**Dr. Partha S. Biswas**

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**Dr. Reynante Ordonio**

Project Leader, Healthier Rice Project

Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice)

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Dear Dr. Biswas and Dr. Ordonio,

We are writing to call on your good office to immediately halt the ongoing Golden Rice field trials and its eventual commercialization to the Philippines and Bangladesh.

We support the concerns of our fellow farmers and consumers in these countries, particularly with the safety and long-term impacts of the genetically modified rice. We understand that until now, no credible and independent studies have been made to establish the safety of the Golden Rice to the peoples' health and the environment. On the contrary, studies have shown that Golden Rice can affect rice productivity which will have a far-reaching impact to rice diversity and rice security. [[1]](#endnote-2)

We believe that Golden Rice is inherently flawed and an unnecessary technology that will possibly cause more harm than solution to malnutrition. The latest study from India confirms that not only is the beta-carotene content in the Golden Rice negligible, but in fact, degrades so fast that farmers need to "vacuum-pack" the unmilled rice just to extend the beta-carotene shelf-life.[[2]](#endnote-3) Even the US Dept. of Agriculture has deemed that the beta-carotene in Golden is not high enough to warrant a label as a nutritional product.

We do recognize however, that there is a need to address hunger and malnutrition in Asia and around the world. The solution is not Golden Rice, nor other biofortified food crops, but through 1) promoting diversified food production and diet to include the myriad sources of beta-carotene and 2) supporting the traditional and small farmers who remain the main producers and protectors of these diverse source of food. There are existing successful cases of reducing malnutrition incidences through traditional farming and food systems that further shows that Golden Rice is pointless.[[3]](#endnote-4)

We appeal that you consider the long-term effects of Golden Rice to the present and future of our women and children, our environment and rice biodiversity, our small-scale farmers and our consumers. The welfare and interest of these sectors should be respected and ensured.

Yours sincerely,

1. Bollinedi, H., Prabhu, K. V., Singh, N. K., Mishra, S., Khurana, J. P., & Singh, A. K. (2017). [Molecular and Functional Characterization of GR2-R1 Event Based Backcross Derived Lines of Golden Rice in the Genetic Background of a Mega Rice Variety Swarna.](http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0169600) PloS one, 12(1), e0169600. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Bollineni, Haritha & Dhakane-Lad, Jyoti & Krishnan, S & Bhowmick, Prolay & Vinod Prabhu, Kumble & Singh, Nagendra & Singh, Ashok. (2019). Kinetics of β-carotene degradation under different storage conditions in transgenic Golden Rice® lines. Food Chemistry. 278. 773-779. 10.1016/j.foodchem.2018.11.121. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. Food Sovereignty Alliance India and Catholic Health Association of India, “Exploring the potential of diversified traditional food systems to contribute to a healthy diet”, 2018, https://foodsovereigntyalliance.files.wordpress. com/2018/12/Report-1.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-4)