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منظمة الأغذية
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INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Sixth Session

Rome, 29 March – 2 April 2004

Report of the Secretariat

Agenda Item No 4 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The paper provides a brief report on the work of the Secretariat to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) based on the Strategic Directions endorsed by the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary measures (ICPM). This report was prepared in early December 2003. An update on the work programme will be presented at the ICPM. In some cases issues are dealt with in more detail under separate agenda items.

Strategic Direction 1: The development, adoption and monitoring of the implementation of international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs)

2. Expert Working Groups have been held in 2003, after ICPM-5, to develop drafts for the following standards:

- Equivalence
- Use of integrated measures in a systems approach for pest risk management of citrus fruit for citrus canker
- Revision of ISPM 3, Code of conduct for the import and release of exotic biological control agents
- Low pest prevalence

3. Expert Working Groups are planned for early 2004 to develop drafts for the following standards:

- Guidelines for consignments in transit
- Revision of ISPM 2, Guidelines for pest risk analysis
- Inspection methodology
- Revision of ISPM No 5
- Revision of ISPM No 1

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4. ICPM 5 requested that e-mail groups be used for the development of final draft standards for the following:
 - Revision of ISPM No. 5 Glossary of phytosanitary terms
 - Revision of ISPM No. 1 Principles of plant quarantine as related to international trade
 - Citrus canker surveillance
 - Efficacy of measures
 - Guidelines for formatting specific diagnostic protocols for regulated pests
5. Progress on finalizing draft standards by e-mail has been much slower than anticipated and the Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau and the Standards Committee has convened, (or will convene in early 2004), face-to-face meetings on the Glossary and revision of ISPM No.1. It is also likely that face-to-face meetings will need to be convened on the draft standards on citrus canker surveillance and efficacy of measures during 2004, if these are to be completed.
6. As agreed by ICPM-5 in 2003, the Informal Working Group on Forest Quarantine is expected to convene in early 2004 to develop recommendations on treatments for wood packaging to manage pests.
7. The ICPM agreed that the International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation (ICGFI) be approached to review information on potential irradiation treatments for pests. However, this had not progressed as the ICGFI is currently being disbanded. It may be appropriate to form a Technical Panel on this issue if the concept of technical panels is agreed to by the ICPM (see agenda item on proposed improvements in the standard setting process).
8. The Standards Committee Working Group (SC-7) was convened in May and November 2003. The full Standards Committee (SC) was convened directly after the SC-7 meeting in November 2003. Formal country consultation occurred on three draft standards during 2003 and the comments received were considered by the SC at its November meeting. Adoption of draft standards is dealt with as a separate agenda item.
9. Four regional consultations on draft standards have been organized (Asia/Pacific, Latin America/Caribbean, Near East and Francophone Africa). Participants considered these meetings were very valuable. The volume and quality of the comments received on the draft standards was of a very high standard reflecting the understanding of the drafts that was facilitated by the regional consultations.
10. FAO has published the new ISPMs in the standard “green book” format, including the revised ISPM 15 with the new IPPC certification mark.. The ICPM will note in particular that the Spanish versions of standards approved in 2002 and 2003 (ISPM No. 11 Rev. 1, ISPMs 14 to 19) have also now all been published as green books.

Strategic Direction 2: Information exchange

11. The International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP - <http://www.ippc.int>) is now a valuable source of information on IPPC issues and is receiving an increasing number of visitors each month (a five fold increase between March and November 2003). Substantial development continues to taken place to provide the services Members require and improve the interface to allow for easier navigation. Substantial improvements have been made to the IPP in terms and stability and performance. Notification of updates or new information on the IPP are being provided as News articles. However, the use of a email message system for warning contact points when new information or documents are added to the site is being considered. The Secretariat continues to receive substantial queries via the IPP, particularly with regards the implementation of ISPM No. 15.

12. The inclusion on the IPP of information on membership of Expert Working Groups as requested at ICPM-5 has significantly increased transparency on the standard setting process. The Secretariat has been assisting some countries in placing official information on the IPPC in advance of the full implementation of the IPP as a tool for information exchange.

