremonially switched on 10 newly completed deepwell pumps in Tarlac under the Deepwell Irrigation Projects of NIA.

The farmers who attended the program visited the fields. “I feel that the holistic and farmer-participatory approach we are using to develop and disseminate water-saving technologies in Central Luzon is much appreciated and that we are on the right track to having impact,” Dr. Bouman said.

Around 700 people attended the event, including hundreds of farmers, irrigation managers, DA personnel, extension agents, and the media. IRRI staff present were Duncan Macintosh and Johnny Goloyugo, VIS; Ruben Lampayan, Domingo Tabbal, Lou Herrero, Lucio Caramihan, Mary Ann Burac, Lizzida Llorca, Ambrocio Castañeda, Artemio Madrid, Jr., Cesario de Mesa, Jr., Paul Belder, and Ria Tenorio of CSWS; Gary Atlin, PBGB; Florencia Palis and Pio Adan Cenas, SSD; Macky Montecillo, Training Center; and Ariel Javellana and Joe Ibabao, CPS.

## Effective presentation workshop successful



**T**he Effective Presentation Workshop sponsored by the Human Resources Services and the Training Center on March 11-12 was “very appropriate for scientists to learn and be reminded of the basics in scientific presentations.”

“The practical exercises were very effective in applying immediately what we learned. There should be more workshops for other staff and researchers. This is too good not to be shared,” the participants said.

Two PhilRice staff suggested that the workshop be one of the courses that IRRI offers to partner institutions to benefit more people.

The workshop focused on topics such as how to organize technical content and prepare for delivery, knowing your audience and handling nervousness, gestures, body language and vocal variety, power dressing, proper evaluation, and Powerpoint and

overhead projector handling. The resource speakers were mostly from Toastmasters International District 75 (Philippines).

Ian Wallace, the director for Human Resources and Administration, said the workshop was a laudable initiative because of the different cultures and the difficult communication environment at IRRI.

The successful participants were: Dante Adorada, Eric John Azucena, Devendra Dwivedi, Rebecca Laza, Serge Magadia, Lily Molina, Arlett Portugal, Jessica Rey, Darlene Sanchez, R. Venuprasad, Gina Zarsadias, Leilani Juliano, and Jennifer Tagubase.

**Director Ian Wallace (left) explains the multinational character of IRRI as one of the causes of communication problems. Inset, Mike Chua, the lieutenant governor for marketing of Toastmasters International District 75, talks about knowing the audience and handling nervousness. Menchu Bernardo, Mel Revilla, Lily Molina, and Jessica Rey (above) are all smiles during the workshop. Becks Laza (below) stresses a point during practical exercises.**



**Arlett Portugal is adjudged as best presenter.**

# IRRI Fire Brigade Training—no walk in the park

By Meg Yandoc



**W**hat have I gotten myself into?!

I am tired, hungry, bruised, scratched, sprained, nervous, worn-out—everything hurts. How did getting out of bed become so agonizing? Does curiosity always beget pain?

This was I, talking to myself after Day 1 of the IRRI Fire Brigade Training. Suddenly, my day at work wasn't about Web sites and writing anymore. It had become a battleground where my only enemy was fire—and to extinguish it, I had to conquer heat and smoke while wearing 54 pounds of basic fire fighting gear.

If you think you're physically fit, fire fighting has its ways of proving you wrong. This I realized after carrying a 70-pound charged hose over a distance of about 50 meters, dragging a 100-pound dummy back and forth, and crawling through a confined space with 13 pounds of rolled hose while wearing that heavy, almost unbearable, fireproof coat and all. I was reduced to nothing. And that was just the beginning.

Day 2: I cried on the second day. Without protective gear, we had to crawl inside a fire simulator—an old aluminum van converted to a training facility. As I climbed up the small entrance that descended to the floor, all I could see and breathe was smoke. I rushed towards the exit with big, fat tears. I was crying without wanting to. Being able to see daylight and breathe fresh air again was pure joy. I dreaded the thought of another training day.



