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para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Seventh Session

Rome, 4-8 April 2005

Standards Committee Report by the Chairperson

Agenda Item 7.1.1 of the Provisional Agenda

I. SESSION OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (SC-20) : 26-30 APRIL 2004

As decided at the sixth Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM- 6) a full session of the SC was organized due to a high volume of work and the election of a new SC. The SC elected Mr. Vereecke (FAO Region Europe) as Chairperson and Mr Ribeiro e Silva (FAO Region Latin America and Caribbean) as Vice-Chairperson. The report of the 3rd session of the SC was adopted.

Due to the heavy workload the SC agreed to split into two sub-groups to review the draft standards and the draft specifications for International Standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) proposed to it. It was also agreed not to have complete redrafting, but to identify and address the main concerns. However in order to facilitate the above review, stewards or an Expert Working Group participant, briefly reported to both sub-groups on the draft standards for which they were stewards, or had taken part in Expert Working Groups (EWG).

1. SC Procedures

a) *Nomination of SC-7 members*

The meeting discussed the selection of SC -7; it was agreed that the SC-7 should be composed of one representative from each FAO region, agreed amongst the SC members of that region.

The regions nominated the following representatives to serve on the SC-7 : Mr A. Challaoui (Africa), Mr W. Fuxiang (Asia), Mr J.G. Unger (Europe), Mr O. Ribeiro e Silva (Latin America and Caribbean), Mr M. R. Katbeh Bader (Near East), Mr N. Klag (North America), Mr J. Hedley (Southwest Pacific). The SC accepted the nominations and established the SC-7 on this basis.

b) Terms of reference and Rules of procedure for SC

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In response to the request by ICPM- 6, the SC analysed the proposed terms of reference and rules of procedure.

The SC agreed to modifications dealing with:

- the establishment and dis-establishment of working groups and technical panels and the designation of membership to technical panels as additional functions of the SC,
- the inclusion of a mechanism for substitution of members of the SC,
- the period of membership, which should be increased to 3 years,
- how often the SC should meet (May and November of each year).

The agreed modifications were presented to the Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and technical Assistance (SPTA).

c) *Integration of supplement on pest risk analysis (PRA) for living modified organisms (LMOs) into ISPM No. 11*

The ICPM had requested the Secretariat to integrate the above supplement on LMOs into ISPM No 11 Rev.1 and to identify in a clear way the sections arising from the supplement on analysis of environmental risks and PRA for LMOs. The SC examined and approved the system of integration, i.e. the use of the letters S1 and S2 in the margin of ISPM No. 11 for, respectively, the supplementary text on environmental risks and the supplementary text on LMOs. The text has been published in that way.

d) *Technical Panels: Terms of reference and Rules of procedure*

ICPM-6 decided on an improved standard setting procedure and a fast track adoption procedure for technical standards. One of the major components of these decisions has been the principle of establishment of technical panels (TP). It was further recommended that general specifications should be elaborated. Hence, the SC discussed proposals for terms of reference and rules of procedures for technical panels established by it. These proposals were mainly based on decisions made in ICPM-5 and -6, i.e. “Guidelines for the composition and organization of expert working groups“. Some modifications were suggested which were agreed by the meeting. The SC approved the draft texts.

2. Administrative Guidelines for the Structure of Standard-Setting Documentation

The SC reviewed the draft guidelines which outline the structure of standard-setting documentation, including specifications for ISPMs. It also provides a model to be used for these documents and guidance as to what information is needed under each heading. The guideline is updated by the SC when necessary to take into account changes in the standard setting- process as approved by the ICPM. As such it is an internal document and thus not intended for submission to countries in the country consultation process.

Several specific modifications were suggested and agreed .They relate amongst others to:

- a modification of step 3 of the Procedures for the elaboration of ISPMs, as approved by ICPM-2, enabling the drafting of specifications for ISPMs to be done by or under the auspices of the Secretariat, instead of by the Secretariat,
- the inclusion of a “ background “section in each ISPM,
- the format of ISPMs.

The SC also approved “guidelines for the submission of comments on draft ISPMs”.

