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Plant Protection
Convention

REPORT

STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP (SPG) MEETING

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IPPC Secretariat

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1. Opening of the Meeting

- [1] Francisco Javier TRUJILLO ARRIAGA, the SPG Chairperson, opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and underlining that priority for discussion should be given to two most important topics: Sustainable Funding Mechanism to be discussed on Wednesday and IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 to be discussed on Thursday. Other items of the agenda would be discussed in the first day and Wednesday and Thursday depending on the progress with two prioritized topics.
- [2] Jingyuan XIA, the IPPC Secretary, pointed out to the link of this year SPG meeting with the 65th Anniversary of IPPC that will be celebrated also this week through a special reception. The IPPC Secretary stressed that the SPG is a think tank for the CPM, therefore, its role is very important. He pointed out the serious challenges facing the IPPC Secretariat in terms of funding the IPPC activities and solicited the SPG support to the IPPC proposal for resource mobilization. He also underlined the four topics with great importance to be discussed by SPG, as follows: 1) Strategic Framework for 2020-2030; 2) Sustainable Funding; 3) Cooperation between standard setting and implementation which was underlined by a joint call for topics/issues meeting; and 4) the IPPC strategy for trade facilitation – an IPPC action plan for trade facilitation would be needed, including sea containers, ePhyto, eCommerce.
- [3] The IPPC Secretary welcomed a new Secretariat member: Shoki AL-DOBAI, the Integration and Support Team Leader who moved to FAO-HQs from FAO Regional Office in Cairo, Egypt, and wished everyone a successful and fruitful meeting.

2. Meeting Arrangements

2.1 Election of the Rapporteur

- [4] Sam Bishop, from the United Kingdom, was elected as the Rapporteur.

2.2 Adoption of the Agenda

- [5] The SPG adopted the agenda (Appendix 01). It was suggested to address a point about transitional arrangements as described in the CPM report and discuss comparison between the CPM held in the Republic of Korea and in Rome at FAO-HQ. The SPG decided to address these items under point 5.1. and to remove the item 9.5. Emerging issues and involvement of RPPOs.

3. Administrative Matters

- [6] These points were not specifically addressed during the meeting.

3.1 Documents list

- [7] Documents list is attached to this report as Appendix 02.

3.2 Participants list

- [8] Participants list is attached to this report as Appendix 03.

3.3 Local information

4. Report of Last SPG Meeting

- [9] The Chairperson provided an update on main issues. The Strategic Framework including objectives drafted by Ralf LOPIAN and Peter THOMPSON had been discussed at length at the last year's meeting. It was hoped that the discussion on its priorities would take place during the 2017 SPG meeting. Another important issue was Sustainable Funding as there is a need to find c. 2 million dollars extra budgetary contributions annually to fully implement the CPM Work Programme. It is envisaged that two conferences will be held in 2020: a ministerial CPM and a conference for donors. Last year's SPG meeting produced a proposal for the new Implementation Committee (IC) which was adopted by the CPM-12.

- [10] It was noted that in the last year report some elements were missing regarding the draft IPPC Strategic Framework. The report contains only five topics selected, while in fact there were two discussion groups with two lists of topics, therefore an outcome of one group with 8 topics was not included in the meeting report.

5. Report from CPM Chairperson

- [11] The Chairperson provided an update on behalf of the CPM Chairperson on the outcomes of the Bureau meeting held in June 2017. The main subjects discussed: 1) eCommerce; 2) Sustainable Funding; 3) the membership of the IC; 4) draft TORs for a stakeholder advisory committee.

5.1 Updates from CPM-12 meeting

- [12] This was the first CPM to be held outside of Rome and it was agreed the event had been a success. Holding the event outside of Rome added c.600,000 dollars to the usual cost of hosting the meeting. The additional costs were to cover things like accommodating FAO official translators, and were by the Government of the Republic of Korea. There were also increase in human resources cost, such as staff time, but overall it was felt that organizing the meeting was more efficient. The official agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) between the FAO and the Republic of Korea to host the CPM took considerably longer to be concluded than expected.
- [13] It was felt that being outside of Rome raised the profile of the IPPC in the region and resulted in increased attendance from the countries of the Asian region compared with CPMs in Rome and being outside of Rome raised the profile of the IPPC in the region. In addition, having CPM hosted by a contracting party is kind of increasing public awareness on plant health and supporting the country capacity in plant health and phytosanitary issues.
- [14] The SPG thanked the Republic of Korea for hosting the CPM in a perfect manner and felt that further CPMs could be held outside FAO-HQs if contracting parties volunteer to host them (include covering the additional costs associated with doing so) as it would help to raise the profile of the IPPC in other regions.
- [15] The Chairperson felt that the 2017 Theme of Plant Health and Trade Facilitation was addressed well, especially with the delivery of a keynote speech by the Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization. A case-study on the avocado industry clearly demonstrated the connection between correct implementation of ISPMs and the opening of new markets followed by an increase in trade volume. The role of IPPC was clearly underlined.

