D R A F T Role of the IPPC in relation to plant health emergencies

Background

1. In recent years, representatives of contracting parties have raised several concerns, and engaged in discussions at several venues, regarding the IPPC’s role in relation to plant health emergencies faced by contracting parties and their regions. To date there has been no firm CPM decision on this. This paper is intended to summarise recent discussions, elaborate on the potential role of the IPPC Secretariat in relation to emergencies, explain limitations in the Secretariat’s resources and mandate, and also to clarify the roles and responsibilities of individual contracting parties within their regions and at CPM. The paper includes proposed decisions for contracting parties to take at CPM-14.
2. This paper has been prepared for the October 2018 meetings of the Bureau and the Strategic Planning Group. It will be further developed for CPM-14 following these meetings, as appropriate. It should be noted that a separate paper on emerging pests is also under development by the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization.
3. Discussions that took place at CPM-11 and CPM-12 on emerging issues were considered further by the CPM Bureau in 2016 and the Strategic Planning Group during its 2016 meeting. Concerns raised at CPM-13 on fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) were considered by the CPM Bureau in June 2018. Among the outcomes of these discussions was identification of the need for clarity in regard to the role of the CPM and the IPPC Secretariat in relation to plant health emergencies.
4. Earlier, in June 2017, the Bureau had proposed that a new arrangement for sharing information on emerging issues would be for Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) to have a quarterly conference call coordinated by the Secretariat to discuss emerging issues, to decide if they are global or regional in nature, to identify possible actions and provide recommendations to contracting parties. However, before embarking on this, the subject will be further discussed during the next Technical Consultation among RPPOs (TC-RPPO). Presently, the TC-RPPO includes “emerging pests” as a standing item on its annual meeting agenda.
5. Accompanying these discussions has been the consistent concern over how limited IPPC Secretariat resources are in regard to all purposes, and whether and/or how best to allocate any of these resources to activities relating to emergencies.

Current situation

1. Discussion at CPM-13, and in meetings of subsequent governance bodies, has included suggestions on, and considerations of, how the CPM and the Secretariat should respond to emergency pest situations, what the mandate of the IPPC is with respect to such situations, and how or whether resources could or should be made available to assist contracting parties in responding to such emergencies. In particular, there has been in depth discussion on the role of the IPPC Secretariat and the use of its resources in such situations. It has also been felt important to define what constitutes an emergency and the role of the IPPC Secretariat in such cases.
2. It should be noted that the IPPC Secretariat’s resources are limited and are widely recognized by contracting parties to be insufficient to continue core work on a sustainable basis. There are therefore no resources immediately available to be allocated towards assisting contracting parties with responding to emergency pest situations. Any funds allocated towards such activities would require that existing core work be delayed or discontinued.
3. During the June 2018 Bureau meeting, in order to help focus discussion on this subject, a member provided a general dictionary definition of “emergency” as: *a serious unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action*. There are also partially related IPPC glossary (ISPM 5) definitions as below:
* “emergency action”: *A prompt phytosanitary action undertaken in a new or unexpected phytosanitary situation*
* “emergency measure”: *A phytosanitary measure established as a matter of urgency in a new or unexpected phytosanitary situation. An emergency measure may or may not be a provisional measure*
1. During its 2016 meetings, the Bureau had recommended that a glossary definition for “emergency plant health situation” should be developed. A possible definition considered during this meeting was: *a new or unexpected phytosanitary situation occurs which, if not addressed with immediate phytosanitary action, will result in a plant health situation resulting in catastrophic harm to food security (human and/or animal), economic well-being, and/or environmental degradation*.
2. In relation to the Secretariat’s potential involvement in emergencies and any related use of resources, the Bureau indicated that it should be involved in any decision that would require the re-allocation of funds or a re-prioritization of activities that may be proposed to respond to an emergency. In such situations, an ad hoc meeting of the Bureau could take place (physically or virtually, depending on the nature of the situation) to ensure that time or funds are appropriate used.
3. The Bureau reiterated the fact that the Convention places an obligation on contracting parties to coordinate and cooperate with each other to deal with the spread of pests, if necessary, and also to share information in this regard[[1]](#footnote-1)[1]. The Bureau also recalled that the issue of emerging pests and IPPC actions had been discussed by the Bureau in 2017 and that the TC-RPPOs was requested to develop a process for identifying and coordinating response to new and emerging pests. This work is progressing and includes defining the scope of an emerging pest for which global action is warranted.
4. The Bureau considered that in the case of the fall armyworm raised during CPM-13, the Bureau and Secretariat were not equipped to respond immediately to the concerns raised by contracting parties, and the need for contracting parties to report such situations at early stages and in accordance with the Convention should be highlighted. In this regard, the Bureau felt that adding emergency and/or emerging pests as a standing CPM agenda item would be useful and important.
5. The Bureau also indicated that first the SPG, then the Bureau, and finally, the CPM, should provide a clear position and decision on how the Secretariat could be involved in responding to emergencies.
6. In relation specifically to the fall armyworm situation, following CPM 13 it became clear that other areas in FAO were fully aware of the issue and had mobilised resources to assist regional responses. A Bureau member indicated that the IPPC Secretariat should undertake a study of which other divisions within the FAO are involved with emergency situations that could be of concern to contracting parties, but which are not necessarily fully within the mandate of the IPPC, thereby ensuring that the full range of FAO resources and activities can be communicated to contracting parties.

