



منظمة الأغذية
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للأمم المتحدة

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y la
Alimentación

INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Second Session

Rome 4-8 October 1999

Items Arising from the First Session of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures Pest Reporting

Agenda Item 6.3 of the Provisional Agenda

1. Article VII of the existing IPPC states:

The contracting parties shall cooperate with one another to the fullest practicable extent in achieving the aims of this Convention, in particular as follows:

- a) *Each contracting party agrees to cooperate with FAO in the establishment of a world reporting service on plant pests, making full use of the facilities and services of existing organizations for this purpose and, when this is established, to furnish FAO periodically, for distribution by FAO to the contracting parties, with the following information:*
- i) *reports on the existence, outbreak and spread of economically important pests of plants and plant products which may be of immediate or potential danger;*
 - ii) *information on means found to be effective in controlling the pests of plants and plant products.*

2. Article VIII of the New Revised Text of the IPPC does not maintain the obligation for cooperation with FAO in the world reporting service.

3. Resolution 12/97 of the FAO Conference urged that "high priority be given to the provision of reports on the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests to the Secretary of the IPPC and, underlines the importance of establishing relevant procedures applicable to this reporting."

4. At its first session in 1998, the the Interim commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) noted the recommendation by Conference and requested that the Secretariat prepare a report and recommendations for the ICPM to consider at its present session. It was agreed that this report would also discuss the role the Secretariat should play in pest reporting processes. The ICPM is provided with the following in response to its request.

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I. Background

5. The FAO Plant Protection Bulletin was specifically designed to capture and disseminate information in accordance with the provisions of Article VII for a world reporting service. The Plant Protection Bulletin was published from October 1952 to August 1995. Beginning in 1987, FAO created the Plant Quarantine Database (PQ Database), a computerized collection of information on pests including their distribution. This became supplementary to the Bulletin as part of FAO's effort to support the concept of a world reporting service. The PQ Database was subsequently combined with other information such as import requirements in what became known as PQ Web. These databases continued to be maintained and distributed by FAO's Plant Production and Protection Service until 1994. In accordance with Article VII of the existing IPPC, certain regional plant protection organizations (EPPO and APPPC) also established pest reporting systems. These systems continue to be implemented.
6. The FAO Plant Protection Bulletin and the PQ Database were discontinued because:
- a) countries provided very little relevant and timely information;
 - b) governments were reluctant to verify pest reports; and,
 - c) countries raised liability issues with FAO where reports resulted in regulatory actions.
7. In practice, when countries were concerned with ensuring that phytosanitary decisionmaking was based on recent, complete and accurate pest information, they would consult numerous references and experts and normally inquired directly with the country in question. The provision of such information through FAO added nothing to the accuracy or credibility of such information, and sometimes detracted significantly from its timeliness and completeness. This was clearly recognized by governments negotiating the New Revised Text of the IPPC when it was agreed to modify the provisions of the existing Article VII to remove reference to the world reporting service.

II. Pest Reporting in the New Revised Text of the IPPC

8. The New Revised Text asserts that contracting parties make appropriate information available and cooperate in the exchange of information according to procedures established by the [Interim] Commission. Provisions of the New Revised Text associated with pest reporting involve:
- a) gathering information (surveillance);
 - b) maintaining and using pest information for decisionmaking (pest categorization, pest risk analysis, pest listing);
 - c) reporting and cooperation in information exchange (notification of outbreaks, non-compliance, and verification of pest status).
9. The New Revised Text explicitly refers to pest reporting in Article IV paragraph 2 (b):
- “The responsibilities of an official national plant protection organization shall include the surveillance of growing plants, including both areas under cultivation (inter alia fields, plantations, nurseries, gardens, greenhouses and laboratories) and wild flora, and of*

plants and plant products in storage or in transportation, particularly with the object of reporting the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests, and of controlling those pests, including the reporting referred to under Article VIII paragraph 1(a)."

10. Article VII paragraphs 2(i) and 2(j) discuss the need to conduct surveillance to develop and maintain adequate information on pest status as the basis for pest categorization and the establishment of lists of regulated pests. These provisions also indicate that pest lists are to be made available to the Secretariat and regional plant protection organizations, and that information on pest status should be provided to other contracting parties on request.

11. Article VIII paragraph 1(a) states:

"The contracting parties shall cooperate with one another to the fullest practicable extent in achieving the aims of this Convention, and shall in particular cooperate in the exchange of information on plant pests, particularly the reporting of the occurrence, outbreak or spread of pests that may be of immediate or potential danger, in accordance with such procedures as may be established by the Commission."

12. The reporting of pests may also be considered to be an element of Article VII paragraph 2 (f), as it relates to consignments found not to comply with phytosanitary certification requirements due to the interception of pests. Likewise, the provision of official contact points in Article VIII paragraph 2 is important for pest reporting as official information regarding pest status is reported or requested through official contact points.

III. ISPMs

13. International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures complement the provisions for pest reporting found in the New Revised Text. In particular, ISPM No. 6, *Guidelines for surveillance*, and ISPM No. 8, *Determination of pest status in an area*, emphasize important elements of pest reporting such as reliability and cooperation. "Good reporting practices" are described in ISPM No. 8. Additional emphasis on cooperation and the provision of pest information has also been added to the draft standard being prepared on *Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests*.