Day 3: As if the weight of the basic gear was not enough to make me huff and puff and sweat, here comes the 35-pound self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Worn like a backpack, it connects to a face mask that makes me sound like Donald Duck when I talk and Darth Vader when I breathe. But walking around wearing it was easy, the air from the tank was crisp and cool, I had perfect access and control to all the valves, and a bell would ring if the tank was almost empty. I found a new best friend.

Little did I know that my “best friend” would turn out to be my worst tormenter. Running, crawling, and climbing with it, and I soon realized how deceitful the SCBA is. It pinned me down to the floor and hurt my back whenever I'd get up, the valves could turn themselves off when they hit the floor on a wrong angle, the mask could leak, anything could go wrong. I felt claustrophobic wearing the mask, it was a major effort trying to keep calm while chanting the words “don't panic”. In full gear, all 16 of us trainees were then blindfolded, two at a time, for a search and rescue drill. All fun disappeared that day. It was like joining the *Amazing Race* and *Fear Factor* in one go.

The last two days of training were the best. We put out real fires and spent more time inside the simulator. I learned to love the SCBA, the heavy suit, everything. The course not only taught me how to fight a fire, it taught me about teamwork, determination, and resourcefulness. It gave me a sense of fulfillment and pride knowing that I'm now a volunteer firefighter capable of saving property and the life of another person. In the end, it was well worth all the sweat and tears. As I slid my certificate in my drawer, it struck me—real firefighters are not just heroes, they're superheroes—in the truest sense of the word!

**Trainees (above) whoop it up after the training. The author (left) in her fire fighting gear.**

## They who are tough, brave, and committed

Sixteen hardy souls braved the smoke, fire, and the heavy equipment of a rigorous fire fighting training conducted by the Manila-based Emergency Resource Center and IRRI Fire Brigade instructors on March 12-14, 18, and 19 at the Institute and emerged better persons and committed members of the IRRI community.

The activities were difficult but they were fun. Face the challenge. Try it. There were no "casualties." I managed to survive. These are some of the comments of the new fire fighters at IRRI.

"The training is tough but we proved to be tough, too. Being a trained firefighter is a lot different from just being qualified. I encourage everyone who has the guts to try it. I hope not to use the skill but I'm ready," Nestor Malabuyoc of PPS said.

"On the first day it was scary," said Maria Judy M. Anicete of General Accounting, "especially when we went through the fire and the very thick smoke. You cannot see a thing, even the big flame—it was total darkness. I could hardly breathe. But after that, I learned that you have to deal with the fire and smoke to survive. With proper education and training, combined with the proper use of gadgets and techniques, I overcame the fear. One important thing that I also learned from this training is that "One need not be that physically strong, but should have the ability to face the challenge."

Jojo Guce of MSS commented: "I think the trainers did an excellent job. Their approach was very effective in terms of getting through to the trainees the required aptitude and attitude for the job. The exercises were difficult but they were fun."

Roderick B. Maligalig of General Accounting almost "quit the training for fear of wearing the heavy bunkers and the breathing apparatus. The activities were tough but there were no casualties. Thanks to the encouragement of my co-trainees, I managed to survive and finish the rigorous training."

### ● Future of IRRI . . . from page 1

Lone District), Carlos M. Padilla (Nueva Viscaya, Lone District), Wilfrido B. Villarama (Bulacan, 2<sup>nd</sup> District), Danton Q. Bueser (Laguna, 3<sup>rd</sup> District), Oscar S. Moreno (Misamis Oriental, 1<sup>st</sup> District), Arthur D. Defensor (Iloilo, 3<sup>rd</sup> District), Oscar S. Rodriguez (Pampanga, 3<sup>rd</sup> District), Nereus O. Acosta (Bukidnon, 1<sup>st</sup> District), J. Apolinario L. Lozada, Jr. (Negros Occidental, 5<sup>th</sup> District), Clavel A. Martinez (Cebu, 4<sup>th</sup> District), and Francis G. Escudero (Sorsogon, 1<sup>st</sup> District).

