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Organización  
de las  
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Unidas  
para la  
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Alimentación

## INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### Seventh Session

Rome, 4 – 8 April 2005

### Report of the Sixth Meeting of the ICPM Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance

### Agenda Item 8.2 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ICPM Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) was convened in Rome, 11-15 October 2004. This report provides a brief summary of the major topics according to the strategic directions. Items requiring decisions by ICPM-7 are dealt with in more detail in separate agenda papers.

***Strategic Direction 1: The development, adoption and monitoring of the implementation of ISPMs***

2. The Secretariat presented to the SPTA a brief overview of the standard setting activities. The SPTA discussed one concern raised, namely the practice that draft standards in country consultation may be returned by countries without specific comments, but with only a general reason for rejection of the standard. The SPTA noted this concern and recommended that the Standard Committee should nevertheless proceed and review such draft standards taking into account specific comments received and the recommendations of the steward.

3. The SPTA discussed revised Terms of Reference (TOR) and Rules of Procedure (ROP) of the Standards Committee. The SPTA proposed modifications to several sections of the TOR and ROP, pursuant to the request of ICPM-6 that SPTA analyze the TOR and ROP and submit resulting changes to ICPM-7 (see agenda item 7.2.1).

4. In accordance with the procedure established by ICPM-4, the SPTA discussed topics and priorities for standards (see agenda item 7.5). The SPTA found some difficulties in applying all the criteria for identifying topics and priorities for standards. The SPTA recommended that the Secretariat update the procedures for identifying topics and priorities for standards as presented in the IPPC Procedural Manual (first edition 2004) to reflect the changes to the standard setting process, modify dates as needed and include the submission form for work programme topics. Nevertheless, the SPTA identified three strategic areas of work: PRA for weeds; propagating material; and soil and growing media. The SPTA recommended that establishment of a Technical Panel on surveillance for specific pests be considered by the SC.

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5. The SPTA noted the work being undertaken on electronic certification under the UN initiative on trade facilitation, UN/CEFACT. It noted that this topic was presented to the recent Technical Consultation among RPPOs (Nairobi, September 2004), and recommended that the Secretariat establish contacts with those responsible for e-certification within OIE and Codex to ensure a common strategic position on the subject among the international standard-setting bodies. It also recommended that the Secretariat prepare a paper for consideration at an informal working group at ICPM-7, in collaboration with the UN/CEFACT project (see agenda item 7.1.4).

### ***Strategic Direction 2: Information exchange***

6. The Secretariat presented to the SPTA a work programme for information exchange for 2005. It amended and consequently endorsed the plan for 2005 and recommended that the overall workplan on information exchange and the workplan of the IPP be updated to mid-2006 and submitted to the ICPM for approval (see agenda item 9.1).

### ***Strategic Direction 3: The provision of dispute settlement mechanisms***

7. The chair of the SBDS provided an update of activities of the Subsidiary Body on Dispute Settlement (SBDS) and informed that three items are under preparation: an advocacy document; a manual on the IPPC dispute settlement process; and a roster system that may be used for listing experts for dispute settlement procedures. The Chair of the SBDS expected to present one or more documents to ICPM-7 on these matters (see agenda item 10.2).

### ***Strategic Direction 4: The development of the phytosanitary capacity of members by promoting the provision of technical assistance***

8. Based on a proposal by the Secretariat, the SPTA discussed the agenda of the new Expert Group on Technical Assistance. Three agenda items were agreed upon for the meeting: (1) IPPC implementation needs assessment; and (2) development of a strategy for IPPC implementation; (3) short term action plan. A possible fourth agenda item on evaluation or monitoring was discussed, and referred back to the Secretariat for further consideration. On this item, some members of the SPTA suggested that a focus should be on evaluating the effectiveness of technical assistance in addressing capacity needs of developing countries, rather than on monitoring implementation (or compliance) more generally.

9. The SPTA reviewed the proposal made by the Focus Group and 3 Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) representatives in July 2004 on the roles and functions of RPPOs. This was and subsequently amended by the Technical Consultation (TC) among RPPOs in September. The SPTA welcomed this text. It recommended that it should be adopted by ICPM-7 with some amendments (see agenda item 8.8). The SPTA also reviewed a paper proposed by the TC on the organization of TCs. It considered this proposal which would improve the contribution of TCs to the work of the ICPM, and acknowledged the need for such procedures. It concluded, however, that the development and adoption of such procedures was a matter between the IPPC Secretariat and RPPOs.