14. ISPMs already provide a strong foundation from which the ICPM may build pest reporting procedures. The ICPM may consider continuing this course toward the further elaboration of pest reporting procedures through the development of ISPMs pertaining to pest reporting and also by emphasizing pest reporting procedures and related aspects where appropriate in other ISPMs.

IV. The Role of the Secretariat

15. The role of the Secretariat as the focal point within FAO with the responsibility for collecting and disseminating pest reports is no longer relevant under the New Revised Text. However, lists of regulated pests are made available to the Secretariat under Article VII paragraph 2(i) and additional information exchange responsibilities are assigned to the Secretariat under other provisions of the New Revised Text. The Secretariat places the highest priority on carrying out these responsibilities under the Convention. Additional roles for the Secretariat in information exchange, including pest reporting, depend on the wishes of the ICPM, the availability of resources, and the commitment of Members to provide information as required.

16. At the present time, the Secretariat endeavours to facilitate pest reporting wherever possible. This involves identifying appropriate sources of information and providing technical support to pest reporting systems such as FAO's Global Plant and Pest Information System (GPPIS). The role of the Secretariat in these activities is primarily to promote the harmonization of concepts, procedures and terms agreed under the IPPC, including:

- a) the type and quality of information needed by the phytosanitary community;

- b) the means and format for pest reporting;
- c) terms and definitions used for describing pest status; and,
- d) criteria for judging the reliability of data.

17. Since the approval of the New Revised Text, the Secretariat has devoted considerable resources to encouraging the establishment and use of official contact points having as one function to issue official pest reports and also to respond to official inquiries on pest status. Wherever possible, the Secretariat has helped governments and others to better understand the importance of pest reporting and highlighted the need for the verification of pest status through official contact points.

V. Pest Reporting for Non-trade Reasons

18. The primary objective of pest reporting for phytosanitary purposes is to enable governments to take appropriate actions related to trade. However, there are other reasons for pest reporting that are not directly related to trade that may be noted

19. Pest reporting and aspects associated with pest reporting are important for monitoring emerging pests and changes in host resistance, increases in the severity of pests, the progress of epidemics, and the effectiveness of pest management strategies. This information is useful for developing national strategies and cooperation on a multilateral basis consistent with Article VIII (International cooperation) of the New Revised Text. The Secretariat endeavours to promote greater understanding of the obligations associated with pest reporting for phytosanitary purposes and also the advantages of pest reporting for other purposes.

VI. Other Mechanisms

20. The ICPM may note that there are numerous other mechanisms and initiatives associated with pest reporting outside the IPPC. The following summarizes a few believed by the Secretariat to be important for the ICPM to consider:

- a) The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) of 1972 is currently negotiating a legally binding protocol which includes consideration of the potential threat that plant pests have as biological weapons. BTWC member countries are insisting on an effective plant pest monitoring and reporting system with the objective of identifying unusual or unexplained outbreaks. Nearly all BTWC member countries are also contracting parties to the IPPC and WTO Members;
- b) the Global Plant and Pest Information System (GPPIS) is an Internet-based FAO system extended from earlier plant protection compendia, including PQ Web. GPPIS relies on data input and review by users and currently has extensive information on plants and pests as well as numerous functions and the ability to add additional functions as needed. The ICPM may consider the possibility of establishing a pest reporting function within GPPIS that may be administered by the Secretariat;
- c) the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) is an academic network for information exchange on invasive organisms. GISP is coordinated by the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) in conjunction with the World Conservation Union (IUCN), CAB International (CABI), and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). GISP is a component of DIVERSITAS, an international programme on biodiversity science and is closely associated with

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- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in its alien and invasive species initiatives;
- d) the United States Invasive Species Council recently formed by Executive Order to address the environmental and economic threat of invasive species includes within its mandate the development of information management and impact monitoring mechanisms. It is noted that this initiative targets a “web-based information network”;
 - e) CAB International (CABI) is a well known commercial source of information concerning plant pests;
 - f) the EPPO Reporting Service of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Service has served for many years as a source of information on the occurrence, outbreak, and spread of pests among EPPO Member countries and also including significant information regarding pests outside the region.

VII. Recommendations

21. The ICPM is invited to consider measures to implement Resolution 12/97 of the FAO Conference. The ICPM may also consider discussing procedures to implement Article VIII (a) of the IPPC as amended in 1997.
22. The ICPM may also:
- a) note the progress already made in pest reporting procedures through the establishment of ISPMs;
 - b) agree to continue the development of procedures for pest reporting through the elaboration of ISPMs and urge that wherever possible emphasis be given to pest reporting and related aspects in the development of ISPMs;
 - c) urge Members to observe and promote good reporting practices;
 - d) recommend that the Secretariat continue to facilitate good reporting practices and promote increased awareness and understanding of the importance of, and procedures for, pest reporting;
 - e) recommend that the Secretariat provide support to the extent possible for the establishment of pest reporting functions in GPPIS specifically tailored for the needs of the phytosanitary community;
 - f) urge Members and the Secretariat to closely follow developments in pest monitoring and reporting being undertaken in other fora with a view to identifying points for harmonization, partnership, and complementarity;
 - g) request that the Secretariat review and report to the ICPM on the status of pest reporting at its next session.