Senator Francis Pangilinan sponsored SB 2396.

The House Committee on Labor and Employment conducted a public hearing on HB 5095 on 2002 October 16. Deputy Director General for Partnerships, William G. Padolina, Senior Counsel Atty. Walfrido E. Gloria, then CIE chair Kathy Lopez, and other IRRI staff attended the hearing. Organized groups such as BISSIG and the Kilusang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KMP), among many others, also attended.

The committee met again in executive session on February 26 where Dr. Padolina, Atty. Gloria, CIE chair Tom Clemeno, Atty. Rico de Guzman of the ACCRA Law Office, and other IRRI staff attended.

After the congressional hearings, IRRI invited members of the House Committee on Labor and Employment, Foreign Affairs, and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to IRRI to show them the research activities of the Institute and engage them in fruitful and transparent dialogues on issues that affect the Institute's future in the Philippines.

IRRI received no responses from such invitations except for Rep. Krisel Lagman Luistro who is the vice chair of the House Committee on Labor

and Employment. She met with NRS during her visit to IRRI on February 28 where, among others, the role of CIE, security of tenure, and other employee benefits were discussed.

The House committee headed by Rep. Barinaga endorsed for second reading a revised version of HB 5095 and its counterpart SB 2396 that reads as follows:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

"SECTION 1. Article 3 of the Presidential Decree No. 1620 is hereby amended to read as follows: "The Institute shall enjoy immunity from any penal, civil and administrative proceedings, except insofar as that immunity has been expressly waived by the Director General of the Institute or his authorized representatives. **THIS IMMUNITY SHALL NOT APPLY WITH RESPECT TO THE RIGHTS OF LABOR.**

"SECTION 2. Declaration of IRRI workers' rights. The State shall afford full protection to the rights of the workers of the Institute to self-organization and peaceful concerted activities, including the right to strike in accordance with law. They shall be entitled to security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage. They shall also participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting their rights and benefits as may be provided by law.

"SECTION 3. Promotion of the



Vice chair Rollie Torres discusses some points about the CIE with Atty. Gloria and Atty. De Guzman before the start of the executive session on HB 5095.

principle of shared responsibility in settling labor disputes. The State shall promote the principle of shared responsibility between the Institute's workers and management and the preferential use of voluntary modes in settling disputes, including conciliation, and shall enforce their mutual compliance therewith to foster industrial peace.

"SECTION 4. Upon enactment of this law, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) shall immediately submit a written proposed amendment to all parties to the 1995 agreement recognizing the international legal personality of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), amending the Philippines' commitments to the rights of labor, as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and in pursuance of the country's commitments to the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions. The submission of the proposed amendment by the DFA shall not in any way prejudice the effectivity of this law.

"SECTION (5). All laws, decrees, rules and regulations, INCLUDING LETTERS OF INSTRUCTION or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

"SECTION (6). This Act shall take effect within fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation."

In his Thursday seminar on March

20 on the topic *IRRI as an international organization and workers' rights*, Atty. Gloria explained that the proposed amendment is inconsistent with Article 1 of PD 1620. The Philippine government under the said article recognizes IRRI as an international organization and accords it with an international status.

Atty. Gloria stressed that excluding labor or any other claims from its immunity would mean the withdrawal of the status of IRRI as an international organization. This is also contrary to international practice and customary law.

The Philippines is one of the 19 countries which signed an agreement on 1995 May 19 that recognized the legal personality of IRRI. By withdrawing such international recognition to the Institute, the Philippines will in effect lose its role as host to these countries.

The immunity privilege granted to international organizations such as IRRI is a political question that can only be resolved by the Executive branch of the government. PD 1620 is the "Headquarters Agreement" of IRRI and may not be repealed or amended by congress, Atty. Gloria said.