3. Specifications for ISPMs

The SC examined several specifications for ISPMs presented to it. The meeting agreed to the modifications suggested and approved the following draft specifications:

- specification for TP No. 1 (*develop diagnostic protocols for specific pests*),No. 2 (*pest free areas and systems approaches for fruit flies*) and No. 3 (*phytosanitary treatments*),
- specification No. 16 : *alternatives to methyl bromide*,

- specification No. 18 : *classification of commodities by phytosanitary risk related to level of processing and intended use*,
- specification No. 20 : *guidelines on sampling of consignments*,
- specification No. 21 : *guidelines for regulating potato micropropagation material and minitubers in international trade*.

The SC also approved the 3rd revision of specification No. 3: Revision of ISPM No. 2 (*Guidelines for pest risk analysis*) enabling the expert working group on the revision of ISPM No. 2 to prepare a revision which maintains the detailed hazard identification and risk communication components in ISPM No. 2 and refers, as appropriate to ISPMs No. 3, 11 or 21 for the risk assessment and risk management components.

The discussion on the draft specifications was so extensive and time consuming that work could not be fully completed and part of it had to be reported to an Extraordinary Working Group of the SC convened in July (12-15) at the Headquarters of FAO. It should be stressed that the preparation of specifications should be significantly improved so that the SC has a better understanding of the intended scope and less editorial work has to be carried out. Clear guidance from the ICPM on the concept of a draft standard before a specification is drafted is required.

In this respect it should be underlined that the procedure for submission of topics and priorities for future standards could also be improved by requiring that, via a template, minimal information on its expected scope and content should be given. The SC was informed that the Secretariat would draft a template for such a submission and would request such details. This has been done for the October 2004 submissions.

4. Draft ISPMs

The SC considered 8 draft ISPMs:

- amendments to ISPM No. 5 : *Glossary of phytosanitary terms*,
- *Guidelines on the concept of equivalence of phytosanitary measures and its application in international trade*,
- revision of ISPM No. 3: *Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and beneficial organisms*,
- *Guidelines for inspection of consignments*,
- *Requirements for the establishment, maintenance and verification of areas of low pest prevalence*,
- *Guidelines for consignments in transit*,
- revision of ISPM No. 1 : *Principles of plant quarantine as related to international trade*,
- revision of ISPM No. 2 : *Guidelines for pest risk analysis*.

The SC approved the first six ISPMs with modifications for submission to countries in the country consultation process.

As regards the last two dealing with the revision of ISPMs No. 1 and 2, the SC recognized the good work achieved by the EWGs in following the specifications given to them. However, the SC felt that they were not yet ready to be sent for country consultation. The revision of ISPM No. 2 (*Guidelines for PRA*) was considered too lengthy, too complex and some important issues still needed clarification and in particular the interrelation between ISPMs No. 2, 3 (biocontrol agents), 11 (quarantine pests) and 21 (regulated non quarantine pests). Hence the SC revised the specification for this ISPM and in particular the tasks to be carried out. The SC agreed that a small EWG should be constituted.

In relation to the revision of ISPM No. 1, the SC noted that it had been drafted before the 1997 amendments to the IPPC had been approved and before the SPS Agreement came into force. Some principles which were recommendations in the original ISPM No. 1 were now included in the revised text of IPPC. Moreover the text contained some SPS principles which are not in the IPPC.

The SC and the IPPC Legal Adviser noted that there would be two options for the redrafted ISPM No.1, i.e.:

- change the status of the draft text to an explanatory document, or
- add explanatory text to indicate that the standard provides additional guidance on the principles of the IPPC. No agreement could be reached and the SC decided that the Secretariat should envisage two possible options while trying to tackle the issues at stake.

II. EXTRAORDINARY WORKING GROUP OF THE SC : 12-16 JULY 2004

Due to the huge workload, it was agreed to organise, an extraordinary working group of the SC. The SC selected 4 members (Ms Othman, Mr Hedley, Mr Ribeiro e Silva and Mr Arnitis) to address issues that were not completed at the spring meeting of the SC. The documents which they would review would then be forwarded to the SC in November for their final approval.

