

MALACAÑANG  
Manila

**PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1620**

GRANTING TO THE INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IRRI) THE STATUS, PREROGATIVES, PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

WHEREAS, on December 9, 1959, the government of the Republic of the Philippines signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundations establishing the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) at Los Baños, Laguna, as an autonomous, philanthropic, tax-free, non-profit, non-stock organization to carry out the following objectives:

1. To conduct basic research on the rice plant, on all phases of rice production, management, distribution and utilization with a view of attaining nutritive and economic advantage or benefit for the people of Asia and other major rice-growing areas through improvement in quality and quantity of rice;
2. To publish and disseminate research findings and recommendations of the Institute;
3. To distribute improved plant materials to regional and international research centers where they might be of significant value or use in breeding or improvement programs;
4. To develop and educate promising young scientists, primarily from South and Southeast Asia along lines connected with or relating to rice production, distribution and utilization, through a resident training program under the guidance of well-trained and distinguished scientists;
5. To establish, maintain and operate an information center and library which will provide, among others, for interested scientists and scholars everywhere a collection of the world's literature on rice;
6. To organize or hold periodic conferences, forums and seminars, whether international, regional, local or otherwise for the purpose of discussing current problems.

WHEREAS, in furtherance of the foregoing objectives, the Memorandum of Understanding has granted IRRI the following incidental powers:

- (1) To acquire or obtain from any governmental authority, national, municipal or local, foreign or domestic or otherwise or from any corporation, company, association, or person, such charters, franchises, licenses, rights, privileges, assistance, financial or otherwise, and concessions as are conducive to and necessary for the attainment of the purpose of THE INSTITUTE.
- (2) To receive and acquire by donation, grants, exchange, devise, bequests, purchase, or lease either absolutely or in trust, contributions from any person, firm or entity whosoever of such properties, real and personal, including funds and valuable effects, as may be necessary to carry out the objects and purpose of THE INSTITUTE and to hold, operate, use or otherwise dispose of the same.
- (3) To do and perform all acts and things as are necessary, expedient, suitable or proper for the furtherance or accomplishment of the purpose and the attainment of any or all of the objectives herein stated, or which shall appear, at any time, as conducive to and useful for the activities of the Institute.

WHEREAS, the International Rice Research Institute, by virtue of the objectives and incidental powers assigned and granted to it as set forth above, was clearly intended to be an international organization, yet its ability to operate as such in the Philippines is greatly hampered by the fact that it was organized and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a private corporation and, therefore, is subject to all laws and regulations covering private corporations, which is in conflict with its international status, and which is not conducive to the free operation of the Institute's routine activities and its efforts towards the attainment of its objectives.

WHEREAS, considering that the government of the Republic of the Philippines has in fact implicitly recognized IRRI as an international organization and in consideration of the importance of its work in rice research which has and will continue to redound to the benefit not only of the Filipino people but also of the millions of rice-consuming peoples of the world, it is now most opportune to formally confer on IRRI the status, prerogatives, privileges and immunities of an international organization.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines by virtue of the power vested in me by the Constitution, do hereby decree:

ARTICLE I  
**Status of an International Organization**

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines recognizes the International Rice Research Institute (hereinafter referred to as the Institute) as an international organization, and hereby accords to the Institute such status in the Philippines.

ARTICLE II  
**Immunities and Privileges**

The Institute shall enjoy in the Philippines all the immunities and privileges normally accorded to international organizations of a universal character.

ARTICLE III  
**Immunity from Legal Process**

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.

ARTICLE IV  
**Communications**

1. The Institute shall enjoy, for its official communications, treatment not less favorable than that accorded to other international institutions and to diplomatic missions in the Philippines especially in the matter of priorities, rates and charges for mail, telegraphs and other communications.

2. The Institute shall have the right to use codes for its official communications. It shall also have the right to dispatch and receive correspondence by duly identified couriers or bags, which shall have the same privileges and immunities as diplomatic couriers and bags.

3. Correspondence and other official communications of the Institute shall be immune from censorship.

4. The import and export of the Institute's publications and those intended for it shall not be subject to restrictions.

ARTICLE V  
**Taxation and Customs**

1. The provisions of existing laws or ordinances to the contrary notwithstanding, the Institute, or its successors, shall be exempt from the payment of gift, franchise, specific, percentage.

real property, exchange, import, export, and all other taxes provided under existing laws or ordinances. This exemption shall extend to goods imported and owned by the Institute to be leased or used by members of its staff.

2. All gifts, bequests, donations and contributions which may be received by the Institute from any source whatsoever, or which may be granted by the Institute to any individual or non-profit organization for educational or scientific purposes, shall be exempt from the payment of the taxes imposed under Title III of the National Internal Revenue Code. All gifts, contributions and donations to the Institute shall be considered allowable deductions for purposes of determining the income tax of the donor.

3. Non-Filipino citizens serving on the senior professional and administrative staff of the Institute shall be exempt from the payment of income tax on salaries and stipends in dollars received solely and by reason of service rendered to the Institute.