Is unionism the only recourse to settle labor disputes in IRRI as militant groups and their supporters in the legislature advocate?

Immunity privileges allow IRRI to carry out its scientific research and operations without hindrances brought

about by labor disputes. Like other international organizations, IRRI has an existing internal mechanism that settles labor-management disputes. Under the IRRI Code of Discipline, aggrieved employees are given due process. They can elevate their grievances to the IRRI Appeals Committee if they consider the decisions on their grievances as unreasonable or unjust. They can also seek the assistance of CIE which plays a major role in this area.

This mechanism complies with the due process requirement of law and is consistent with IRRI's status as an international organization, Atty. Gloria explained.

The existence of CIE and the four sectoral organizations—AISAS, AIRESS, IFSA, and SINOP—believe allegations that there is no right to self-organization at IRRI.

Has IRRI abused workers' rights as alleged by militant groups?

In its 43 years, IRRI has never subverted, overridden laws, and ignored the requirements of the Philippine government or any civil authority because of its immunity as an international organization. It is only in the country where such an unfounded allegation was raised by former IRRI and non-IRRI staff.

For example, despite budget shortfalls, the Institute met all of its obligations under the Philippine Labor Code, and in most instances even surpassed them, as a result of the Special Separation Program in November 1989, the Staff Adjustment Program in 1993, the Staff Restructuring Program in 1997, and the NRS Retrenchment Program in 2002.

As regards inhumane working conditions at IRRI especially in relation to pesticide poisoning, IRRI's safety equipment and procedures are estimated to be as good as, or better than, that of any other organization in the Philippines, and follow world class standards established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. No death of any IRRI worker has ever been



**Dr. Padolina, DFA Assistant Secretary Jose Zaide, and Rep. Krisel Lagman Luistro are shown in serious discussion after the session.**

directly linked to pesticide exposure.

During the open forum after Atty. Gloria's presentation, an employee expressed the view that removing IRRI's immunity would compel the Board of Trustees to rethink the Institute's

presence in the Philippines. At the same time, it might force major donor countries to withdraw its funding support to IRRI.

Dr. Padolina expressed the same views during the induction of officers of the Association of IRRI Research Support

Staff (AIRESS) on March 21.

At this writing, CIE is continuing its information campaign on PD 1620, HB 5095, and SB 2396 in an effort to enlighten the NRS on the issues and their likely effects on them and IRRI.

## Joe Roxas is ECDC chair anew

Jose "Joe" Roxas of PBGB will serve for another two years as chair of the board of directors (BOD) of the IRRI Employees' Credit and Development Cooperative (ECDC), following his reelection on 10 March.



J. Roxas

The BOD, meeting for the first time on March 10 since ECDC held its general assembly and election of officers on February 28, also elected Tess

Rola (CPS) as vice chair, with Rolly Santos (TS), Oscar Gonzales (PBGB), Felee Kalaw (MMS), Jun Nimedez, Jr. (MMS), and Ariel Nuque (TS) as members.

The BOD also elected the chairpersons of three committees as follows: Audit and Inventory Committee: Zeny Pascual (CSWS), chair; Joe Sibal (MMS), secretary; and Ferdie Corcuera (CSWS), member.

Credit Committee: Ramon Oliveros (DDGP), chair; Mel Lalap (GRC), secretary; and Noel Lantican (Property and Assets), member.

Election Committee: Joey Talay (PBGB), chair; Nestor Ramos, secretary; and Bong Villareal (EPPD), member. Newly elected BOD officers will serve for two years while the committees will be for one year.

Five hundred of the 582 members participated in the ECDC general assembly and election.

"As stated in our theme during the last general assembly, IRRI ECDC: *Susulong sa hamon ng panabon* (Moving forward to the challenges of the times). In spite of the decreasing number of

Training assistant Dennis Gavino won first runner-up in the humorous speech category in the Division H, Toastmasters International District 75 annual speech contests held on March 22 at Zilog Electronics, Inc. in Sucat, Parañaque City.

