



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

### Second Session

Rome 4-8 October 1999

### Work Programme for Harmonization Information Exchange

### Agenda Item 7.2 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The provision of certain information by contracting parties and between contracting parties and the Secretariat is key to the implementation of the Convention and essential to decisionmaking on phytosanitary measures. The text of the IPPC as amended in 1997 emphasizes transparency and cooperation in the obligations for contracting parties to gather, maintain and report or make available specific information. The timeliness, reliability, and completeness of information are also identified as important aspects of information exchange identified in the Convention and ISPMs.
2. The Secretariat places the highest priority on its obligations under the Convention and the recommendations of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM). As far as possible, the Secretariat also endeavours to facilitate information exchange between Members. For its present session, the ICPM identified pest reporting as a specific topic within the agenda. Other important points regarding information exchange in the work programme of the Secretariat are noted here for consideration by the ICPM.
3. Existing FAO systems for the translation, printing and distribution of reports and other official printed matter remains in place with the notable change being a shift by the Secretariat to corresponding through official contact points where these have been provided. FAO policies require that certain documents such as invitations and other correspondence from the Director General of the Organization follow a particular distribution which may not include the designated contact points. Where it is relevant, such material is also provided to contact points.
4. Material such as ISPMs and other correspondence provided by the Secretariat directly to contact points is not copied to other offices in the government of the contracting party or to other parties within the country. It is therefore the prerogative of the contact point to distribute information to officials or others within their country. For example, environmental protection often falls under the authority of ministries other than the ministry where the contact point is located. These ministries are frequently not informed or involved in IPPC activities such as

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consultation on draft standards. The ICPM is invited to recommend that Members consider their own unique situations and develop appropriate systems for the provision of such information internally.

5. Increased demand and use of electronic forms of communication, particularly the Internet, has led to significant effort being devoted by Members and the Secretariat to the use of electronic media for the exchange of information. Most Members and RPPOs now correspond routinely by email and many also have Internet websites. The Secretariat actively encourages the provision of appropriate equipment, training and support for technical assistance programs where national plant protection organizations do not have the capability for electronic communication.

6. The Secretariat is now taking note of electronic contacts where these are provided and adding this information to the Directory of Regional and National Plant Protection Organizations. This publication is being completely revised and updated by the Secretariat to reflect official contact points including email and website addresses.

7. The Secretariat accepts and encourages the submission of official information in electronic form. However, all official communication between the Secretariat and contracting parties continues to be primarily through printed correspondence with duplicate information provided electronically wherever possible. The Secretariat's efforts in this regard have been devoted primarily to improving the IPPC website (<http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpp/pq>).

8. Information is made available in electronic format as soon as practically possible through the website and/or by email. This frequently results in information being available electronically before it is distributed in print. In addition, certain language versions of official documents may be available electronically before others as translation times vary. Members are encouraged to make full use of the electronic information exchange capabilities of the Secretariat and to comment on areas where improvement may be made to better serve the needs of Members

9. The ICPM is advised that the Secretariat has recently established the website domain <http://www.ippc.int> specifically for the ICPM. At the present time, this website is a mirror of the FAO website maintained by the Secretariat. The server for the new website has been provided to the ICPM on a trial basis at no cost until the end of 1999. Thereafter, the site may be maintained on a fee basis or moved to another server donated and maintained for this purpose. The primary advantages for the members to maintain an independent website is the ability to make web space available to all Members and the capability to post material directly and without delay.