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Report from the IPPC Secretariat

Agenda item 7

Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat

This is a summary of significant activities of the IPPC Secretariat for 2015

1. 2015 was the beginning of a major transition for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat. While much of the information is covered in significantly more detail in other documents prepared by the Secretariat, there are some key points that are addressed herein for emphasis.
2. One key event that took place early in the year was the release of the IPPC Secretariat Enhancement Evaluation. The evaluation, conducted in the last quarter of 2014, provided a number of recommendations for the improvement of the Secretariat's operations, not least among them being the reorganization of the Secretariat into two main pillars: standard setting and implementation.
3. While the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) meeting is always a key event in any year for the IPPC Community, CPM-10 was particularly significant. The results of the enhancement evaluation were presented to the contracting parties by the lead of the evaluation team. CPM-10 also received the announcement of the new Secretary, Mr. Jingyuan Xia. There was unanimous support from contracting parties to pursue an International Year of Plant Health through the UN process, as well as to pursue resources to develop an electronic phytosanitary certification (ePhyto) system. Finally, the winners of the first-ever IPPC photo contest were announced, and an article with the pictures later appeared in National Geographic magazine.

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4. As noted above, Mr. Jingyuan Xia officially took office as IPPC Secretary on May 22, 2015. Additional personnel changes occurred, as a number of new personnel came on board in the capacity development area, a somewhat regular occurrence for the IPPC Secretariat as a whole due in part to the FAO personnel policy. This is one of the issues addressed in the enhancement evaluation as well as the implementation plan for the evaluation.
5. The Standards Committee, Capacity Development Committee and Subsidiary Body on Dispute Settlement had successful meetings last year, and details of those meetings, as well as the activities under the oversight of these bodies is covered in more detail in CPM papers CPM 2016/19 report of SC activities and CPM 2016/08 report of CDC activities.
6. The June 2015 CPM Bureau meeting was the first occasion for Bureau members to be introduced to the new Secretary, have a thorough review and provide a response to the enhancement evaluation and begin to lay the foundation for the coming year. The Secretary introduced his initiatives for the Secretariat intended to create “One IPPC”. These initiatives are: A New Image, New Performance, a New Atmosphere and New Achievements.
7. The Bureau also received the news that FAO will maintain the level of budget support for the biennium beginning in 2016 at the same level as the previous two years. In addition, the Bureau agreed to a redefined budgeting process and an improved financial report (see additional information in CPM paper 2016/31). The Bureau held additional meetings on the margins of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meeting in October and a teleconference in early December to set the agenda for CPM-11.
8. A new set of activities related to internal management also occurred in this year of change. A chronicle of events was established to keep track of key events taking place each month. The Secretary introduced semi-annual and annual meetings as a way of celebrating the accomplishments of the Secretariat and to plan and strategize as a team for the future. Also, the Secretary introduced IPPC Seminars within the FAO as a means for increasing awareness of the IPPC; the first two covered the proposed International Year of Plant Health and Invasive Species.
9. The new Secretary also conducted a series of meetings with key internal and external contacts. Along with the Coordinator, the Secretary met with senior officials in FAO to include both Deputy Director Generals, the heads of Finance, Human Resources and Communications. Relationships were renewed with CABI, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and new emphasis was placed on the relationship in the Biodiversity Liaison Group of multinational environmental agreements.
10. The work on ePhyto received a big boost with an agreement by the World Trade Organization (WTO)’s Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) working group to award the IPPC USD1 million to develop an ePhyto hub that can be used by all contracting parties. This effort is the product of the ePhyto steering group with input from the Secretariat. The intent for 2016 is to have a pilot project launched which would then lead into a true ePhyto system with a hub and web-based application. The Republic of Korea also hosted the 2nd ePhyto symposium which significantly contributed to progress in the project’s development.
11. Another key event for the year was the work done to complete STDF project 350 which saw the development, publication and distribution of a number of manuals which will provide essential information for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and plant health professionals. This project, along with STDF project 401 to develop a cadre of Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) facilitators, are building blocks of a long term capacity development strategy for the IPPC.
12. Strong effort went into developing a framework for standards and implementation. This topic has been discussed at length in two separate working group meetings, as well as a meetings of the Bureau, the SPG and the Standards Committee. A revised Framework for Standards and Implementation was discussed in the 2015 SPG and is being presented to this year’s CPM. This important piece of work will help to set the future direction of standard setting in the IPPC for some years to come.

13. This note is not intended to provide a comprehensive report on the activities of the IPPC Secretariat in 2015, but rather to provide some of the key highlights for the year. There remains, the same as last year, the need to gain an equivalent level of prominence to that of Codex Alimentarius and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), there is a continued need to have sustained funding, and there is always a need for experts to work on topics, and a sustained staff with growth opportunities.

14. The Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to thank NPPOs, Regional Plant Protection organizations (RPPOs), partners and collaborators for all of their efforts to protect plant health in 2015.

15. The CPM invited to:

- 1) *note* the highlights presented in this paper