Mr. Gavino represented the IRRI Toastmasters Club and Area 74 of Division H. His winning speech was entitled *The driving force of a Toastmaster*.

In his speech, Mr. Gavino said driving and public speaking are almost the same. "But each one has different risks. You encounter obstacles and have many experiences, like the first time I was driving in the highway. I was supposed to turn left so I switched on

## Toastmaster wins in speech contest

the signal light ... but I made a mistake, and accidentally switched on the windshield wipers instead."

"Like delivering a speech, driving involves much preparation. You learn theories and principles of driving such as switching gears, stop signs, and signals. Public speaking

involves a gradual build-up of your piece. In driving, you try to stay in one piece. You also try to build up your confidence," he said.

Mr. Gavino thanked Achu Arboleda and fellow Toastmaster Thelma Paris for their valuable suggestions and evaluation prior to joining the speech contest. He received a trophy and a certificate of recognition for his feat.



## New international research fellow

Farming systems specialist M. Zainul Abedin has joined IRRI's Social Sciences Division as an international research fellow.



Z. Abedin

Dr. Abedin will assist in completing the IFAD-funded project on Validation and Delivery of New Technologies for Increasing the Productivity of Flood-Prone Rice Land in South and Southeast Asia.

Dr. Abedin has a PhD in crop production from the University of Agriculture, Prague (1976) and has over 30 years of experience in using community-based participatory and farming systems approach in natural resource management and agricultural and rural development.

He was posted in Yemen from 1996 to 1999 as a farming systems specialist for the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

Dr. Abedin also worked from 1993 to 1995 as a farming systems research consultant in the World Bank-sponsored National Agricultural Research Project based in Kenya Agricultural Research Institute.

membership and other uncertainties that lie ahead, we will continue to serve with members patronizing the services of the coop. The coop will always find ways to earn money to be distributed as dividends to its members. While the earnings may not be as big compared with the

past, the services will be," Mr. Roxas said.

"Plenty of questions were asked during the last general assembly. That means the members are aware and watchful. These are good signs," Mr. Roxas said when asked to describe the ECDC membership.

## New employees, resignation



**M. Ogatis**

Ma. Sol V. Ogatis, a former specialist in the Project Development and Management Division of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, joined the

Institute on February 17 as assistant manager I in the office of the Director for Program Planning and Coordination (DPPC).

Ms. Ogatis, an economics and management graduate from UPLB in 1998, will assist the DPPC director in project development and in developing and managing the portfolio of donors and contacts.

Faiga A.

Amping worked for EPSON Philippines, Lipa City, Batangas for two years prior to joining IIRI on February 17 as a systems analyst/programmer in ITS.



**F. Amping**

Ms. Amping is a computer science graduate from the Systems Technology Institute in 2000. Among her duties are database administration and supervision of databases being developed by contract staff.

Joselito Platon joined IIRI on February 24 as a full-time community project assistant in VIS. He will be



**J. Platon**

responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring community projects organized and sponsored by IIRI in Bay and Los Baños.

He finished his MS in pastoral ministry from the Christian Reform Theological Seminary in Los Baños in 1998.

Meanwhile, Aileen A. Rivera, secretary I at CPS, resigned on 2003 March 15.

## Hiking for a cause cum Asereje



Members of SInoP led by its president, Eves Reyes, literally hiked to Mt. Makiling on March 8 to deliver, with the aid of a horse (inset), school supplies and old clothes to Bagong Silang Elementary School in Barangay Bagong Silang in Los Baños. They are Sylvia Avance, Boy Marcelo, Fred Reyes, Mary Ann Burac, Caloy Huelma of IFSA, Joe Rosales, and Mike Mamaril. Principal Leah Cabral (above photo, second from right) met the group upon its arrival at the school and was feted with fresh buko, bananas, and papaya. After hiking for 40 minutes from Barangay Bitin to Bagong Silang, Sylvia Avance and Caloy Huelma learned how to dance the Latin beat Asereje!



