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Communication from the ICPM Technical Consultation on Strategic Planning
to ICPM Members

I. INTRODUCTION

The Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM), at its second session in October 1999, recommended that as part of the work programme of the ICPM in 2000, interested Members develop a strategic plan for the work of the Interim Commission. This was to begin with a questionnaire soliciting Members inputs, followed by an analysis of the responses and ultimately resulting in the formulation of a 5-year strategic plan to be submitted to the third session of the ICPM in April 2001. The Secretariat convened a Technical Consultation on Strategic Planning in conjunction with an ICPM meeting on technical assistance 6-10 March 2000 in Bangkok, Thailand. The purpose of this meeting was to begin the strategic planning process by developing the questionnaire to be sent to Members. The meeting was attended by representatives of national plant protection organizations from: Bangladesh; Australia; Canada; Viet Nam; USA; Uruguay; Thailand; Sweden; South Africa; Nigeria; Indonesia; Japan; and New Zealand. Representatives of the APPPC and Comunidad Andina attended as observers. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Hedley, Chairperson of the ICPM, and also attended by staff of the IPPC Secretariat.

The meeting developed the documents provided here. One document is a complete summary to be used as a reference. The other is for recording and submitting your response. These documents are being distributed to official IPPC contact points to facilitate national consultation and timely response. You are asked to give careful consideration to the questions and provide complete responses to make this as valuable as possible for the planning processes of the ICPM.

Your answers to the questionnaire must be returned to the IPPC Secretariat before 15 August 2000. Responses will be collected by the Secretariat for submission to the second meeting of the Technical Consultation on Strategic Planning scheduled for 2-6 October. The second meeting will use the results as the basis for preparing a draft strategic plan for submission to the ICPM for adoption in April 2001. It is anticipated that the strategic plan will be subject to periodic review and updating as deemed necessary by the ICPM.

Elements of the strategic plan

The process of strategic planning used by the Technical Consultation uses a position statement, mission statement, strategic directions and goals, described as follows:

Position statement: This statement provides summary information on the current status of the ICPM and the external environment. It describes, very briefly, its formation, members, administration, present functions, and challenges. The statement is a summary of the information used as the basis for the development of the strategic plan.

Mission statement: This statement describes succinctly what the ICPM aims to achieve. All strategic directions and goals should be covered by the mission statement.

Strategic directions: These describe basic themes for activities of the ICPM. All the activities and outputs planned by the ICPM should be found within one or more of the strategic directions.

Goals: These are the achievements desired within each strategic direction for the particular time period covered by the plan.

II. POSITION STATEMENT

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an international treaty ratified in 1952, first amended in 1979, and amended again in 1997. The purpose of the Convention is to secure common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products.

The IPPC as amended in 1997 provides for the establishment of a Commission on Phytosanitary Measures. However, the amendments do not come into force until two-thirds of the contracting parties have accepted the amendments. Governments have initiated the acceptance process. 13 of the needed 72 governments have deposited instruments of acceptance with FAO. It is anticipated that several years will be required for the amendments to come into force. As an interim measure, FAO Conference, in 1997, established the ICPM. The ICPM will continue to exist until the amendments come into force and it will then be superseded by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures. While the ICPM operates as an interim body, its membership is open to FAO Members and contracting parties to the IPPC. The functions of the ICPM are the same as those listed for the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in Art XI.2.

The ICPM has a unique formal role in the area of plant protection as the global forum for the discussion of areas of common action under the IPPC. These include in particular the establishment of international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) that provide norms for safe and fair international trade that are recognized by the WTO. Although the ICPM is a relatively new body, the IPPC has a wide membership and nearly fifty years history of implementation resulting in the development of significant expertise, experience, and goodwill amongst Members. The ICPM provides a means for liaison with other organizations and opportunities for interaction including possibilities for leveraging resources.

Basic funding for the ICPM is through FAO, which is the depository for the IPPC and provides the Secretariat as well as associated infrastructure including legal support. Lack of adequate resources are a limiting factor to the implementation of the work programme of the ICPM and additional resources need to be sought, particularly to establish a critical mass of standards as soon as possible. The consequences of these limited resources are significant when considering the requirements of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement) for the availability of ISPMs to promote harmonization.