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

10. The SPTA discussed the strategic plan as elaborated by the Focus Group which had met in July 2004. It agreed to the proposals of the Focus Group in relation to the structure, presentation and maintenance of the strategic plan and made some amendments to the strategic goals. The SPTA elaborated time frames for work on the different elements of the strategic plan and recommended the plan to ICPM for adoption (see agenda item 8.6). The SPTA also decided

that a detailed review of the priorities attributed to the strategic goals should be undertaken in 2005.

11. Within the framework of the amendment of the strategic plan, the SPTA discussed the need to introduce a new strategic goal on regionalization into the plan. The SPTA recognized that further action was required to meet the concerns raised in the SPS Committee and it recommended that the general role of the IPPC with regard to regionalization and administrative delays should be discussed by an open-ended working group during ICPM-7 (see agenda item 7.4).

12. The SPTA noted a discussion by the Focus Group on the need to develop draft guidelines for providing official ISPM interpretations, with the idea that such interpretations could help countries to avoid entering into a dispute-settlement procedure. The SPTA endorsed the Focus Group recommendation that the Subsidiary body on dispute settlement (SBDS) could discuss this at its next meeting.

13. In regard to the Business Plan the SPTA recognized the quality of the plan as developed by the Focus Group. It recommended a number of general changes especially in relation to establishing a consistent approach to financial figures laid down in different parts of the plan and the presentation of a stronger link between the IPPC and its relationships to the SPS, OIE and Codex Alimentarius Commission. The SPTA incorporated a number of editorial changes to the Business Plan and recommended it to the ICPM for endorsement (see agenda item 8.6).

14. The SPTA considered long-term funding options for the IPPC (see agenda item 8.4.2). Based on a proposal by the Focus Group, it was agreed that the subject of investigating options for securing funding for the IPPC should be approached in two steps. The first stage would be to recruit a consultant to work in cooperation with a new Focus Group to study various funding options. The second stage would be undertaken at a later time, and would be an evaluation of the ICPM infrastructure, the IPPC Secretariat, and the outputs and outcomes of the system. The SPTA recommended terms of reference for the new Focus Group.

15. The Secretariat presented an overview of IPPC trust funds. It was noted by the SPTA that it was difficult to plan expenditures when the donations to the IPPC Trust Fund were not fully confirmed, especially for 2006. The SPTA noted that the ICPM had determined that the first \$500,000 (US) donated to the IPPC Trust Fund should be used to fund ICPM participation, regional workshops to review draft ISPMs and technical assistance for implementing ISPMs. However, the SPTA felt that a clarification of the interpretation of paragraph 73 of the report of ICPM-6 is necessary to plan the expenditures out of the IPPC Trust Fund.

16. The SPTA discussed the budget for the IPPC and proposed adjustments to the Secretariat proposal (see agenda item 8.4).

17. The SPTA considered financial guidelines for the trust fund. The financial rules were presented for discussion by the Secretariat and further amended by the SPTA. The SPTA recommended that these financial guidelines now be submitted to the ICPM, after final clearance by the relevant FAO Departments (see agenda item 8.5).

18. The Focus Group had proposed terms of reference for the informal working group on strategic planning and technical assistance. The SPTA discussed this proposal and agreed to the Focus Group recommendations that interim terms of reference should be established. It amended the Focus Group recommendations and proposed them to the ICPM for adoption (see agenda item 8.7).

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

19. In regard to liaison with research and teaching organizations, the SPTA stressed that it is important to make progress in this area. Activities would start in 2005 and would include a meeting of an expert working group on liaison with research and teaching organizations. The SPTA would review outcomes at its next meeting.

20. The SPTA was informed by the Secretariat on the cooperation between the IPPC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the SPTA recognized some concerns in regard to the staff resources necessary to maintain close relations with the CBD, it also stressed the need for cooperation with the Secretariat of the CBD, in particularly in relation to the COP decision which had clearly recognized the role of the IPPC in the management of alien invasive species. The SPTA welcomed the cooperation with the CBD/Cartagena Protocol Secretariat on the website and information sharing. The SPTA recommended that the report of the joint meeting of the Chairpersons and Secretariats of IPPC and CBD be submitted to the ICPM for information.

21. Based on an initiative and paper by the ICPM Chairman, the SPTA considered closer cooperation between the IPPC, OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It was suggested that the three organizations could try to work together to make a general framework on standards, and could then develop more specific standards within that framework. The SPTA noted that subjects such as liaison with research and teaching organizations and electronic certification could also be of interest for the three organizations. The SPTA noted the paper, accepted the proposals made in it, and took note that a paper would be presented to the ICPM (see agenda item 12.2).

22. The ICPM is invited to:

*Note* the report of the SPTA.