Strategic Direction 3: The provision of dispute settlement mechanisms

13. The Secretariat has received no requests for assistance in dispute settlement. A meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Dispute Settlement (SBDS) was convened immediately prior to ICPM-6. An informal report will be given by the Chair of the SBDS at the ICPM.

Strategic Direction 4: The development of the phytosanitary capacity of Members by promoting the provision of technical assistance

14. The Secretariat has sought to involve developing countries in the activities of the IPPC to the greatest extent possible. This has been greatly assisted by funding provided by the EU, Germany, COSAVE and Australia to support the attendance of developing country delegates at various ICPM meetings, and Regional Workshops on draft ISPMs, and the workshop on Invasive alien species and the IPPC.

15. Information on the IPPC has been presented at a number of workshops convened by the WTO – Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement Secretariat (WTO-SPS) to assist developing countries, as well as at a workshop on SPS matters convened by Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA).

16. ICPM-5 agreed that, if additional resources are available, an Informal Working Group on technical assistance be formed and begin providing guidance to the Secretariat and recommendations to the ICPM. The Secretariat was not able to convene this meeting in 2003 or early 2004. The Secretariat is planning to convene an Informal Working Group on technical assistance in 2004 in time to allow the Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) to consider the report of the group and prepare recommendations for ICPM-7 in 2005.

17. Reports on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE), the Special Trust Fund and the SPTA consideration of technical assistance are under other agenda items.

18. A workshop on Invasive Alien Species and the International Plant Protection Convention was held in Braunschweig, Germany, 22-26 September 2003 with funding provided by the German Government. This workshop was set up to help phytosanitary experts, environmentalists, and regulators to exchange ideas and learn how the IPPC and related tools may help in the management of IAS. The workshop involved approximately 110 attendees with expertise in IPPC and environmental issues.

19. The programme addressed some of the most topical issues that are confronting both phytosanitary services and environmental protection agencies with regard to invasive alien species (IAS). Presentations and discussions sought to explain the role of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and systems developed through the IPPC framework, including Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs), and identify how these systems can contribute to the management and mitigation of risks posed by invasive alien species relevant for plants. Details of the Workshop are available on the IPP. The proceedings of the workshop will be published.

Strategic Direction 5: The maintenance of an effective and efficient administrative framework

20. The report of the Fifth Session of the ICPM was distributed to all Members following the meeting. International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) adopted by the ICPM at its Fifth Session were included in the report and have also been made available to Members through the Secretariat in electronic and hard copy formats.
21. The Secretariat has convened one meeting of the SPTA and a Focus Group meeting on the standard setting process. Both these activities are dealt with as separate agenda items.
22. FAO provides the primary source of translation services contracted by the Secretariat. Assistance from other organizations and individuals are also contracted on an as-needed basis. Valuable assistance has been provided by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) which has been contracted for the review, editing, and translation of documents from English to Spanish in 2003-2004. NAPPO has drawn upon its own substantial expertise and also consulted widely with phytosanitary officials and other organizations on Spanish translation issues. NAPPO has completed the comprehensive review of ISPMs 14-19, which have consequently been published, and it has been decided previous ISPMs will be reviewed for language issues when they are revised. The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) continues to provide valuable assistance on specific French translation issues.
23. Maintaining sufficient staffing levels in the Secretariat was a problem through 2003 but the situation may improve in 2004 depending on the final budget outcome (see separate agenda item).

Strategic Direction 6: Promotion of the IPPC and cooperation with relevant international organizations

24. The Secretariat has been represented at a range of meetings with international and regional organizations including, WTO-SPS, Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) and the World Bank.
25. ICPM-5 noted the benefits arising from liaison with research and educational institutes and agreed to the creation of an informal working group on research and educational liaison. The SPTA considered this topic and developed recommendations for the Working Group on specific issues that should be addressed. The Secretariat will convene the Working Group in time to allow the 2004 SPTA meeting to consider the report of the group and develop recommendations to ICPM-7 in 2005.
26. The ICPM is invited to:
1. *Express* its gratitude to countries and organizations that have provided assistance and resources to the work programme.
 2. *Note* the information provided by the Secretariat on the ICPM work programme.