Further limiting factors to the implementation of the work programme include differences in development status and technology of members, differing levels of participation and expectations of countries. Despite the increased importance of the IPPC due to linkage with the WTO SPS Agreement, the IPPC is not widely known or understood. Further contributing to this are the newness of the ICPM procedures and its interim status following the recent amendment of the Convention.

The ICPM has adopted its own rules and procedures. It has set up an Interim Committee on Standards, the membership of which is still under discussion. The ICPM has adopted two ISPMs at each of its two meetings, bringing to ten the total number of ISPMs adopted to date. Procedures to assist with dispute settlement are being developed so the ICPM may offer a complementary role to other international dispute settlement systems. Members of the ICPM are investigating the role it could have in technical assistance to raise the phytosanitary capacity of developing countries. The ICPM does not have any clear role yet in the sharing of regulatory and scientific information, and has weak links with the research community.

Although the ICPM has prepared priority lists for the development of standards, it has not prepared a strategic plan to make clear its strategic directions and goals or drawn up a long term plan of its intended activities, e.g. preparing a comprehensive body of ISPMs. At the second meeting of the ICPM a timetable of meetings for 2000 was endorsed by members.

There are nine regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) that have coordinating functions in their respective regions. One of their roles is to help to achieve the objectives of the IPPC. The organizations are disparate in that they have widely differing numbers of members, authority, constitutions and capabilities. Their relationship with the IPPC Secretariat and the ICPM, and the opportunities for increased interaction, remain to be clarified.

The primary use of phytosanitary measures in most countries has been in the protection of agriculture, horticulture and forestry from the ingress of exotic pests and/or their spread within countries. Whilst recognizing the imperative of protecting natural ecosystems and that IPPC principles applied to cultivated systems are equally valid for wild flora and biodiversity, the ICPM has not developed explicit systems to deal with environmental issues. The increasing importance of environmental issues, such as alien invasive species, is of immediate concern to ICPM Members. The issue of alien invasive species is also addressed by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The increasing volume and speed of the movement of people and goods is placing pressure on phytosanitary systems and creating greater demand for standards, while at the same time many governments are finding it difficult to meet the increasing demands for resources. There is an increased reliance on national and regional phytosanitary standards due to the lack of ISPMs in many areas of need. There is also an increasing demand to restrict the spread of organisms that threaten biological diversity. The use of computers and the internet, has meant that greater complexity in import requirements can be handled by national plant protection organizations and this level is demanded from exporting countries. The means of dealing with these pressures has not been examined by the ICPM on either the political front or with affected private sector groups or environmental organizations. The process of undertaking the construction of import regulations is a matter of increasing detail, complexity and contention. In this situation, an increasing divergence between developed and developing countries will be difficult to avoid if steps are not taken urgently. Likewise, the Commission needs to ensure that all Members are fully able to implement the Convention

III. MISSION STATEMENT

The following mission statement includes the purpose of the IPPC, recognizing also its relationship to the SPS Agreement. It emphasizes the function of the ICPM as a global forum and lists other strategic directions.

To secure common action in protecting the world's cultivated and natural plant resources from the spread and introduction of plant pests while minimizing interference with the international movement of people and goods. This is accomplished by providing a global forum for promoting the full implementation of the IPPC through the:

- *development and adoption of international standards for phytosanitary measures*
- *sharing of information;*
- *provision of dispute settlement mechanisms;*
- *development of phytosanitary capacity of Members by promoting the provision of technical assistance;*
- *maintenance of an effective and efficient administrative framework.*

IV. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

A. The development and adoption of international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs)

Setting international phytosanitary standards is a basic and unique role identified in the IPPC, particularly given the status accorded IPPC standards as a result of the WTO SPS Agreement. Internationally accepted phytosanitary standards form the basis for the harmonization of phytosanitary measures that protect natural and cultivated plant resources while ensuring fair and safe trade. Governments are protected from challenge and require no risk analysis to justify phytosanitary measures when they are based on recognized international standards.