# 2003 sports tournament reels off



**E**xerting one's best or committing one's self to a sterling performance and making choices in teammates and in decisions on what kind of strategy to adopt during a game are two important mindsets in sports.

The Deputy Director General for Partnerships, William G. Padolina, stressed these points in his inspirational message during the opening ceremonies of the IRRI Sports Tournament 2003 on March 24.

Dr. Padolina related a story about a sales lady in a sports store who wanted to sell him a tennis racket worth \$50.95. The price was not worth it, he said, and he was offered a tube of tennis balls instead for \$23.96. "I don't think this is something I'd like to buy," he said.

The determined sales lady showed Dr. Padolina a pair of swimming goggles that cost \$16.20. "It looks very good, very useful, and could shield me from getting hurt during swimming. It just fits my requirements. So \$16.20 is what I'll pay," he said.

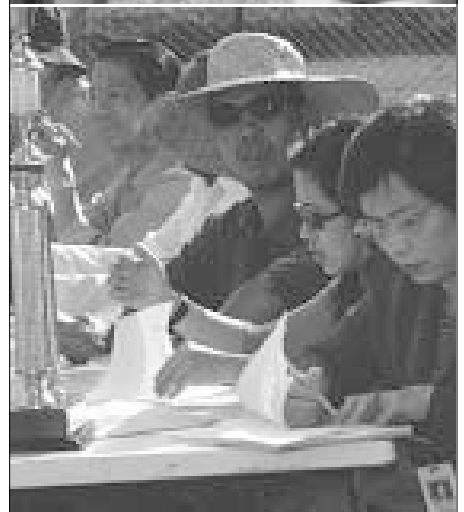
Dr. Padolina concluded his speech with the hope that all participants could read between the lines and possess the true spirit of sportsmanship.

Ian Wallace, the director for Human Resources and Administration, pointed out the challenges to IRRI brought about

by House Bill No. 5095 and Senate Bill No. 2396 that seek to amend Presidential Decree 1620. The twin bills, if passed into law, will strip IRRI of its immunity privileges as an international organization.

"We will try to cheer and play every single sport available at IRRI. So watch for us on the playing field," Mr. Wallace said.

"Participate with a full heart, live by the rules, and play in the spirit of sportsmanship," Finance director





Kwame Akuffo-Akoto said in his closing remarks.

A parade and presentation of participating teams in the men's and women's divisions together with their respective muses started the annual IRRI sports spectacle.

Ms. Aiko Serrano, who represented the LBSCI, was adjudged "Miss IRRI Sportsfest 2003." Gladys Tan, Nida Reyes, Achu Arboleda, Kathy Lopez, and

Boyet Aldipollo comprised the board of judges.

The other muses and their respective teams are as follows: Ma. Sol Ogatis – Admin/Finance/CPS/LDS/ITS/MSS/ Collaborators; Andrelyn Malabanan – ES/AEU; Michelle Charisse Aquino and Babita Thapa – CSWS/EPPD/Biometrics; Darlene Sanchez – PBGB/SSD/GRC; Nikoleta Juretic – AFSTRI; and Rowena Barsicula – Safeguard Security.

The IRRI chess team, which won the first invitational PhilRice-IRRI chess match on March 22 at the PhilRice headquarters in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, was presented before the competing teams (see related story in this issue).

Lawn tennis was also introduced for the first time as a main game in the sports tournament.

## IRRI chessers outduel PhilRice team



**Rey Rodriguez (second from left) receives the championship chess cup from Mr. Akoto during the opening of the 2003 sports tournament at IRRI.**

**T**he IRRI chess selection defeated the tough PhilRice chess team, 7.5-4.5 points, in the first ever IRRI-PhilRice Friendly Chess Match held on March 22 at PhilRice's Administration Building in Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

The match consisted of two rounds. IRRI won in the first exciting round by a close score of 3.5-2.5. In the second round, the IRRI players played with more energy, confidence, and fire, and registered a respectable 4-2 edge to win the match.

