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INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Sixth Session

Rome, 29 March – 2 April 2004

Report of the 15th Technical Consultation Among Regional Plant Protection Organizations

Agenda Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The 15th Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (TC), hosted by the Pacific Plant Protection Organization in Fiji, September 29th to October 3rd discussed issues of regional and global importance in the context of international cooperation in phytosanitary measures. This report highlights some of the main issues discussed. The full report of the Consultation is available on the IPP.

Funding for the IPPC

2. The RPPOs reported on their actions within their regions regarding financial support for the IPPC. The TC noted that there is widespread support for increasing the IPPC funding and encouraged RPPO representatives to communicate the need for ongoing support by their member countries.

Implementation of the ISPMs

3. The TC discussed the issue of implementation of the ISPMs in their member countries. It acknowledged among other things, the need for:

1. A critical review of the status of implementation and for a tracking programme.
2. Explanatory documents to assist in the implementation.
3. Translating the ISPMs into Russian to assist the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Countries in Transition (CT) whose language of communication is Russian.
4. Capacity building to boost compliance with the ISPMs.
5. Centralizing technical capacity in, for example the PPPO, whose member countries have small economies and limited technical capacity.
6. Technical assistance to promote implementation and harmonization.

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Report of the Focus Group

4. The TC acknowledged the excellent analysis, innovative suggestions and well structured report of the Focus Group on the proposals for improving the current standard setting mechanism and for a fast track mechanism for standard setting. It deliberated and provided comments on the recommendations of the Focus Group and made suggestions as to how these processes might be improved. These comments are set out in the full report of the TC.
5. Regarding the standard setting procedure, the TC:
 1. Recommended that FAO regions with developing countries be provided the opportunity to have capacity building workshops on draft ISPMs and called for greater involvement of the RPPOs in these workshops.
 2. Recommended that parties concentrate on submitting substantive changes and that editorial ones be dealt with by the Secretariat, and
 3. Expressed concerns about shortening the consultation period while acknowledging that fewer standards may be developed as a consequence.
6. On the issue of a Fast track standards adoption procedure, and criteria for its use, the TC:
 1. Expressed concerns that some Regional standards may be too complex or controversial to be considered for a fast track procedure.
 2. Suggested clarification of the term “formal objection”, and
 3. Provided suggestions on elements of the fast track procedure.

Implementation of ISPM 15

7. The status and implementation of ISPM 15 generated much discussion. Issues were raised included the appropriateness of the criteria used for selecting the countries for registration of the logo and whether the statements issued by FAO regarding the registration and use of the logo was sufficient to permit governments to act accordingly. Each RPPO reported on the status of implementation in its member countries. The TC recommended that the IPPC Secretariat organise a side meeting during the next ICPM to discuss problems with implementation of this ISPM.

Capacity Building

8. With regard to capacity building for the implementation of the ISPMs, the TC referred to Article 9 of the SPS Agreement detailing specific support for developing countries with the aim of adopting and applying phytosanitary measures necessary to achieve the appropriate level of protection regarding their imports. The status of implementation of this article was discussed. The TC agreed on the importance for countries to identify their own problems in implementing ISPMs and so that standards might be improved. It was further agreed that this should be a regular agenda item of the TC to consider problems associated with implementation of ISPMs; that results would be compared, collated and conveyed to the ICPM.

Agenda and Venue of 16th TC

9. For the next meeting, the TC identified agenda items in relation to the role identified for RPPOs in appendix XVII of ICPM5 report. These items are listed in the full report. The IPPC Secretariat was asked to confirm the Interafrican Phytosanitary Councils (IAPSC) interest in hosting the meeting in late August/early September of 2004. IAPSC has agreed to host the next TC in Kenya.
10. The ICPM is invited to:
 1. *Provide* comments on the report.
 2. *Note* that substantial issues arising from this report are dealt with under other agenda items.