The following items were addressed:

- **Review of specifications for ISPMs:**
 - redraft Specification No. 15(*The use of integrated measures in a systems approach for pest risk management of citrus fruit for citrus canker (Xanthomonas axonopodis pv. citri)* to include a brief description of citrus canker surveillance,
 - *Guidelines for surveillance for specific pests : citrus canker,*
 - *Post-entry quarantine facilities,*
 - *Research protocols for phytosanitary measures,*
 - *Guidelines for formatting/drafting of commodity or pest specific ISPMs,*
 - *Debarking of wood.*
- **Review of specifications for technical panels:**
 - Technical panel on forest quarantine.
- **Specific tasks given by ICPM –6 to improve the current standard setting process (see recommendations in Appendix IX of report of ICPM-6):**
 - criteria for the formation, content and subsequent change of supplements, annexes and appendices in ISPMs (recommendation 8.3),
 - guidelines for an additional round of formal consultation on a draft standard (recommendation 1.2),
 - guidelines on the role of a steward of an ISPM (recommendation 5.1),
 - criteria for the formation and content of annexes (recommendation 8.3),
 - guidelines for the operation of EWGs (recommendation 9.1),
 - guidelines on the duties of members of the SC and SC procedures (recommendation 6.d and 11.1).

III. SESSION OF THE STANDARD COMMITTEE : 15-19 NOVEMBER 2004

Pursuant to the decision taken at ICPM-6, the five new members of the SC attended the meeting as observers : Mr. A.A. Ali, Mr D. Opatowski, Mr. M. Holtzhausen, Mr D. Quiroga and Mr M. Sakamura.

The report of SC-4 was adopted.

1. Adoption of report and annexes of the July extraordinary WG of SC

Only a few written comments had been received on the report and the annexes; however some members of the SC made verbal comments. After discussion the SC approved the following specifications:

- TP specification No. 4 – TP on forest quarantine,

- Specification No. 15 (1st rev.) - *the use of integrated measures in a systems approach for pest risk management of citrus fruit for citrus canker*,
- Specification No. 17 - *debarking of wood*,
- Specification No. 22 - *research protocols for phytosanitary measures*,
- Specification No. 23 - *guidelines for surveillance for specific pests: citrus canker*,
- Specification No. 24 - *post - entry quarantine facilities*,
- Specification No. 25 - *guidelines for formatting/drafting pest specific ISPMs*,
- Specification No. 26 - *guidelines for formatting/drafting commodity specific ISPMs*.

After discussion the following documents were approved and will be submitted to ICPM-7 (see recommendations in Appendix IX of report of ICPM –6):

- Criteria for the formation, content and subsequent change of supplements, annexes and appendices in ISPMs (recommendation 8.3),
- Guidelines for an additional round of formal consultation of a draft standard (recommendation 1.2),
- Guidelines on the role of a steward of an ISPM (recommendation 5.1),
- Criteria for the formation and content of annexes (recommendation 8.3),
- Guidelines for the operation of EWGs (recommendation 9.1),
- Guidelines on the duties of members of the SC members and SC procedures (recommendation 6.d and 11.1).

2. Business arising from technical panels

The SC took note of the activities of the TP on fruit flies and approved the work program. A draft standard on pest free areas for fruit flies had been drafted at the first meeting.

The following specifications were discussed and approved:

- Specification No. 27 – *Pest free areas for fruit flies*,
- Specification No. 28 – *Areas of low pest prevalence for fruit flies*,
- Specification No. 29 – *The use of integrated measures in a systems approach for pest risk management for fruit flies*,
- Specification – TP No. 2 : *Pest free areas and systems approaches for fruit flies*.

The SC took also note of the activities of the TP on diagnostic protocols and approved the work programme (19 organisms for diagnostic protocols had been selected as priority protocols and a new one was added on citrus canker). A draft standard on guidelines for formatting specific diagnostic protocols for regulated pests had been drafted at the first meeting.

The specification – TP No. 1: *Develop diagnostic protocols for specific pests* was discussed and approved.