The winning team was awarded the champion chess cup donated by PhilRice Executive Director Dr. Leo Sebastian.

The members of the IRRI chess team were Rey Rodriguez (team captain/coordinator), Rolly Simon, Bay Mabalhin, Bert Escandor, Nap Calimlim, and Danny Banasihan. In addition,

five IRRI players won the individual gold medals, namely, Rodriguez, Mabalhin, Simon, Escandor, and Calimlim.

The PhilRice chess team was composed of Dr. John de Leon (team captain/coordinator), Bong Narca, Edgar Vilorio, Ramil Magdangal, Constante Briones, and Roman Miranda, Jr.

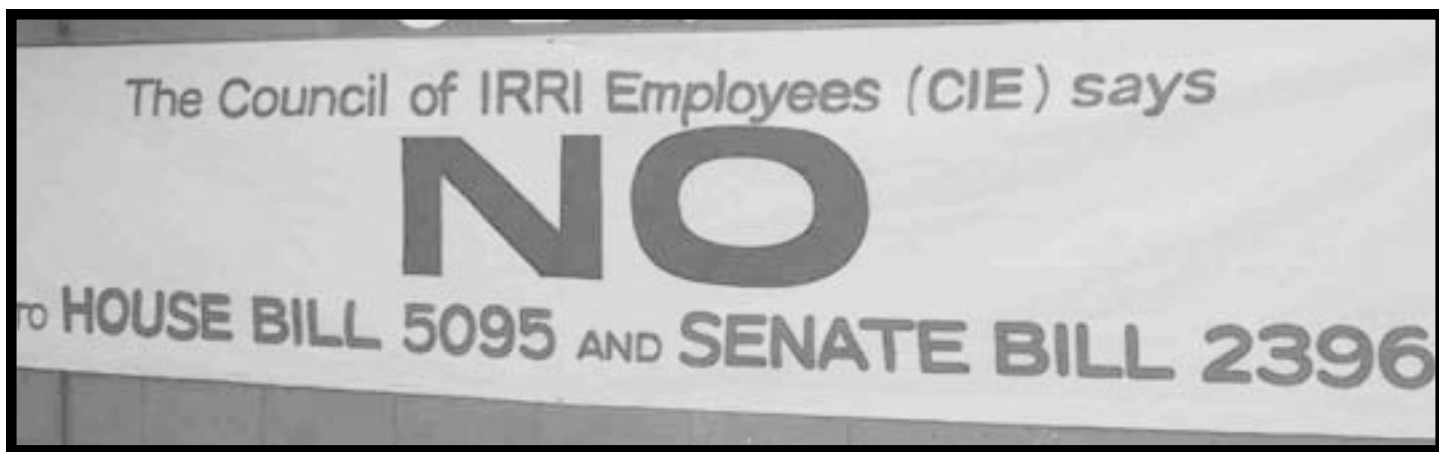
National master (NM) Primitivo Gabawan (chief arbiter), assisted by NM Jake de la Cruz and Fred Pangilinan, officiated the match.

After the awarding ceremonies, Dr. De Leon, the prime mover of the event, announced that

PhilRice will seek a return match with IRRI sometime in the future. The IRRI chess team thanked the hosts for their sincere efforts to make the dream match a reality.

The IRRI chess team thanked Ian Wallace, Director for Administration and Human Resources, and Lilian Mendoza, HRS manager, for their all-out support. The team also thanked Dr. Sebastian and Atty. Ronnie Beronio, Deputy Executive Director for Administration of PhilRice.

"This activity may open other vistas of opportunities between IRRI and PhilRice outside collaborative rice research, extension and development, but also in the field of sports," IRRI team captain Rey Rodriguez said.