5.2 Updates from Bureau

- [16] It was addressed under point 5.1.

6. Keynote Address from IPPC Secretary: The IPPC in 65 years

- [17] The IPPC Secretary provided background information on the IPPC in 65 years, including: 1) historical development stages; 2) five major achievements: IPPC strategic objective, IPPC towards 2020, IPPC Secretariat's Work Plan, Standard Setting; Standard Implementation; International Cooperation with technical, trade, environment related organizations, 3) The Way Forward: contribution to seven UN-SDGs goals; IYPH 2020 – milestone for IPPC; Development of the IPPC Strategic Framework for 2020-2030; prioritization to enhance implementation, trade facilitation, biosecurity, emerging pests.
- [18] John Hedley, from New Zealand, underlined that the impact of climate change on pests was a significant issue and that this highlights the need for the IPPC to continue to work with the FAO and outside partners.
- [19] The Chairperson supported this and also emphasized the need to take into consideration the increasing globalization of trade.

7. Strategic Topics

7.1 IPPC Strategic Framework for 2020-2030

[20] Peter THOMSON, from New Zealand, and Ralf LOPIAN, from Finland, introduced a paper on the IPPC Strategic Framework that had been redrafted after the CPM-12 discussions. The IPPC Strategic Framework is a framework of the Convention and not a work plan for the Secretariat and the main intention is to support the objectives and purpose of the Convention, e.g. is to preventing the spread of pests. A simplified version of the framework may be need to be developed for advocacy purposes The intention is to present the framework to CPM-13 prior to sending it for country consultation with a view to adoption in 2019.

[21] The floor was open for discussion on the mission, vision and ambition of the IPPC.

Mission, vision and ambition.

[22] It was felt that the framework should not simply be quotes from the Convention, but should be more ambitious in its scope, e.g. setting out where we want to get to by 2030.

[23] It was decided that a safe trade element should be mentioned in the mission as it attracts attention, highlights one of the key differences between the IPPC and CBD and was the reason why the Convention was revised.

[24] There was a discussion if a control of pests should be included as the IPPC Article I.1 clearly states that the purpose and responsibility of the Convention is “to promote appropriate measures for their control. However that was seen as too broad, and therefore a mention of management of impact in countries should be removed. Internal controls of all pests is a responsibility of each country, while more efforts would be needed to conduct pest eradication campaigns at national levels as it in itself prevents pests from spreading to other countries. Regarding ambition, it was felt that it should cover activities which we wanted to do in practical terms. Some concerns were raised as to who exactly would be carrying out these activities but this could be clarified later in the document. It is important to be very clear on who is responsible for delivery of the framework e.g. it needs to be clear that it is not the IPPC secretariat which is responsible.

[25] It was suggested to include in the document: benefits and opportunities, risks and challenges, an element of agricultural productivity or economic growth, direct link to food security and safe trade, synergies with pests affecting the environment and modern technologies. It should also underline that IPPC aims at harmonized measures based on the ISPMs.

[26] The SPG decided that the sections on mission, vision and ambition should be redrafted based on the SPG feedback.

[27] The floor was then open for discussion on strategic objectives.

Strategic objectives:

[28] It was stated that a relationship with trade and environment (CBD) should be included in objectives. The objectives should be aligned with SDGs. It should also be clear that IPPC is not a food security agency. The group also agreed that there should be a chapeau paragraph in which it is specified that all objectives are of equal importance and that there is no hierarchy intended. A concern was raised on how to measure proposed objectives.

A. Facilitate Trade Development and Economic Growth

[29] The descriptive part of the objective should be redrafted taking into account definitions from ISPMs. IPPC in the text means the Convention. It was proposed to clarify in more detail on how the objective relates to specified SDGs. A proposal was made to add a glossary of terms to the document.

B. Enhance Global Food Security and Protect Sustainable Agriculture

[30] That narrative of the objective should be redrafted to include responsibilities of contracting parties and a role of NPPOs. The relation to food security should be underlined. Sustainable agricultural productivity should be mentioned although a word “sustainable” could mean different things.