3. Nominations of stewards

The SC nominated stewards for EWGs on “*classification of commodities by phytosanitary risk related to level of processing and intended use*”, “*guidelines for regulating potato micropropagation material and minitubers in international trade*”. It also nominated stewards for EWGs under the direction of TPs for fruit flies and diagnostic protocols.

4. Priorities for standard setting

The SC noted the huge work done by the SC –7. Its chairman Mr Klag introduced the outcome of discussions on the drafts that had been revised by SC-7.

About 2500 comments have been examined. The SC noted that the ICPM-6 had asked that information on comments should be made available and the SC discussed whether this should also be added to the IPP. The SC noted that it would be very difficult to produce updated tables for publishing on the IPP due to the amount of work to edit and reformat the tables. Moreover it was noted that the modified text of a draft ISPM would not address an individual comment made

during the Consultation process. The SC was reluctant to put the stewards' comments on the IPP, as ultimately, it is the SC, not the stewards, which is responsible. In addition it would entail considerable work for the Secretariat and for the SC. It was felt that making the information available on request to countries would suffice. In the event of a request being received by the Secretariat, the Secretariat could use the comments recorded in the country comment tables to prepare a response to such an inquiry and could contact, as appropriate, the stewards, SC-7 or SC.

The SC approved the following draft ISPMs for submission to ICPM-7:

- *Guidelines for inspection of consignments,*
- *Requirements for the establishment, maintenance and verification of areas of low pest prevalence,*
- revision of ISPM No. 3 : *Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and beneficial organisms,*
- *Guidelines on the concept of equivalence of phytosanitary measures and its application in international trade,*
- amendments to ISPM No. 5 : *Glossary of phytosanitary terms.*

However, the draft ISPM on *guidelines for consignments in transit* was not approved due to major reservations from some regions that could not be resolved in the timeframe available.

Nevertheless the SC identified the main concerns and possible solutions in many cases. The steward will revise the text based on the comments and discussions in the SC and will provide the Secretariat with a new proposal by January 2005. It may then be forwarded to the SC in May 2005 for country consultation in 2005 and possible adoption by ICPM-8 in 2006.

5. Priorities for standard setting

1. The SC considered selected suggestions for topics for standards forwarded to the SC by the SPTA which identified three major areas having higher priority: PRA for weeds, propagating material and soil and growing media. The SC also considered existing ISPMs and topics which emerged from the SC discussions. The topics agreed on by the SC will be submitted to the ICPM-7. The SC agreed further to review existing ISPMs at the April 2005 meeting in order to give careful consideration to which existing ISPMs might need to be added to the work program.

6. Exchange of views on the current standard setting process and possible improvements

At the end of the SC session a discussion took place on the current standard setting process and possible improvements.

The following critical points were mentioned:

- time constraints after country consultation: in nearly in all of the steps in the process of adoption of ISPMs, little time was available(compilation of comments by Secretariat, consideration and analysis of comments by stewards, screening by SC-7, time between SC-7 and SC meetings to consider drafts prepared by SC-7),
- importance of stewards: their work on the integration of country comments and their analysis of each comment has significantly contributed to the consideration of the draft ISPMs and thus to the adoption of five draft ISPMs. They have made an important contribution. However the workload for these stewards was too high and ways should be identified to facilitate their very important work,
- role of the SC-7: their role was essential in the screening of the hundreds of comments prior to the SC; however it was felt that there was a limit to their capacity to work with four draft standards during one week.
- splitting of SC in the SC meeting of May 2004 to consider appropriate drafting for ISPMs and specifications : this was not felt to be very satisfactory and could have been the reason for the many comments received during the consultation process.

Given the above, the SC agreed that the current way of working should be improved. As regards possible improvements, Mr Hedley presented an outline of a two-year cycle for standard setting, allowing more time throughout the whole process for the production of high quality ISPMs. The SC concluded that a proposal should be made for future improvements of the standard setting process by the Secretariat in cooperation with Mr Hedley for discussion in the SC meeting of May 2005 with the aim of presenting a document at ICPM-8 in 2006.