IRRI employees through CIE make their statement against House Bill No. 5095 and Senate Bill No. 2396. The bills seek to amend Article 3 of PD 1620 that will remove IRRRI's immunity with respect to labor rights. Some congressmen, Laguna provincial governor Ningning Lazaro, and members of the Laguna Mayors League have received a CIE position paper against the bills signed by hundreds of NRS staff. Kabesilya workers have also signed a position paper against the bills for distribution to lawmakers.

● **CIE . . . page 5**

IRRI Intranet portal. CIE and the sectoral associations also agreed to regularly contribute materials to *Sandiwa*.

**11. Participation in review of administrative cases and grievance mechanism**

CIE participated in reviewing and settling administrative cases of staff. CIE made sure that the employees were given due process and that the mechanism for settling the cases closely followed the grievance process articulated in the Personnel Policies and Code of Discipline for Staff.

**12. Sports and recreational activities**

CIE and ER agreed to look at the Institute's sports program and breathe new life into it by including new activities and events or changing the format and groupings. A proposal for an Employee Day was also submitted, but the activity was moved for implementation in 2003 because of lack of time.

**13. Involvement in various Institute committees**

The CIE chair and representatives sit in various committees, including: Medical Insurance Task Force, Policies Review Standing Committee, Professional Growth Committee, Retirement Savings

Program (RSP) Committee, Food Monitoring Services Committee, Task Force One, Appeals Committee (Re-

trenchment), Voluntary Assistance Program (VAP), Ad Hoc Committee on NRS Categories, and Team IRRRI.

**CIE representatives for 2002**

*Officers*

Chairperson: Kathy Lopez, CPS (SINoP)  
 Vice Chair, Professional Staff: Rollie Torres, CSWS (IFSA)  
 Vice Chair, Support Staff: Jojo Abengania, CSWS (AIRESS)  
 Secretary: Syl Arellano, DGO (SINoP)  
 Treasurer: Mila Ramos, LDS (SINoP)  
 Auditor: Jojo Lapitan, IPMO (IFSA)  
 Public Information Officer (PIO): Joe Marasigan, GRC (AIRESS)  
 Members: Ariel Nuque, TS (AIRESS), Rolly Santos, TS (AIRESS), Ruben Chavez, ASL (AIRESS), Sabino Parducho, ES (AIRESS), Ella Castro, VIS (AISAS), Mirla Domingo, SSD (AISAS), Carlos Casal, PBGB (IFSA), Nelie delos Reyes, PBGB (AISAS)

*CIE standing committees*

Benefits/Welfare Committee: Jojo Abengania (chair), Carlos Casal, Mila Ramos, Ella Castro, and Rolly Santos  
 Professional Growth and Social Interaction: Rollie Torres (chair), Syl Arellano, Nelie delos Reyes, Joe Marasigan, and Ruben Chavez  
 Grievance Committee: Kathy Lopez (chair), Jojo Lapitan, Mirla Domingo, Ariel Nuque, and Sabino Parducho

*Institute committees/task forces*

Medical Insurance Task Force: Jojo Abengania, Kathy Lopez, Carlos Casal, and Mila Ramos  
 Policies Review Standing Committee: Kathy Lopez  
 Professional Growth Committee: Rollie Santos, Kathy Lopez  
 Retirement Savings Program (RSP) Committee: Kathy Lopez, Mila Ramos  
 Food Monitoring Services Committee: Kathy Lopez (CIE and SINoP) and all heads of sectoral organizations: Jojo Lapitan (IFSA), Nelie delos Reyes (AISAS), and Jojo Abengania (AIRESS)  
 Task Force One: Kathy Lopez and Jojo Abengania  
 Appeals Committee (Retrenchment): Jojo Lapitan and Ariel Nuque

*Other CIE-initiated committees (ad hoc)*

Constitution and by-laws (CBL): Jojo Lapitan  
 Voluntary assistance program (VAP): Rolly Santos  
 Food monitoring: Ariel Nuque