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de las  
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Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### Fifth Session

Rome, 7-11 April 2003

### Work Programme for Harmonization: Topics and Priorities for Standards

### Agenda Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda

1. At its Fourth Session, the ICPM identified topics and priorities for standards to be included in the work programme. The work programme that was implemented by the Secretariat in 2002 follows the recommendations of the ICPM to the extent possible within the limitations of time, staff and resources (cf. ICPM 03/5).

2. Certain activities that have been included in the work programme but not yet implemented are carried forward for the ICPM to decide again their priority for completion in the current and future work programmes. Other activities (e.g. Glossary review) are ongoing. In addition, the ICPM will note that there are draft standards in various stages of development that need to be completed and there are also existing standards that require review and revision. Several new topics have been proposed and the ICPM has indicated the need to shift standard-setting priorities toward specific standards that benefit in particular the developing countries.

3. In general terms, the work programme for standard setting addresses five categories of standards:

1. New concept or reference standards and supplements to existing standards
2. Specific pest and commodity standards
3. Review and updating of existing standards, including the Glossary of phytosanitary terms (updated on an ongoing basis)
4. Specific standards in response to developing country concerns
5. Urgent harmonization issues that may arise from the ICPM or other organizations (e.g. wood packaging, equivalence).

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4. The current work programme includes the following standards under development or identified by the ICPM as priorities for development (topics marked by bold indicate priorities for which no action was taken in 2003):

- Efficacy of measures
- Supplement on PRA for living modified organisms
- PRA for regulated non-quarantine pests
- **Import regulatory systems (redrafting)**
- Glossary of phytosanitary terms
- **Surveillance for citrus canker (redrafting)**
- **Revision of ISPM No. 1**
- **Low pest prevalence**
- **Inspection methodology (redrafting)**
- **Guidelines for equivalence (to follow Efficacy of measures)**
- **Revision of ISPM No. 2**
- Revision of ISPM No. 3 (being pursued outside of the regular programme)

5. The listing above is ranked according to the current priority assigned to each standard by the Secretariat. It does not include draft standards that are currently under consideration by ICPM for adoption.

6. In addition to the standards already included in the work programme, the Secretariat has directly received requests in 2002 for additional topics (see ICPM 03/5) and the Chairman of the ICPM has solicited suggestions from Members in order to develop a more comprehensive listing (see ICPM 03/14).

7. The ICPM will also recall that several existing standards are due or overdue for review (see ICPM 03/05) and a number of topics raised previously have not been removed or withdrawn from consideration. These include:

*Transboundary shipment of sterile insects (source: the International Atomic Energy Agency)*

8. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has undertaken an initiative, through the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, to develop a draft international standard on the transboundary shipment of sterile insects.

9. IAEA notes that the transboundary shipment of sterile insects for pest control programmes and research purposes has been a common practice for more than forty years. It is expected that the transboundary shipments of sterile insects will substantially increase in the near future as the use of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) becomes more widespread and interest increases in the commercialization of sterile insects. FAO and IAEA Members have recognized this trend recommended that steps be taken to develop an international standard aimed at providing national plant protection organizations with guidance regarding the phytosanitary risks and procedures for regulating the transboundary movement of sterile insects.

10. A working group of international consultants was organized by IAEA in August 2001 to evaluate the risks associated with the transboundary shipment of sterile insects and to develop a discussion paper on the topic. The IPPC Secretariat participated in this meeting and has assisted with the formulation of the discussion paper. Based on the discussion paper, a draft standard has been prepared which follows the IPPC format. The draft standard describes responsibilities of the producer and shipper, regulatory authorities, and importers and suggests harmonized measures for risk management. The IAEA-FAO Joint Division has requested that the ICPM consider including this topic in the work programme, using the discussion paper and draft standard as the basis for advancing discussions in the IPPC. Both documents are available from the IPPC Secretariat.

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11. The ICPM is informed that a similar initiative has been undertaken by the IAEA-FAO Joint Division on the topic of risk assessment for transgenic arthropods.

*Risk analysis for low-mobility pests (source: Chile)*

12. The Servicio Agricola y Ganadero (SAG) of Chile has provided the Secretariat with the preliminary draft of a standard on the topic of risk analysis for low-mobility pests. The standard is to provide guidance on assessing the risk of pests that have a very low probability of dispersal because of limited mobility. It proposes certain criteria for recognizing low-mobility pests using examples to demonstrate, and it discusses approaches for risk management. SAG has indicated that they consider the standard to have important implications for international trade, in particular considering the anticipated loss of methyl bromide as a treatment for many of the pests of concern.

*Procedures for post-entry quarantine (source: Peru)*

13. A standard (or standards) providing guidance on the establishment and management of post-entry quarantine systems has historically been envisioned as an integral component of the standard-setting programme of the IPPC but no work has been done in this area as yet. An ISPM on general aspects of post-entry quarantine would provide particularly useful guidance to developing countries and would serve as the foundation for several specific standards that might follow on the same topic.

*Sampling concepts (source: Secretariat)*

14. Issues that hinder progress on certain aspects of *Guidelines for surveillance for specific pests: citrus canker*, and *Inspection methodology* relate to understanding (and agreement on) the application of fundamental statistical concepts related to sampling. This includes concepts such as tolerance, confidence levels, and acceptance levels. The formulation of a standard or the development of technical guidelines regarding the statistical basis for sampling may be useful to support the understanding, completion, and application of these and future standards dealing with the assessment of efficacy.

*Transit (source: Secretariat)*

15. The Secretariat is aware that most countries have no phytosanitary requirements regarding the movement of consignments in transit. However, the Secretariat has noted that several countries have notified the WTO of proposals to put such regulations in place and many other countries have contacted the Secretariat requesting assistance with the design of transit legislation and regulations. The formulation of an ISPM providing guidelines for transit requirements could be an important contribution to harmonization at this time.

*Uncertainty (source: Secretariat)*

16. A key issue currently under international scrutiny and debate is the role and use of precaution in the regulation of hazards to plant, animal, and human health and the environment. A concept known as the precautionary approach (and also as the “precautionary principle”) has emerged from the international framework for environmental protection to become a contentious issue in other fora where the concept is not understood or expressed in the same terms. The lack of clarity in this regard is often mistaken for the lack of precaution or the lack of concern for the importance of precaution.

17. Within the IPPC framework, precaution is an element of decision making related to the level of uncertainty associated with risk analysis. However, because of the emphasis placed on scientific evidence and principles, the importance of uncertainty in risk analysis and the criteria

for governments to use for disciplining their judgments on uncertainty is not well understood or internationally harmonized. Significant opportunity exists to articulate the role and importance of uncertainty in risk analysis as the basis for phytosanitary measures and thereby clarify the application of the precautionary approach within the framework of the IPPC.

18. The ICPM is invited to:

1. *Note* the topics that may be included in the work programme.
2. *Recommend* topics and priorities for additions, deletions, or modifications to the work programme.