C. Protect the Environment, Forests and Ecosystems from the Impacts of Plant Pests

[31] As the CBD is mentioned in that objective, other biodiversity related conventions should also be mentioned. A reference to aquatic plants should also be made as it is an environmental issue. Likewise SDGs regarding water could be added. However, our activities regarding aquatic plants only include one recommendation, therefore that claim could be too farfetched resulting in a loss of credibility.

[32] The floor was then open to discuss Core activities.

Standards

A reference to communication and partnership, an importance of harmonization and standards referring to pathways and commodities should be added. We should take into account practicality of implementation so it is not clear that we do not ignore industry.

Capacity Development

[33] We should not mention that we carry out capacity development only when we have resources available as this would consider this activity as a secondary to standard setting, even if this is how the current situation looks like. On the other hand, capacity development in need of funding could attract donors, however the text referring to it should be revised.

Communication

[34] General public should be aware of IPPC, therefore, communication activities should be highlighted. The Themes mentioned are not to be followed during 2020-2030 period. There was a discussion if communication is a core function of the IPPC. According to the IPPC, obligatory communications are information exchanges or other communications between contracting parties. Communication and effective management are important and a good communication strategy is critical but it is not a core activity of the IPPC. It was thought best to retain the importance of communication and management in the SF. This could alternatively be achieved by including them in a specific section/chapter and/or in an annex regarding activities critical to the delivery of the objectives. Communication should also include partnerships.

Effective Government and Management

[35] It was felt that government and management were tools, similar to communication, therefore they could be addressed in a specific chapter such as “factors for success” or be moved to an annex. The CPM’s role is important as it is clearly described in the Convention. Monitoring and evaluation should be a part of Effective Government and Management.

[36] The floor was then open to discuss IPPC Development Agenda 2020-2030.

IPPC Development Agenda 2020-2030

[37] The IPPC Development Agenda 2020-2030 consists of a list of possible programmes that could help master these operational changes during 10 years. The CPM-12 suggested some programmes which were later compiled and extended to include 13 topics altogether. The SPG assessed the list of suggested programmes in terms of their acceptability (√ - topic accepted by the SPG) as follows:

- (1) Harmonisation of Electronic Data Exchange: √
- (2) Commodity, Pest and Pathway Specific Standards: preliminarily √

[38] A concern was raised if it is realistic to commit to that as we might not be able to make much progress. In general commodity standards are needed from a practical point of view. We should see it in a broader

light without being too specific. Some 'pilot' standards exist already (cut flowers – in process), but other do not (fresh products). It was decided that terminology would be revised to be more consistent and focus would be put on pilot standards which would be prioritized. Guidance materials for standards would be developed.

- (1) Management of E-commerce and Courier Mail Pathway: ✓
- (2) It was noted that additional IPPC inter agencies body might need to be established.
- (3) Enabling the Use of Third Party Services: ✓ (with some deletions and rewriting)
- (4) It was decided that some references needed to be deleted (such as to phytosanitary certificates). The audit component was also important to capture as it is key to the use of Third Parties.
- (5) Phytosanitary Emergency Response System: ✓ (with some addition and redrafting)
- (6) It was noted that RPPOs could have a coordinating role while emergency response should happen at a national level. That topic should be discussed at the TC-RPPOs. It was suggested that the activity should refer more to contingency planning, like gathering tools and information, for the contracting parties to use. It was decided that some redrafting of this activity is needed (to include phytosanitary treatments, RPPOs roles, etc.).
- (7) Global Pest Alert System: ✓ (with some work to be done).
- (8) One participant raised a concept that a collection of data could be done in another way and not directly from NPPOs. Some suggested an introduction of an incentive to report pests, as some contracting parties are not reporting due to trade consequences. However, duplication of RPPOs work should be avoided. A link with CABI and other organization might be created. The TC-RPPOs should discuss this issue and suggest possible solutions, however there was no endorsement for the concept to collect data from sources others than NPPOs
- (9) New Treatment Technologies: ✓ (with some revision to be done and combined with No. 8)
- (10) This topic was thought to be very broad and might be understood differently. The current text needs rewording taking into account needs of developing countries. A creation of new technology advisory body was suggested. These technologies should focus on technologies for pest detection and surveillance. New technologies might not have the same meaning in developing countries. Technologies should be combined with Phytosanitary Research Coordination.
- (11) Global Phytosanitary Research Coordination: ✓ (to be combined with No. 7).
- (12) It was noted that we should avoid overlap with existing networks.
- (13) Diagnostic Laboratory Network: ✓ (with some clarification)
- (14) This issue is important for developing countries. It should be clarified that it would be donor orientated activity. The IPPC would establish supporting protocols.
- (15) Capacity Development Brokering Service: -
- (16) It was felt that this subject is too broad to agree on it in the current moment.
- (17) Worldwide Plant Health Education: -
- (18) It was noted that it would take a lot of time based on experience of some contracting parties. Preparing a whole curriculum would be too much, maybe smaller modules could be done, however it was not possible to agree on that in the current moment.
- (19) Public-Private Partnerships Mechanism: -
- (20) It was felt that a creation of a new mechanism was not really needed. For now there was the ePhyto Industry advisory group that worked well and unless other groups approach us on specific issues dedicating time to that was not needed.
- (21) Review the State of Plant Health in the World: -
- (22) The Convention required us to do it, although it has never been done formally. It was not clear how and if it is linked to pest reporting. Proposal of Kenya to organize a conference will be discussed anyway.
- (23) Framework for standards and implementation through monitoring and evaluation. -

