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Food  
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Organisation  
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l'alimentation  
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l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### Second Session

Rome, 26 – 30 March 2007

### Report by the CPM Chairperson

### Agenda Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

## I. Introduction

1. The activities of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) and the IPPC Secretariat can be found in the various reports provided to the Second Session of the CPM. This report aims to identify specific subjects of importance which have been addressed during the last twelve months and notes several issues which will be discussed by the CPM. The report also discusses possible future developments.

## II. Financial Situation

2. A subject which again occupied the minds and activities of the Bureau to a very large degree is the financial situation of the IPPC.

3. You will recall that during the last budget biennium of 2004-05, a considerable part of the IPPC allocation was not a component of the FAO Regular Programme budget but rather came from arrears funding, i.e. funding from earlier programme cycles due to late payment of assessed contributions. The resources from such arrears considerably increased the financial resources of the IPPC but were, however, one-time payments and hence are no longer available as a possible additional source of funding.

4. Although there have been developments to increase the IPPC budget over the last months, the IPPC Secretariat is still under-resourced and does not have access to sufficient funds to implement the activities outlined in the strategic and business plans of the Commission. This has resulted in the need to prioritise IPPC activities, which was undertaken by the first meeting of the CPM Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA). They

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recommended to place various activities on hold until such time that financial resources became available.

5. As well as having to curtail some technical assistance and information exchange activities, for the first time it was suggested to reduce activities in standard setting. The decision of CPM-1 to provide interpretation at Standards Committee meetings has led to considerable additional costs and the SPTA considered that there were not sufficient resources available to hold two meetings of the Standard Committee with full interpretation. Hence the decision was made to cancel the full Standard Committee meeting in May 2007 and to hold only a Standards Committee Working Group (SC-7) meeting.

6. Fortunately, since the SPTA meeting, FAO has been able to increase its allocation to the IPPC budget to the extent where it is again possible to hold a meeting of the full Standards Committee in May 2007. However the point was made by the SPTA that no subsidiary body or workshop, etc. has an automatic right to be held, and insufficient funds will mean curtailment and/or postponement of activities.

### **III. Business Plan**

7. The Bureau has realized that considerable efforts are necessary to promote the need for adequate resources for the IPPC. For this reason a new Business Plan was developed by the Bureau with noteworthy assistance by the IPPC Secretariat. The Business Plan was discussed in depth and endorsed by the SPTA. The new Business Plan, which will be discussed at this meeting of the CPM, is characterized by two main features: the clarity of goals and objectives of the CPM, and a more comprehensible layout, which allows it to also be used as a promotional tool.

### **IV. Funding Options**

8. The Bureau and the SPTA discussed yet again the possible funding options for the IPPC. The manner in which other international organizations obtained funding to carry out their mandates was investigated in more detail. In view of the fact that funding options have been discussed in the ICPM and CPM since 1999, the Bureau believes that this subject should be concluded very soon. Under agenda item 10.6 a document is presented which summarises the different options, and the proposals by the Bureau as to whether or not they should be further pursued.

### **V. Evaluation of the IPPC**

9. ICPM-6 (2005) initiated an independent external evaluation of the IPPC. Last year the evaluation commenced with a questionnaire sent to contracting parties about the IPPC. The evaluation team received over 90 replies, which is very impressive and shows the importance countries attribute to the IPPC. A preliminary report of this evaluation will be presented and discussed this week to give delegates the opportunity to once again voice their opinion as to how they would like to see the IPPC developing. This evaluation is very important for the CPM, since it will provide recommendations for the future face, policy and strategy. A wide input into the discussion is necessary so I encourage you all to attend the session.

### **VI. Compliance Mechanism and International Recognition of Pest Free Areas**

10. Two subjects which are of importance, especially to developing countries, are the further investigation of a compliance mechanism (agenda item 12.3) and international recognition of pest free areas (PFAs) (agenda item 10.7). These two subjects, which were also discussed at CPM-1, were again discussed in the SPTA and by the Bureau. At the moment it is not clear what benefits a compliance mechanism or international recognition of PFAs may bring, but it is important that

we clarify these concepts and assess their benefits. I believe that one of the tasks of the Chairperson is to be forward-looking and to help advance the IPPC and plant health by considering possible new ways and systems.

## **VII. Reference Laboratories**

11. At the 18<sup>th</sup> Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs), the participants discussed the potential role of reference laboratories for plant pests. Several countries already have a national system in place. Establishing an international system of reference laboratories for plant health would have its challenges, but it does merit further investigation. The Technical Consultation is proposing to liaise with the Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols to further investigate this topic and it has been put on the agenda for the next Technical Consultation among RPPOs.

## **VIII. IPPC Secretariat**

12. The lack of staff in the IPPC Secretariat and uncertainties about future improvements are becoming chronic problems. The Bureau has noted with concern the decline of staff resources of the Secretariat over the last 15 months. This reduction of IPPC staff, which have not been replaced, affects the volume of work the Secretariat can accomplish and threatens one resource the IPPC Secretariat has in abundance, i.e. the enthusiasm of its staff. Given the increased expectations of members, the Bureau is most concerned that the reduced Secretariat is trying to complete a work volume designed for a much larger Secretariat and we note the signs of fatigue and frustration resulting from trying to achieve this. We are further concerned in that despite all of the above, the demands on the IPPC Secretariat continue grow.

13. This difficult situation is now more aggravated by the retirement of our long-time Secretary Mr Niek Van der Graaff, who retired in November 2006. However, I do not want to end my Chairperson's report on a negative note. To the contrary, there are very few people who have contributed as much as Mr Van der Graaff to the international harmonization and cooperation in phytosanitary matters. It is always the dynamism and never-tiring efforts of a few individuals which carry a subject to further heights and successes. It was certainly the dynamism and never-tiring efforts of Mr Van der Graaff which helped transform the IPPC from a simple convention to a dynamic body which sets international standards, exchanges phytosanitary information and provides technical assistance.

14. In this context I would like to express the sincere thanks of the CPM to Mr Van der Graaff for his exemplary contributions to the plant protection community, the IPPC and FAO.