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INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

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Technical Assistance: Development of Additional Tools

Agenda Item 8.8 of the Provisional Agenda

The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation

1. The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) is the first official Technical Assistance (TA) tool developed and adopted by the ICPM. The purpose of the PCE is to assist Contracting Parties in the identification of their TA needs in order to identify constraints to the full implementation of the IPPC. It has been applied in a supervised manner in over 35 countries in the Pacific, Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Andean countries. Further application is envisaged by June 2003 in FAO Technical Cooperation Programmes for Eritrea, Gabon, and Zambia and in eight countries of West Africa. Three projects comprising about 15 additional countries are in the approval stage. Other countries may also have used the PCE as it has been freely available on the Internet for about two years. In addition, there is growing interest by other organizations (including Codex and OIE) in adapting the self-diagnostic approach of the PCE for application to other systems. This approach is increasingly seen as critical to supporting technical assistance and donor confidence towards financing projects.

2. The further development, maintenance and application of the PCE is currently supported by US\$200 000 provided to the IPPC Secretariat from an FAO project for the Prevention of Food Losses (PFL). The project is limited to two years. The funds are applied according to a general project outline and based on specific recommendations from experts having interest and experience with PCE. The Secretariat convened a meeting of these experts from 24 to 28 June 2002 to consider improvements to the PCE and strategies for its harmonized application. The recommendations of the Working Group describe three phases of activities:

1. Improving the programme:
 - a) Update the questionnaires to reflect new standards and improve existing sections based on experience;

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- b) Design and develop software programmes to assist with the formulation of national strategies, priorities and action plans;
 - c) Prepare a CD-ROM for demonstration and testing;
 - d) Develop and publish a user manual;
 - e) Undertake software modifications necessary for the transition of the system to FAO.
2. Translation of the PCE into five official languages of FAO.
 3. Training of facilitators, regional workshops and expert working group meetings.

Issues and Challenges

3. The phytosanitary capacity building programme of the IPPC has developed significantly during the past few years. To the extent possible, phytosanitary capacity building projects funded under FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) have included the PCE. As a result, governments are becoming increasingly clear and more precise about their technical assistance needs. At the same time, they are faced with the lack of substantial assistance necessary to address more fundamental institutional and other deficiencies. FAO interventions and achievements are often undermined by the lack of resources for sustainability beyond the TCP.

4. PCE results to date have helped to identify the main limiting factors impeding the full implementation of the IPPC and international standards. These include:

- deficiencies in institutional and human resources;
- inappropriate or out-of-date legislation and regulations;
- lack of documented national phytosanitary operational procedures;
- lack of information, access to information, and information management systems;
- inadequate facilities supporting phytosanitary control.

5. The need to upgrade national legislation is being approached through TCP and other projects with the support of the FAO Legal Office and through the internal development of Guidelines for Phytosanitary Legislation. The need for information is partially addressed through the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) as well as through initiatives by other organizations (EPPO Reporting Service, CABI Global Compendium on Pest and Diseases, etc.). There is, however, little available in relation to the provision of other technical assistance tools, and the ICPM lacks a mechanism to review and recommend priorities and strategies.

6. For example, it is envisioned that documented national phytosanitary procedures could be a set of several interrelated modules including software and manuals, each one dealing with specific operational aspects of ISPMs such as PRA, import inspection and pest interception, export certification, surveillance, sampling and inspection specifications. However, such an initiative needs to be carefully considered by Members with relevant expertise and experience, and designed with a strategic view to its application and relation to other technical assistance tools and needs.

7. The pooled results of PCE constitute an important input for the ICPM in relation to its role in supporting the implementation of the IPPC. Likewise, the PCE has provided important insight into the types of technical assistance tools that could be developed to further support this process.

8. The ICPM is invited to:

1. *Encourage* the further development and application of the PCE, in particular its introduction to donor agencies and its official endorsement as the basis for phytosanitary capacity building initiatives.

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2. *Express* its appreciation to FAO for the support provided for PCE development through FAO's PFL project, and *consider* the priority for future support of the PCE through the work programme.
 3. *Note* the proposed programme for PCE development and maintenance and *consider* the possibility of establishing an informal expert group to provide the Secretariat with guidance PCE activities and to manage other technical assistance initiatives of the ICPM.
 4. *Note* the initiative by the Secretariat and FAO Legal Office to develop guidelines for phytosanitary legislation and *consider* the topics and priorities for other technical assistance tools.