(24) It was suggested as an additional proposal. However some countries felt that it would not appeal to the public and it would be too late to wait until 2020.

[39] The comments to the document should be sent by the SPG participants to Peter THOMSON and Ralf LOPIAN until the end of October 2017.

7.2 IYPH in 2020

[40] Ralf LOPIAN updated the participants on the latest developments in the area. The IYPH Steering Committee took place in April 2017 after the CPM-12. The Second Committee of the UN will now deal with the request to establish IYPH. A deadline for a submission of papers is in October and Finland will submit the paper, however not this year. The proposal will be discussed in November 2018 by that Committee. Ralf LOPIAN also sent out memos and background documents for all contracting parties to be used in proclaiming support to the IYPH as representatives in New York should be briefed in advance.

[41] There are some potential challenges as some countries usually are reluctant to support proposals for the establishment of international years by the United Nations General Assembly. Additionally, co-sponsors are needed to demonstrate that Finland has a number of partners in this enterprise. Three co-sponsors are already confirmed (Australia, Israel and Ireland). A call was sent out to encourage more cosponsors to come forward and as a result three countries had indicated that they are willing to volunteer as co-sponsors. The SPG believed it would be good to have also developing countries as co-sponsors. The role of a co-sponsor would be to support drafting a resolution although it has already been drafted. Co-sponsoring does not mean investing any financial means but providing a general support to the initiative.

[42] The 2017 UN Climate Change Conference will convene in November 2017 and the IPPC will prepare a side event on climate change and plant health initiated by Tonga. Additionally, Australia, Fiji and Finland will be present at the side event to promote the IYPH.

[43] It was also reported that the organizers of the International Congress of Plant Pathology (Boston USA in 2018) had approved a session on international plant health, which includes a presentation on the IYPH. The International Society for Plant Pathology has also expressed interest in the IYPH and the ISF have pledged at least \$10,000 to support the proclamation, showing that there is a significant interest in the Year worldwide.

[44] Ralf LOPIAN informed that a series of events like conferences were being planned by countries. The list was assembled and would be distributed when finalized to all contracting parties with descriptions on how to organize those events. By the end of 2020 all events should be recorded to assess a success of IYPH.

[45] It was suggested to take into account lessons learned from previous FAO International Years and for example have a logo adopted as early as possible.

7.3 2018 IPPC theme on Plant Health and Environment Protection

[46] The IPPC Secretary underlined that major activities are planned for CPM 13, including: a keynote address by the CBD Secretary General, a special topic session, a side event in cooperation with UNEP. Additionally, in 2018 at least one IPPC Seminar will be organized at FAO-HQ with a website subpage and 1 factsheet developed.

[47] It was noted that this theme is very important as there is a direct link between pests and the environment that should be emphasized. There is a significant amount of experience within the plant health community on the management of pests and it was felt that this could be shared with other biodiverse relevant conventions. It was suggested that IPPC attends CBD meetings as often as possible.

[48] It was noted that a link to the environment and destruction of trees in public areas is a good way to engage with the public on the IPPC matters as urban ecosystems issues attract attention of even city dwellers. A link with climate change could also be explored. A possibility to have a 2020 high level symposium on the environmental issues could also be investigated.

