

June 10, 2023

Dr. ROSARIO A. SALAS
Head, Department of Horticulture
Visayas State University
Visca, Baybay, Leyte 6521
Philippines

Subject: Performance Rating for Dr. Marilyn Belarmino

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to provide the following performance rating for Dr. Marilyn Belarmino in support of her application for the position of **Associate Professor IV** position in the Department of Horticulture Visayas State University.

I worked with Dr. Belarmino, from January 2009 to June 2012, at the Regional Center for Africa of AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center, based in Arusha, Tanzania, where she served as a Genetic Resources Scientist and was responsible for managing, maintaining, and modernizing our germplasm operations, in support of breeding programs operating from Cameroon, Mali, Madagascar, Niger, and Tanzania. I was then the Regional Director for Africa of AVRDC.

When Marilyn joined, the facilities for genetic resources that were in place were very basic, consisting of a series of refrigerators, and this required essentially field maintenance with high turnover and deterioration of seed stocks of the accessions. She was instrumental in overseeing the modernization of the facilities with the construction of a cold storage room, the installation of a seed-drying complex, the erection of several screen houses, among others, that significantly improved the lifetime of accessions and reduced turnover while preserving purity and viability of stocks. She also (i) introduced a very efficient computerized system that allowed removal of duplications and (ii) upgraded administrative procedures to facilitate international exchange of germplasm that were compliant with the provisions of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

Marilyn has since moved on to explore opportunities in the private sector, at East-West Seeds, and she has done very well. I have maintained contact with her, although our professional paths did not cross again, as my career took a more policy-orientation trajectory.

I would like to comment on several specific issues, which I believe are important for the position Marilyn is applying for.

Leadership Ability: I equate this with the ability to handle a large program both technically and logistically, while teaching, inspiring, motivating, and mentoring others to rise and contribute to team effort. Marilyn is the prototype of team player who leads by example. I base this statement on my recollection of her interactions with members of my research group where she was a positive contributor and functioned as a true co-worker when the efforts of several people were needed to complete a project. She was not afraid of work and was the kind of person who will be determined to get the job done and done successfully. Marilyn was not an individual who does the job all by herself, rather, she knows the importance of group interaction to the success of a project. Our research group on vegetables had always been multicultural, multiethnic encompassing people from various

nationalities of African, American, Asian, and European origin. I have no knowledge of a single incident that opposed Marilyn to any of the team members and that could be traced to cultural incompatibility.

Personal Qualities: I recall her as a person who was even tempered, jovial, friendly, outgoing, and enthusiastic about life and her profession. she had a positive attitude and seemed cool under pressure. She appeared to be psychologically secure, honest and candid and did not hold grudges.

Professional Abilities: Marilyn proved that she has the talent to be an outstanding scientist. Importantly, she understood that a professional job entailed many responsibilities, and therefore a good sense of planning and delivering according to plans. Marilyn had the rare capacity to recognize when problems arose between people and dealing with such before this could undermine positive team dynamics. I recall Marilyn as an energetic person, capable of motivating others, and a hard worker. I think she will be an innovator and will serve the university in that respect. Having worked outside academia, she would be returning, I think, with an approach to research and to problem solving that will be inspired by real life insights.

Interaction with People: She had a pleasant personality and was well liked, and, I think, it was because she knew when to compliment the efforts of others in order to bring out the best in them. This will assist her in building and contributing to an effective program. She had no problems interacting with superiors.

Administrative qualities: I recall Marilyn as a neat person, as she was superbly well organized. As a true team player, she derived strength from interacting with others. If she had responsibility for a job it would be done in a timely fashion. Although of a gentle nature, Marilyn could be tough if necessary - she would not dread tough interactions but would handle them with maturity instead.

I do not hesitate to recommend her to you. If you hire her, she will be concerned for the welfare of the department and the university. I have come to learn that this quality is of absolute importance to the success of any group. If you should require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr Abdou TENKOUANO
Executive Director