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Subject: Remembering Dr. Swaminathan, former IRRI DG

To: nitya.swaminathan@gmail.com <nitya.swaminathan@gmail.com>, <madhuraswaminathan@gmail.com>

Dear Madhura,

I am sad to hear that your beloved father, an eminent scientist, research leader, former IRRI DG, and mentor passed away. Please accept my sincere condolences to all of you. You may find solace in the thought that he touched the lives of the IRRI community and many of us, former IRRI Junior researchers at that time.

1) Dr. MSS was a great influence in my professional career particularly when he was the DG of IRRI.

As a young Filipino researcher, Dr. MSS allowed me to represent IRRI at an international Conference on Women in Rice Farming Systems. At that time, Filipino researchers were not allowed to represent IRRI at international conferences. Lifting of restrictions e.g. international travel, participation in international conferences to present research papers, invitation to IRRI's Executive Dining Room and Guest house events, etc. promotions, opened doors for us young Filipino professionals.

2) Dr. MSS spearheaded the Women in Rice Farming Systems (WIRS) program in IRRI and in other IARCs. This led to sustainable and meaningful research on gender issues at IRRI and India.

In 1983, Dr. MSS convened the first Women in Rice Farming conference which was attended by biological and social scientists all over the world. For the first time, gender issues in rice-based farming systems were discussed and programs were implemented. I had the opportunity to lead the WIRFS network after Dr. Jenny Dey, Dr. Gelia Castillo, and Bart Duff, left IRRI.

3) Dr. MSS was a compassionate and humble person. He had this habit of writing personal letters of appreciation to us, Junior staff. He remembered the names of almost all of Filipinos working at IRRI. He stepped out of the confines of his office and visited farms. We visited our research sites in Malanay, Pangasinan without fanfare. We simply talked to the women and asked about their technology needs. These are only a few examples of how great Dr. MSS was as a human being.

I will forever be grateful for his great influence in my life. To quote"

"While there are many efforts in developing and testing technologies for women farmers, it is important to recognize that science is not a magic wand with which sex inequalities in

workload and economic returns can be made to vanish. This should be emphasize clearly, otherwise false hopes will be aroused about the capacity of science and technology to remove deeply -seated social maladies"

In the ultimate analysis, it is only the concerned commitment and concerted action of agricultural research systems and policymakers that can lead to meaningful agricultural research in imparting a women users' perspective to research priorities and strategies. The greatest challenge before research and development institutions lies in motivating scientists and technologists to under a process of "listening and learning "through collabration with poor women while developing their research priorities and strategies (Swaminathan 1983:3)

Sincerely yours,

Thelma Paris