8. Sustainable Funding

- [49] The IPPC Secretary gave a presentation on Resource Mobilization of the IPPC Secretariat for 2017 that covered these topics: 1) Budget Plan for 2017 with detailed information on operational and staff costs and the sources of funding; 2) Resource Mobilization Plan for 2017 with sustainable funding initiative; 3) Important activities, such as increasing awareness, strengthening Resource Mobilization Task Force work; Resource Mobilization activities with other international organizations and contracting parties; 4) Major Outcomes of 2017 Resource Mobilization activities; 5) Conclusion and Suggestion.
- [50] The IPPC Secretary briefed the participants about the major outcomes of the 2017 Resource Mobilization activities such as, IPPC-Sustainable Funding initiative, IPPC Resource Mobilization Task Force, progress in the IPPC Multi-Donor Trust Fund since 2013, the contribution of the IPPC Projects (supported by EU, STDF, China, Japan, Switzerland), and in-kind contributions from contracting parties, RPPOs, international organizations. He concluded with highlighting the emerged challenges, particularly the new very strict FAO policies for hiring consultants and PSA that demand more support from IPPC CPs to ensure a sustainable funding is in place.
- [51] The IPPC Secretary suggested that contracting parties, Bureau and FC members should be actively engaged in resource mobilization activities in to raise sufficient funds for ensure the survival and sustainable development of the IPPC Secretariat. He also underlined that activities regarding IPPC financial situation should be based on transparency and efficacy.
- [52] The SPG discussed in detail staffing and funding allocated until now to the IPPC Secretariat (6 currently occupied posts and 3 vacant posts) and how this compared with the 12 posts the FAO agreed to following the publication of the secretariat enhancement.
- [53] There was a suggestion to try to get commitment from FAO to provide additional regular programme funding for the three additional posts, possibly through communications between Ambassadors and FAO. This suggestion was felt by some participants to be unrealistic due to the fact that FAO as a whole is currently looking at ways of reducing organizational costs. Instead it was suggested that effort should also be spent on soliciting external funds for to support project posts. In order to achieve this it is felt that a new mechanism for obtaining additional funding to bring stability into the IPPC Secretariat was needed. The CPM-12 asked for more details regarding that new mechanism which was revised in cooperation with FAO LEG.
- [54] Marko BENOVIC (IPPC Secretariat), Marie-Claude FOREST from Canada, Marta Pardo (FAO Senior Legal Officer) and David McSherry (FAO Senior Finance Officer) presented an update on the development of the mechanism for sustainable funding to secure an additional 2 million dollars annually on top of 3 million dollars coming from the FAO. At the current time an official agreement needs to be reach with the FAO each time somebody wishes to donate additional funding to the IPPC. Negotiations to have these agreements signed separately for each donation is a lengthy, bureaucratic, process that is not sustainable in the long run. A new proposal replacing the old system comprises of: an overall CPM decision (with conditions in Annex 1) which will replace the need for individual agreements between FAO and contracting parties, and an adjusted UN scale of contributions (in Annex 2). The adjusted UN scale of contributions derives from the UN scale of assessment based on the particular needs of the IPPC. The contributions would be voluntarily and it is not expected that all contracting parties would donate funds.
- [55] It was hoped that CPM 13 would reach agreement on a new funding model based on the sustainable funding proposal but without a table indicating amounts per each country. A process would also be needed to clearly show donors how they contributions were being spent.
- [56] A separate project based funding model was explained in detail, project could be internal (funded by contracting parties) or external (funded by international organizations), linked to a specific initiative, enacted by a CPM priority and directed at outcomes unlikely to attract project funds. It should still follow the FAO project cycle. It would be based on a previous idea discussed at SPG of “pay as you go”.

- [57] A suggestion to revise the Convention to include a funding mechanisms was deemed unrealistic and would take at least 10 years providing that all contracting parties would agree. There would also be a danger that other topics apart from financial ones would be opened as well for negotiations while currently there was no other driver for revision.
- [58] The IPPC secretariat had concerns about all donations being earmarked donating contracting parties for specific activities, on the other hand, other priority activities are required by Contracting Parties remain with no funding to be implemented. The SPG recommends that activities of the Secretariat would continue to be decided by the CPM and not by single donor. The pay as you go projects are also not desirable by SPG which only benefit a small number of countries taking Secretariat resource away from delivery of its core functions and activities.
- [59] It was felt that IYPH 2020 should be used for advocating for the FAO to raise its contribution to the IPPC to the same level as that provided to CODEX.
- [60] The Chairperson summarized that the sustainable funding proposal should be redrafted taking into account the SPG feedback to include several mechanisms to fit with different requirements from the contracting parties as a general CPM decision with donations on a voluntarily basis. It would be then discussed at the December Bureau meeting.

9. Standards Setting and Implementation

9.1 Review of topics on framework of standards and implementation

- [61] It was noted that not a lot work was done regarding this issue. The CPM-13 should approve it based on the document already available on the IPP while in 2018 the framework would be updated by a joint Task Force. It was suggested that the document still needs some improvements.