Recommended approach

1. Further to the earlier recommendations developed by the Bureau in June 2018 and contained in section 10.3 (*IPPC criteria for emergency issues*) of the report of the Bureau’s June 2018 meeting, the SPG is asked to consider the following recommendations for prospective presentation to CPM-14:
2. The CPM is invited to:
3. *Request* that the IPPC Secretariat engage with the division(s) of the FAO responsible for emergency situations to clarify what type and level of support is presently available for contracting parties.
4. *Confirm* that emergency situations that may potentially warrant consideration of the use or reallocation of Secretariat resources should be limited to:
* the mandate of the Convention and activities within the Secretariat’s available resource and technical capacity;
* supporting or resolving an activity or system for which the IPPC Secretariat is responsible, that fails unexpectedly and could negatively impact the IPPC work programme;
* an emergency pest situation that is causing damage to contracting parties plant resources or threatening their endangered areas, nationally and/or regionally, for which the IPPC Secretariat could provide a function of facilitating sharing of information or coordination of activities; and/or
* developing and implementing a new system related to a regional emergency pest situation, if approved by the CPM, for which the IPPC Secretariat would be responsible.
1. *Agree* that, in such emergency situations, the Secretariat should convene an ad-hoc meeting of the Bureau to discuss and, if required, approve, the reallocation of funds and/or re-prioritization of activities of the Secretariat to respond to the matter, and that situations outside the Secretariat's resource capacity and mandate will not be considered for reallocation of funds or re-prioritization of activities;
2. *Agree* that, where Secretariat resources may be allocated or reallocated towards assisting responses to emergencies, priority should be given to assisting developing countries and regions;
3. *Confirm* that updates of emergency situations and outbreaks of pest situations be added to the CPM agenda as a standing item.
4. *Clarify*, however, that reports submitted and statements made as part of this standing CPM agenda item should:
* be oriented towards pest outbreaks that are regional in nature or have the potential to have regional impacts;
* identify the nature of the damage caused or expected, plant resources at risk, the endangered area(s) and other relevant potential plant health, environmental or economic consequences;
* describe what measures if any, have been taken and what the results of these efforts have been;
* indicate, if known, what role the FAO and any other international organizations are playing, or are planning, in relation to the outbreak;
* clarify precisely what role the IPPC Secretariat could play in helping contracting parties respond to the outbreak.
1. *Note* that contracting parties may donate targeted extra-budgetary funds through the multi-donor trust fund to support Secretariat activities identified through this standing agenda item.

References

IPPC CPM (2017) *Emerging Issues*. Paper CPM 2017/35 prepared for agenda item 8.4 of the 2017 CPM-12 meetings

IPPC CPM Bureau (2016) *Establishment of financial support for emergency pests*. Paper 15 prepared for agenda item 13.2 of the June 2016 Bureau meetings

IPPC CPM Bureau (2018) *Bureau report – June 2018*.

IPPC SPG (2016) *Emerging issues*. Paper 5 prepared for agenda item 8.1 of the 2016 Strategic Planning Group meetings

Annex to SPG paper on Role of the IPPC in relation to plant health emergencies

# Articles in the IPPC’s New Revised Text relating to plant health emergencies and responses to them:

***ARTICLE IV General provisions relating to the organizational arrangements for national plant protection***

2 The responsibilities of an official national plant protection organization shall include the following:

1. the surveillance of growing plants, including both areas under cultivation (inter alia fields, plantations, nurseries, gardens, greenhouses and laboratories) and wild flora, and of plants and plant products in storage or in transportation, particularly with the object of reporting the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests, and of controlling those pests, including the reporting referred to under Article VIII paragraph 1(a);

***ARTICLE VII Requirements in relation to imports***

6. Nothing in this Article shall prevent any contracting party from taking appropriate emergency action on the detection of a pest posing a potential threat to its territories or the report of such a detection. Any such action shall be evaluated as soon as possible to ensure that its continuance is justified. The action taken shall be immediately reported to contracting parties concerned, the Secretary, and any regional plant protection organization of which the contracting party is a member.

***ARTICLE VIII International cooperation***

1. The contracting parties shall cooperate with one another to the fullest practicable extent in achieving the aims of this Convention, and shall in particular:
2. cooperate in the exchange of information on plant pests, particularly the reporting of the occurrence, outbreak or spread of pests that may be of immediate or potential danger, in accordance with such procedures as may be established by the Commission;
3. participate, in so far as is practicable, in any special campaigns for combatting pests that may seriously threaten crop production and need international action to meet the emergencies; and
4. cooperate, to the extent practicable, in providing technical and biological information necessary for pest risk analysis.
5. Each contracting party shall designate a contact point for the exchange of information connected with the implementation of this Convention

***ARTICLE XI Commission on Phytosanitary Measures***

1. Contracting parties agree to establish the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures within the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
2. The functions of the Commission shall be to promote the full implementation of the objectives of the Convention and, in particular, to:
3. review the state of plant protection in the world and the need for action to control the international spread of pests and their introduction into endangered areas;

***ARTICLE XX Technical assistance***

The contracting parties agree to promote the provision of technical assistance to contracting parties, especially those that are developing contracting parties, either bilaterally or through the appropriate international organizations, with the objective of facilitating the implementation of this Convention.

1. [1] Articles VII and VIII of the International Plant Protection Convention [↑](#footnote-ref-1)