B. Information sharing

This strategic direction covers member's obligations to provide information as specified in the IPPC and information exchange that may be specified by the ICPM or in ISPMs, including such information as pest lists, pest reports, and phytosanitary measures. Information exchange activities ensure that members communicate officially on phytosanitary regulations and other issues of phytosanitary significance.

C. The provision of dispute settlement mechanisms

This relates to the non-binding dispute settlement provisions contained in Article XIII of the New Revised Text of the IPPC. The ICPM is charged to develop rules and procedures for dispute settlement under the IPPC. This provision ensures that members fulfill their obligations under the Convention. The Convention explicitly recognizes the complimentary role of the IPPC in this area given the formal binding dispute settlement process that exists under the WTO.

D. The development of phytosanitary capacity of Members by promoting the provision of technical assistance

Article XX in the New Revised Text of the IPPC requires members to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to developing contracting parties, either bilaterally or through appropriate international organizations with the purpose of facilitating implementation of the IPPC. Adequate capacity and infrastructure for all Members are critical to accomplish the IPPC's goals.

E. Provision of a global forum for Members to identify where further common actions are required

This strategic direction recognizes the charge of the ICPM to keep under review the state of plant protection in the world and to identify global concerns that may be addressed by the ICPM but fall outside the scope of other specific strategy directions.

F. The maintenance of an effective and efficient administrative framework

To function effectively, the ICPM must establish organizational structures and procedures, identify funding mechanisms, and address various support and administrative functions. This strategic direction is to make provision for the ICPM to address its administrative issues and strategies, making continual improvement to ensure its business practices are effective and efficient.

V. GOALS***Strategy direction A – the development and adoption of ISPMs***

- Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for the Interim Standards Committee completed
- Number of standards developed and adopted is increased
- Greater transparency in the standard setting process
- Increased participation by developing countries in standard setting
- Increased implementation of standards
- A procedure for identifying and prioritizing standards (including submissions procedures)
- A process for sponsorship of specific standards
- PRA standard(s) for environmental risks
- Notification process for adoption of ISPMs to contact points and governments
- Priority given to standards on fundamental concepts
- Explanatory documents corresponding to ISPMs

Strategy direction B – information sharing

- Promotion of increased access and use of electronic communication/Internet
- A system for pest status recognition developed
- Assistance to RPPOs to establish information systems promoted
- Promotion of the IPPC
- An IPPC clearing house mechanism (e.g. for depositing bilateral agreements, information for and from PRA, current phytosanitary research)
- Systems to identify sources of information on regulations/pests; internet linkages
- Reports of ICPM activities completed and in progress
- Procedures for pest reporting/information sharing

Strategy direction C – dispute settlement

- Procedures for dispute avoidance (e.g. a regular ICPM agenda item on the implementation of the IPPC)
- Inventory of other related dispute settlement systems
- Supporting information on IPPC and other dispute settlement systems made available
- Rulings/precedents from dispute settlements (e.g. WTO) made available
- Information requirements for effective preparation of a dispute settlement clarified
- IPPC dispute settlement procedures finalized
- Criteria and procedures for the establishment of a list of phytosanitary experts for panels elaborated

Strategy direction D - development of phytosanitary capacity

- Promotion of capacity building with regard to the understanding and application of international standards
- Promotion of establishment, revision and updating of national legislation
- Systems which attract technical assistance from donors
- Promotion of the improvement and development of RPPOs
- Internet communication ability
- Lists of international experts for technical assistance made available
- A technical assistance programme to help developing country experts to attend ICPM working meetings
- A process within the ICPM to identify and rank priorities for the ICPM's activities in technical assistance
- A method for assessing the phytosanitary capacity of individual countries

Strategy direction E – provision of a global forum for Members to identify where further common actions are required

- Other issues for common action identified.

Strategy direction F – administration

- Members encouraged to deposit their instrument of acceptance for the new revised text
- Non-contracting parties encouraged to adopt the IPPC
- Budget transparency ensured
- Means identified for increasing resources (e.g. trust fund; trust fund with special conditions (under control of ICPM); other voluntary contributions; FAO regular programme increase; in-kind contributions; assessed contributions (after amendments come into force).
- Capacity of the Secretariat increased (use of outside resources)
- A business plan for resource requirements