9.2 Call for phytosanitary issues

- [62] Corné VAN ALPHEN, from the Netherlands, presented the outcomes of discussions of the Focus Group to develop criteria for a call for phytosanitary issues that took place on Monday, 9 October 2017. The suggested name for calls was: “a call for topics: standards and implementation” and would be issued every 3 years. The group proposed a process for the call in the form of a chart. A Joint Task Force, the SC and the IC would be involved in the process. The Chairpersons of the SC and the IC were expected to actively participate in the process. If the CPM agreed with those outcomes the process could start in November 2018. The Focus Group also looked at the list of possible criteria for a call. The FG based the proposed criteria for the call the existing standard setting criteria and modified these fit both areas of standard setting and implementation. Having a joint call was seen as a great opportunity to increase the cooperation between standards setting and standards implementation. There could also be a possibility to open calls beyond contracting parties so the SC and the IC could submit topics as well.
- [63] The SPG discussed in detail the proposal of the Focus Group. Some issues were raised concerning joint expert working groups; an early detection of the best solution to the issue raised (a standard or a manual or guidelines or a recommendation) that would address best a need of contracting parties and that could be identified early in a process; the length of the process, readjustment of a standard setting process; a link with emerging issues.
- [64] The SPG believed that the suggested process for the call was too long to address emerging issues in order to keep the IPPC move faster to be more relevant and responsive.
- [65] It was noted that while a standard was being created the experts should also be thinking about possible issues with its implementation. At the same time, it should be up to a contracting party putting forward a topic to also suggest which solution (a standard, a manual, etc.) would fit best their needs. The current framework of standard setting would need readjusting to take into account the demand.
- [66] There was a suggestion to keep a call continuously open and not only every two or three years. However, resources would be needed for that.

[67] The Chairperson asked the Focus Group to take the comments of the SPG into account and to revise the draft to be discussed at the December Bureau meeting. Corné VAN ALPHEN will take a lead in that process. The Focus Group was also asked to include some information on the background explaining the general situation and informing clearly which issues the call was supposed to address.

9.3 Promotion of the implementation of eCommerce

[68] Sarah BRUNEL (IPPC Secretariat) briefed participants on the developments in the area of eCommerce and a meeting of WCO expert group on eCommerce that took place in Brussels on 11 October 2017. At the CPM-12 a special topic session was organized on eCommerce. The Bureau also addressed this issue at its June meeting. In general, the WCO Secretariat is interested in producing a joint manual on eCommerce. The SPG was asked to select priorities on eCommerce related activities.

[69] The SPG appreciated the activities that the Secretariat had undertaken so far. However, it was also noted that currently there was no funding for the proposed action plan. It was also mentioned that the general public would not read WCO manuals and groups of collectors should be approached individually at a country level. It was suggested to explore cooperation with postal services and with the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) and CITES as they expressed concern about the same issues.

[70] The SPG concluded that the topic should be researched more before a work plan is drafted. The presented list was very extensive and the SPG could not decide without more background information on resources (human, financial) needed to cover them. The SPG requested the Secretariat to estimate costs of the proposed activities for further discussion by the Bureau.

9.4 Implementation of ePhyto project

[71] The IPPC Secretariat introduced the latest developments in the implementation of the ePhyto solution. The ePhyto HUB a secure system for the exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates between contracting parties began operation in early August with a few contracting parties testing the exchanging of information about a month. The HUB is hosted in Geneva by the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC). This testing led to the implementation of the pilot project phase and contracting parties were provided with a first-hand look at the HUB administration portal. The ePhyto Steering Group is working with the UNICC to develop the evaluation criteria that will be used by pilot countries to assess the operation of the HUB including technical on-boarding information.

[72] Developing countries raised the issue that they do not necessarily have good internet connections to participate in the ePhyto. It was explained that the system is being designed to operate in low bandwidth connections and it should be recognized that the use of electronic certificates not obligatory. Furthermore the IPPC would not be able to address the internet issue at the country level only provide the HUB for contracting parties to use.

[73] The IPPC Secretariat noted that there are a number of international funding organizations such as the World Bank which may provide funds for efforts to improve trade facilitation by developing countries and ePhyto may be an important component to improving border activities and countries may be able to seek funds from these organizations that potentially could be used to support a variety of implementation activities related to ePhyto. It was suggested that the Secretariat should draft a paper on how countries can access funding to support the implementation of the system in their own countries. Additionally, the system is being designed to work on mobile phones and with the ability for NPPO staff to work offline and then upload data when services are restored.

[74] The ePhyto Project Manager was thanked for outstanding efforts he has put into making a progress in the development of the ePhyto solution.

[75] The Secretariat also noted that it is working with the FAO Legal Office to develop a document outlining the proper use of the system by countries to further improve the security of the overall operation of the Solution. It was noted that the document will be presented to CPM 13 for adoption.

