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Summary of the Strategic Planning Group report

Agenda item 8.1

Prepared by the Prepared by Lois Ransom, Chair of the SPG meeting

I. Highlights from the Strategic Planning Group October 2015 meeting

1. The Strategic Planning Group (SPG) met on 13 to 15 October 2015. It was a successful meeting, which focussed on the next five years leading up to the proposed International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) in 2020 under the theme of 'The IPPC towards 2020', and planning the development of the strategic framework for the IPPC from 2020 to 2030 using 'the IPPC in 20 years' as a starting point. The concept of a commodity standard was also discussed.
2. The Secretariat provided opportunities for participation from developing countries, resulting in 29 participants, with 11 from developing countries and 18 from developed countries across all regions. This provided broad perspectives, particularly in several small group sessions that were held during the meeting.
3. Several papers were presented by participating countries and updates were received from the Secretariat and the ePhyto Steering Committee on progress on implementing the IPPC Secretariat Enhancement Evaluation and the Standards and Trade Development Fund (STDF) funding proposal, respectively. Only one paper from Canada was classified as a 'Strategic topic proposed by a Contracting Party' in the agenda. This addressed Alternative Service Delivery as a challenge for NPPOs in the future.

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4. The SPG was introduced to the new Secretary, Mr Xia, who provided a biography of his experience and an outline of his objectives in this new role. He introduced his vision for the IPPC towards 2020. This was supported by presentations from the Secretariat and group discussions of challenges and opportunities for standard setting, implementation facilitation, communication and partnerships, resource mobilization and advanced technology towards 2020. Mr Xia outlined his plans to implement the recommendations of the Enhancement Evaluation report, particularly as they relate to establishing a more streamlined, internally coordinated Secretariat staff structure. He noted that the new structure is subject to FAO approval as it impacts FAO personnel system, but did not expect any difficulties in this regard given senior level support for the Enhancement Study and most of its recommendations.

5. Central to this vision was that the IPPC community work towards common goals, facilitated by a 'One IPPC' approach. This will be reflected in the new structure of the Secretariat, where the focus on coordination and cooperation would spread outwards to RPPOs and NPPOs, as well as relevant international partnerships. The SPG agreed that there was merit in establishing an annual theme for the next four years that would focus IPPC advocacy materials and actions, and demonstrate the value and contribution of the IPPC to achieving key global outcomes.

6. The themes for the years leading to the IYPH were subsequently agreed by the Bureau as:

2016 – Plant Health and Food Security

2017 – Plant Health and Trade Facilitation

2018 – Plant Health and Environmental Protection

2019 – Plant Health and Capacity Development

7. The introduction to the IPPC in 20 years recapped the discussions at SPG 2014, which identified and explored seven themes that would be important to the future of the IPPC. The 'Theme 7: Simplify regulatory environment for the complexities of future global trade' was expanded in a discussion paper to SPG 2015, using enabling elements from many of the other themes. This approach, when applied to the other themes, could assist the development of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020 – 2030. The SPG discussed the intended purpose and goals of the Strategy, which would be provided to the Bureau for consideration. It also proposed a time line and process for drafting the Strategy that would enable it to be adopted by CPM during IYPH in conjunction with the Ministerial conference. The process would include further development of key themes and outcomes in the Strategy by SPG, using input from Contracting Parties – as this was so successful in 2014.

8. The SPG further considered the Framework for Standards and Implementation that had been presented to CPM-9(2014) and CPM-10 (2015). It fully supported the use of the Framework to assist in understanding gaps and prioritising standard setting and implementation facilitation activities. It would help clarify whether a topic proposed as a standard is better developed as a different type of guidance, better understand 2020 priorities, could enable resource mobilisation and assist the interaction and communication between the two pillars of the Secretariat, as well as Standards Committee and the Capacity Development Committee.

9. A broad discussion explored the conclusions and recommendations from the Working Group on the Concept of a Commodity Standard, which was held in Edinburgh, Scotland in July 2015. A summary of this discussion is in the SPG 2015 report.

10. The Secretariat and the Chair of the ePhyto Steering Committee were happy to advise SPG that the IPPC funding proposal to the STDF had been successful, subject to some amendments to the project proposal and forward plan. The SPG congratulated the Steering Committee, its Chair, supporting countries, Bureau members and the Secretariat for achieving this positive outcome and looked forward to the implementation of the pilot program that would establish basic hub and generic system to product, send, store, receive and read electronic phytosanitary certificates.

11. Other important topics included: reflection on the future of the SPG; NPPO and wood export in the Republic of Congo: Phytosanitary certification process; and the IPPC Secretariat Enhancement Evaluation.

12. The SPG continues to be an extremely valuable forum for strategic thinking and planning within the IPPC, and will be vital to the development of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020 – 2030. It was agreed that this value can be increased by eliciting input from Contracting Parties on relevant themes prior to the meeting. It was recognised that the SPG provides valuable insight, feedback and guidance to assist the Bureau and Secretariat to explore strategic issues.

13. The CPM is invited to:

- 1) *note* the activities of the SPG presented in the summary.