4. The Institute shall be exempt from the payment of all customs duties and related levies of any kind, except charges for storage, transport and services supplied, and from prohibitions and restrictions on the import or export of articles intended for its official use.

#### ARTICLE VI

##### Free Disposal of Funds

1. For the purpose of achieving its aims, the Institute may hold funds, gold or foreign exchange of any kind and may keep its books in any currency. It may also freely receive and transfer its funds, gold or foreign currency and convert into any other currency the currencies in its possession.

2. The government shall assist the Institute in obtaining the most favorable conditions for its exchange transactions and its transfer.

#### ARTICLE VII

##### Freedom of Entry and Sojourn

1. The government of the Republic of the Philippines shall take appropriate measures to facilitate the entry into, sojourn in and departure from the Philippine territory of the following categories of persons, regardless of their nationality:

a. Members of the Board of Trustees, officers and senior

professional and administrative staff of the Institute;

- b. The Institute's fellows, scholars, trainees, and visiting scientists;
- c. The spouses, children and members of the families of the persons referred to in (a) and (b) above who live with them;
- d. Any other persons who, by reason of their functions, must have access to the Institute in an official capacity.

2. Visas which may be required for persons referred to in this article shall be exempt from the formalities provided for by the Philippine laws and regulations with respect to the registration of aliens, residence permits and working permits, provided they are not gainfully employed in the Philippines in any other capacity.

#### ARTICLE VIII

##### **Status of the Institute's Board of Trustees, Officials, and Members of its Senior Professional and Administrative Staff, Fellows, Scholars and Trainees and Visiting Scientists**

1. The Institute's Board of Trustees, officials, and members of its senior professional and administrative staff, fellows, scholars and trainees and visiting scientists shall enjoy in the Philippines the following privileges:

- a. customs facilities in respect of their personal effects and exemption from baggage inspection in the same conditions as are accorded to diplomatic agents on temporary mission;
- b. the right to use codes in the official communications and to receive and dispatch papers and official correspondence by *diplomatic courier or in sealed bags*;
- c. exemption from immigration restrictions and aliens' registration, as provided for in Article 7, and from national service;
- d. exemption from exchange restrictions in the same conditions as are accorded to diplomatic agents on temporary mission.

#### ARTICLE IX

##### **Immunities and Facilities Accorded to Officials of the Institute**

1. The non-Filipino members of the senior professional and administrative staff of the Institute shall be exempt from taxa-

tion in respect of the salaries, emoluments and indemnities paid to them in U.S. dollars or other foreign currency by the Institute. Benefits paid in U.S. dollars or other foreign currency in any circumstances by a pension fund or provident scheme shall also be exempt in the Philippines from taxation at the time of their payment, as shall all benefits paid in U.S. dollar or other foreign currency to agents, officials or employees of the Institute for sickness, accidents, and so forth.

2. The Director General of the Institute shall enjoy in the Philippines the privileges and immunities, exemptions and facilities accorded to ambassadors who are heads of diplomatic missions. He shall designate the officials who by reason of the responsibilities of their functions shall enjoy in the Philippines the same privileges and immunities, exemptions and facilities as are accorded to diplomatic agents or the administrative staff of diplomatic missions.

3. The officials of the Institute shall enjoy in the Republic of the Philippines the privileges and immunities, exemptions and facilities accorded to responsible officials of other international bodies.

4. Officials of the Institute who are not Philippine nationals shall enjoy the following privileges:

- a. exemption from any military service obligations in the Philippines;
- b. immunity for both themselves and their spouses and dependents relatives from immigration restrictions and aliens' registrations;
- c. the same exchange facilities as are accorded to officials of diplomatic missions or similar rank;
- d. the same repatriation facilities for both themselves and their spouses and dependent relatives as are accorded to officials of diplomatic missions of similar rank in the event of international crises;
- e. the right to import, free of duty, their furniture and other personal effects when moving to the Philippines to take up their duties, their right remaining valid for one year from the date on which they have definitely taken up their duties.

## ARTICLE X

### **Purpose of Immunities**

1. The privileges and immunities provided for by this decree

are not intended for the personal benefit of the officials of the Institute. They are accorded solely in order to ensure in all circumstances the free operation of the Institute and the complete freedom of its officials.

2. The Director General of the Institute shall have the right and duty to waive the immunity of any official whenever, in his opinion, the immunity would impede the normal course of justice and can be waived without prejudice to the interest of the Institute.

#### ARTICLE XI Interpretation and Application

1. The decree shall be interpreted in the light of its fundamental objectives to enable the Institute fully and effectively to assume its responsibilities and fulfill its purposes.

#### ARTICLE XII Effectivity

This decree shall take effect immediately.

Done in the City of Manila this 19th day of April in the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventy-nine.

(Sgd) Ferdinand E. Marcos

By the President:

(Sgd) Juan C. Tuvera  
Presidential Assistant

Certified Copy:

(Sgd) Aurora T. Aquino  
Presidential Staff Assistant  
Malacañang Records Office