[76] The Chairperson summarized that the discussion on that project would continue now in a more timely manner given that components of the Solution are being tested and that it is important to acknowledge that IPPC Secretariat has achieved significant progress in this area.

9.5 Emerging issues and involvement of RPPOs

[77] This point was not separately addressed.

9.6 Trade facilitation action plan

[78] The IPPC Secretary presented this topic. The CPM Chairperson drafted a paper available to participants covering the main areas: 1) cooperation with WCO; 2) ePhyto; 3) eCommerce; 4) Sea containers; 4) 2020 conference. The IPPC Secretariat should establish a Task Force for Trade Facilitation. The SPG was asked for feedback on the paper. The IPPC Secretary also informed that the IPPC agreement (MoU) with WCO should be signed this year.

[79] Some participants raised an issue that in reality at the national level NPPOs were not involved while they should be directed to participate in the implementation of the TFA.

[80] William GAIN, from World Bank, explained that national implementation committees should have different border agencies involved in at least working groups. In general, the government of each country should notify about the implementation stage of the TFA, including some details on legislation and inspections.

[81] Some participants shared their experience on the functioning of similar working groups at the national level. In general although it was considered useful, especially in a process of consultation on specific issues, it proved to be very time consuming. It was also difficult to gather whole industry together as it is composed of different groups with different interests.

10. External Cooperation

10.1 Industry Advisory Group and stakeholders' involvement

[82] Craig FEDCHOCK (IPPC Secretariat) briefed the SPG on the historical background and informed that an industry group was engaged in the ePhyto project as it was seen as mutually beneficial. Following that, an idea was developed to potentially increase the use of an industry advisory group into other IPPC areas.

[83] Some participants raised a concern that a stable group with regular meetings might be too difficult to achieve. Maybe a broader network would be more feasible. However, at the current moment no other industry expressed a particular interest in IPPC. Participants shared their experience with national contacts with industry that was in some cases very costly and in others very divided as many industry group bodies exist at the national level. In general, a contact with the industry would have an added value for the IPPC. It was also noted that engagement with IYPH was already foreseen. Also, establishment of contacts on a global level should not interfere with contacts at national levels that were already established.

[84] It was noted that proposed ToRs could be redrafted based on the SPG feedback.

10.2 Cooperation with International Seed Federation (ISF)

[85] The IPPC Secretary informed that the IPPC Secretariat met with ISF representatives and 4 areas of possible cooperation were identified: standard setting, implementation of ISPM 38, training at the 2018 IPPC Regional Workshops and communication (IYPH). They offered 10 000 Swiss francs as a donation. The ISF also support the ePhyto and currently chair the industry group.

[86] The SPG acknowledged the importance of healthy seeds and raised several issues like who would develop material and pay for it and what would be the content for a training at the 2018 IPPC Regional Workshops. Some participants shared their experience with regional and national seed associations.

[87] The SPG noted the information without any specific conclusion. Implementation of the ISPM on seed would happen at the national level in cooperation with regional or national seed associations.

11. Strategic Topics Proposed by Contracting Parties

11.1 International Day for Plant Health (IDPH)

[88] The IPPC Secretary reminded about an initiative to establish the International Day to complement the IYPH. Potentially that could be discussed by the Bureau, the CPM, FAO Council and FAO Conference and then 2020 UN Conference would approve it.

[89] Some participants expressed an opinion that a suggested 6 December for a Day would not be the best for the northern hemisphere.

[90] Participants raised a concern on how would that influence a progress of establishing the IYPH as there a prevailing feeling against was against adopting international years (there is even a UN resolution against Years).

[91] It was decided that it is better to wait for the outcome of the IYPH and then decide if we wanted to establish a Day as well. Trying to establish a Day now could jeopardize chances of establishing the IYPH. It was also noted that contracting parties could establish a day at a national level if they wished so.

11.2 International Phytosanitary Conference

[92] Shoki AL DOBAI (IPPC Secretariat) presented the paper prepared by Kenya not able attend the meeting. The SPG was asked to express their views.

[93] A value of the conference was not questioned and there was support for ensuring that such a conference takes place and possibly produce a publication on the state of the world's plant health. However, it was not clear to participants why the CPM should adopt a format of any conference not what they were actually being asked to adopt. In general, organization of conferences requires significant funding and the organizers should be responsible for running it without any financial support from the convention or organizational engagement from the IPPC Secretariat.

[94] The Chairperson concluded that the Bureau could analyze further this issue and consider its implications and practical aspects.

11.3 Discussion paper on ISPM-15 symbol registration, plant health and IYPH

[95] Mohammad MOHSIN, from Bangladesh, presented the paper which was noted by the SPG.

