



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### Fifth Session

Rome, 7-11 April 2003

### Other Work Programme Related Information (Report of the Secretariat)

### Agenda Item 4.5 of the Provisional Agenda

## I. Stewardship

1. The application of the concept of stewardship for the formulation of new ISPMs has been strongly encouraged by the Standards Committee for the past several years. The concept involves identifying an expert who provides leadership for the elaboration of a standard and then to coordinate the formulation process through this expert from initiation until the standard is completed.
2. It is expected that stewards would be available to assist the Standards Committee and others with understanding the draft and the rationale that is the basis for provisions included in drafts. The steward also coordinates the inputs and deliberations of experts and may be called upon during the consultation stage to respond to comments or questions raised by governments. It is often desirable (but not required) that the steward is also a member of the Standards Committee.
3. Wherever possible, stewards are suggested or confirmed by the Standards Committee when reviewing the specifications for new standards. In some cases, stewards have only been identified at the time of the first expert group meeting. Where no steward is identified, the Secretariat takes this responsibility.
4. Draft ISPMs initiated in 2002 have assigned stewards following the recommendations of the Standards Committee. Current stewards are:
  - Mr. Roberts (Australia) – PRA for living modified organisms
  - Mr. Hedley (New Zealand) – Efficacy of phytosanitary measures
  - Mr. Canale (Uruguay) – PRA for regulated non-quarantine pests
  - Mr. Larson (Canada) – Glossary of phytosanitary terms

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5. The ICPM may consider other standards that are in the work programme and Members may wish to put forward nominations for experts and possible stewards for future initiatives.

## **II. Wood packaging**

### **A. MARKING**

6. The Fourth Session of the ICPM adopted as ISPM No. 15 the new standard *Guidelines for regulating wood packaging material in international trade*. Members will recall that this standard included provision for the use of an approved mark to indicate that wood packaging met the requirements for approved measures. Shortly after the adoption of the standard, the IPPC Secretariat learned that there was the possibility of legal action being taken by users of the mark because of its similarity to another mark being used commercially in the United States.

7. In June 2002, a statement was issued by the FAO Legal Office recommending that governments suspend the implementation of the standard in order to avoid the possibility of legal challenges. At the same time, the IPPC Secretariat undertook to identify and register a new mark. The IPPC Secretariat and the FAO Legal Office will report to the ICPM on the current situation.

### **B. TREATMENT**

8. The ICPM will recall that at the adoption of ISPM No. 15 during the Fourth Session of the ICPM, two Members expressed concern about whether existing data adequately supported the adoption of methyl bromide fumigation treatment for *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* (Pine wood nematode) It was agreed that the data would be reviewed again by experts and the results communicated to the concerned Members and the ICPM.

9. The IPPC Secretariat immediately made the data available that had been used for the initial recommendation and subsequently contacted several recognized experts in wood treatment to request additional information and review. This resulted in a package of data, including some new information which was then shared with experts (see below). The same information was also transmitted to the concerned Members through the participation of one Member in the Standards Committee.

10. The expert findings that were notified to the IPPC Secretariat supported maintaining the recommendations in ISPM No. 15. However, the National Plant Quarantine Service of the Republic of Korea subsequently transmitted the results of a joint experiment undertaken with the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China to confirm the treatment efficacy of methyl bromide fumigation against the Pine wood nematode as specified in ISPM No. 15. The results of this experiment indicate that the treatment is not effective. The Government of the Republic of Korea proposes that Annex I of ISPM No. 15 be amended to remove reference to Pine wood nematode as a pest for which the specified methyl bromide fumigation treatment is effective.

### **C. INTERNATIONAL FOREST QUARANTINE RESEARCH GROUP**

11. During the formulation of ISPM No. 15, the IPPC Expert Working Group benefited greatly from information provided by the Forestry Panel of the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), including scientific data regarding treatments. It was fortunate that NAPPO had already established a relationship with researchers in wood treatment through its initiative to formulate a regional standard. The same group later expressed a strong interest in establishing and maintaining a more formal relationship with the IPPC for the further development of ISPM No. 15, in particular as regards the necessary scientific inputs and scientific review for the adoption of new approved measures.

12. Recognizing the importance of credible scientific inputs and the need for ongoing support to update ISPM No. 15, the IPPC Secretariat has encouraged the group to organize itself for this purpose. The group has now expanded to include wood treatment researchers from Germany,

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New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Japan in addition to the original members from Canada and the United States. Efforts are underway to encourage interested forestry researchers from other countries to also participate.