12. Any Other Business

[96] No topic was discussed.

13. Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

[97] The SPG will be held most probably on 9-11 October 2018. The IPPC Seminar could be organized at the same time on Plant Health and the Environmental Protection.

14. Close of the Meeting

[98] The Chairperson thanked the participants for their feedback and input and closed the meeting.

Appendix 01 - Agenda

	Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter
1.	Opening of the Meeting		XIA/TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
2.	Meeting Arrangements		
2.1	Election of the Rapporteur		TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
2.2	Adoption of the Agenda	01_SPG_2017_Oct	TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
3.	Administrative Matters		
3.1	Documents lists	02_SPG_2017_Oct	ALDOBAI/ FEDCHOCK
3.2	Participants lists	03_SPG_2017_Oct	ALDOBAI/ FEDCHOCK
3.3	Local information	Link to the Local Information	ALDOBAI/ FEDCHOCK
4.	Report of Last SPG Meeting	Link to SPG Meeting Report Oct 2016	TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
5.	Report from CPM Chairperson	Link to the Mid-Year Report of the IPPC Secretariat	
5.1	Updates from CPM-12 meeting		RANSOM
5.2	Updates from Bureau		RANSOM
6.	Keynote Address from IPPC Secretary: The IPPC in 65 years		XIA
7.	Strategic Topics		
7.1	IPPC Strategic Framework for 2020-2030	07_SPG_2017_Oct	LOPIAN/THOMPSON
7.2	IYPH in 2020		LOPIAN
7.3	2018 IPPC theme on Plant Health and Environment Protection		RANSOM/XIA
8.	Sustainable Funding	07_Bureau_2017_Oct	FOREST/PARDO/ BENOVIC
9.	Standards Setting and Implementation		
9.1	Review of topics on framework of standards and implementation		FEDCHOCK/ TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
9.2	Call for phytosanitary issues	10_SPG_2017_Oct	VAN ALPHEN /LARSON/SOSA
9.3	Promotion of the implementation of e-commerce	09_SPG_2017_Oct	BRUNEL/SOSA
9.4	Implementation of e-phyto project	08_SPG_2017_Oct	SELA/FEDCHOCK
9.5	Emerging issues and involvement of RPPOs		TRUJILLO ARRIAGA/ FEDCHOCK
9.6	Trade Facilitation Agreement work plan	05_SPG_2017_Oct_Rev_01	RANSOM/XIA
10.	External Cooperation		
10.1	Industry Advisory Group and stakeholders involvement		FEDCHOCK/RANSOM
10.2	Cooperation with International Seed Federation		XIA/ALDOBAI

	Agenda Item	Document No.	Presenter
11.	Strategic Topics Proposed by Contracting Parties		TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
11.1	International Day for Plant Health (IDPH)		DOMINICA
11.2	International Phytosanitary Conference	04_SPG_2017_Oct	KENYA
11.3	Discussion paper on ISPM-15 symbol registration, plant health and IYPH	06_SPG_2017_Oct	BANGLADESH
12.	Any Other Business		TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
13.	Date and Venue of the Next Meeting		TRUJILLO ARRIAGA
14.	Close of the Meeting		TRUJILLO ARRIAGA

Appendix 02 – List of Documents

DOCUMENT NO.	AGENDA ITEM	DOCUMENT TITLE	DATE POSTED / DISTRIBUTED
01_SPG_2017_Oct	02.2	Provisional agenda	2017-10-05
02_SPG_2017_Oct	03.1	Documents list	2017-10-05
03_SPG_2017_Oct	03.2	Participants list	2017-10-05
04_SPG_2017_Oct	11.2	International Phytosanitary Conference - Proposal to establish an IPPC format for a regular phytosanitary conference: The "International Phytosanitary Conference	2017-09-25
05_SPG_2017_Oct_Rev_01	09.6	Trade Facilitation Agreement work plan	2017-09-28
06_SPG_2017_Oct	11.3	Discussion paper on ISPM-15 symbol registration, plant health and IYPH	2017-09-29
07_SPG_2017_Oct	07.1	IPPC Strategic Framework for 2020-2030	2017-09-29
08_SPG_2017_Oct	09.4	Implementaton of the ePhyto project	2017-10-03
09_SPG_2017_Oct	09.3	Promotion of the implementation of e-commerce	2017-10-05
10_SPG_2017_Oct	09.2	Call for phytosanitary issues	2017-10-11

LINKS	AGENDA ITEM
Link to the Local Information	03.3
Link to SPG Meeting Report Oct 2016	04.
Link to the Mid-Year Report of the IPPC Secretariat	05.

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