13. The group has tentatively taken the title of *International Forest Quarantine Research Group* and is in the process of designing terms of reference that would create a formal linkage to the IPPC and RPPOs. The main objective of the group is to identify and address the key scientific issues facing quarantine regulators in the forestry area and to formulate recommendations based on the best scientific information and judgements.

14. The group has requested endorsement of this initiative by the ICPM and welcomes any recommendations regarding the nature of a relationship with the IPPC.

### **III. International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation**

15. The International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation (ICGFI) was organized in 1984 under the aegis of FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Secretariat for ICGFI is administered through the Joint FAO/IAEA Division for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture and is located at IAEA Headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

16. ICGFI is composed of government designated experts in food irradiation. Functions of the group are to:

- evaluate global developments in the field of food irradiation;
- provide a focal point of advice on the application of food irradiation to Member States and the Organizations (FAO, WHO, and IAEA); and
- furnish information as required to the Codex Alimentarius.

17. Over the past twenty years, ICGFI has played an important role in developing and distributing credible information on food irradiation. Through many regional initiatives, ICGFI has also promoted harmonization, including the application of irradiation as a phytosanitary treatment. A substantial amount of the information and expertise needed for the IPPC Expert Working Group to develop the draft standard on irradiation as a phytosanitary measure was provided by ICGFI.

18. ICGFI is currently approaching the end of its 20-year mandate. In its most recent meetings, the group has observed that there continues to be an important role for an international expert group on food irradiation, in particular to provide expert scientific support to the Codex Alimentarius and the IPPC. As in the case of ISPM No. 15 (see above) there is envisioned the need for expert scientific inputs and review for the addition or modification of specific treatments that may be added to the IPPC standard on irradiation treatment. Similar opportunities exist with Codex. The group has therefore proposed to re-organize itself under a new mandate. This mandate would focus less on the technology and instead emphasize the application of the technology. Two direct benefits are envisioned for the IPPC:

- the availability of a neutral international expert group to provide scientific support and advice regarding relevant aspects of standards, in particular with respect to new treatments; and
- the possibility to support training and national or regional capacity building for plant protection officials and others involved with the application of the technology.

19. ICGFI is in the process of gaining acceptance and support for its new charter as the International Forum on Food Irradiation (IFFI). A business plan is also being developed to accompany a proposal which will be sent to governments to solicit support for the initiative. It is anticipated that ICGFI's next and last meeting under its current mandate will be critical for deciding future developments. In the meantime, ICPM Members are encouraged to become involved in their national consultations regarding relevant aspects from a phytosanitary standpoint.

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## IV. Equivalence

20. The ICPM will recall that in 2001 the World Trade Organization Committee on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Committee) formally requested that standard-setting organizations develop guidelines on the interpretation and application of the concept of equivalence. The ICPM agreed at its Fourth Session to add this topic to the work programme but noted that it should follow discussions on the efficacy of phytosanitary measures. A high priority was therefore given to work on a standard for the efficacy of phytosanitary measures.

21. The IPPC Expert Working Group on the Efficacy of Phytosanitary Measures met in November 2002 and has elaborated a draft standard that will be submitted to the Standards Committee in May 2003. The draft contains basic provisions regarding equivalence. At the same time, Dr. Jane Chard, a visiting scientist with the IPPC Secretariat, has been studying the topic of equivalence with the aim of developing a discussion document for the ICPM and experts that may work on this topic. The paper summarizes background on the topic with emphasis on its relevance to phytosanitary applications. Issues for consideration by the phytosanitary community are highlighted.

22. The main recommendation in the paper is that the ICPM give priority to the production of guidelines on equivalence as they apply in the phytosanitary area. It is proposed that this could be undertaken as part of the process of revising ISPM No. 1 where equivalence is listed among the principles of plant quarantine. The suggestion is to create a supplement to ISPM No. 1 dealing specifically with the understanding and application of the concept of equivalence. Likewise, it is suggested that current and future ISPMs continue to highlight equivalence where relevant.

## V. Guidelines for systems approaches

23. The Fourth Session of the ICPM adopted as ISPM No. 14 the new standard *The use of integrated measures in a systems approach for pest risk management*. Members noted that this was the first standard in which a specific risk management process was described. Many Members expressed concern about the understanding and operational applications for the standard. The Secretariat indicated that an operational guide would be developed as a complement to the standard that would discuss in greater detail and in less legalistic terms, the concepts described in the standard and their application in practice.

24. Draft operational guidelines have been developed and are available to the ICPM in English only. The Secretariat recognizes that this is the first such initiative associated with a new standard and therefore suggests that the ICPM consider the current document to be for peer review. Comments may be submitted to the Secretariat until June 2003 after which the document will be finalized. Translation and printing in official languages will follow as resources allow.

## VI. Transboundary shipment of sterile insects

The Third Session of the ICPM was informed that a draft standard and discussion paper on the transboundary shipment of sterile insects had been formulated by experts following the IPPC format and based on guidance provided by the IPPC Secretariat. The ICPM will recall that this initiative was undertaken in 2001 by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. The draft standard describes responsibilities of the producer and shipper, regulatory authorities, and importers and suggests harmonized measures for risk management. The IPPC Secretariat again brings this to the attention of the ICPM following the recommendation of Joint Division that the ICPM continue to consider the possibility for including this topic in the work programme, using the discussion paper and draft standard as the basis for advancing discussions in the IPPC. In addition, the Secretariat notes that a similar initiative is being undertaken by IAEA on the topic of risk assessment for transgenic arthropods.

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## VII. Revision of ISPM No. 3

25. The *Code of conduct for the import and release of exotic biological control agents* was adopted as ISPM No. 3 in 1995 and scheduled for review in 2001. For the past several years, the IPPC Secretariat has collected numerous comments on the standard, including suggestions for future modifications to update terms, concepts, and procedures and pointing out gaps where modern practices are not adequately covered. The review and possible revision of this standard has not yet been included as a priority in the work programme. However, the opportunity to initiate this process has been provided through resources from the Integrated Pest Management Group of the Plant Protection Service in FAO.

26. A workshop was organized and hosted by Imperial College in Wye, United Kingdom in December 2002. The purpose of this workshop was to assemble a group of experts comprising regulatory officials, pest management specialists, experienced participants with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) system, and private- and public-sector end users from developed and developing countries to identify the possible scope of a revision.

27. The workshop concluded that the scope of ISPM No. 3 could usefully be expanded to provide support to a range of non-chemical methods as components of integrated pest management, as well as introductions of other organisms (other than plants) into agro-ecosystems, including pollinators and soil organisms, where safety risks were potentially greater than those posed by biological control agents. An expansion of the Code to address living (but not necessarily self-replicating) organisms and to include other potential beneficial organisms was suggested to make the standard more useful to integrated pest management initiatives, in which many of these are employed. Likewise, it was suggested that the standard could provide a model for management of other invasive pests in non-agricultural systems.

28. It is anticipated that resources will be available to continue this revision process. Next steps involve expert drafting followed by consideration of the draft revision by the Standards Committee.

## VIII. Risk assessment for herbicide- and insect-resistant crops; weed risk assessment

29. The Plant Protection Service of FAO has developed and published *Draft guidelines for assessment of ecological hazards of herbicide- and insect-resistant crops*. This work was undertaken with the assistance of numerous technical experts and is designed to follow the format of an IPPC standard. A similar initiative has been undertaken to develop *Draft guidelines for weed risk assessment*. This document has not yet been published.

30. The IPPC Secretariat has provided technical input to these drafting initiatives, but the documents were not developed within the work programme of the IPPC and currently have no official status in relation to the IPPC. The ICPM is informed of the possibility to consider these documents as part of any future work that may be undertaken by the IPPC on these topics. Copies of these documents are available in English by request from the IPPC Secretariat.

## IX. Standards and Trade Development Facility

31. The World Bank and World Trade Organization have recently established a Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). The overall objective of the STDF is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in meeting SPS standards for market access of food and other agricultural commodities. It is envisioned that this will be achieved by strengthening the collaboration between the relevant institutions in SPS-related activities, including through the development of joint institutional projects, and the provision of STDF funding in developing countries.

32. An STDF Secretariat has been established with the WTO in Geneva, Switzerland. A concept note has been agreed upon and criteria for the selection of projects have been elaborated.

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(ICPM03/INF/1) Partner organizations, including WTO, OIE, WHO and FAO (encompassing also the Codex Alimentarius and the IPPC) are represented in the Working Group that has been established to guide STDF activities. Additional information on the STDF is available to the ICPM and may be requested from the STDF or IPPC Secretariats.