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y la
Alimentación

COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

First Session

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

Agenda Item 12.2.1 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The 7th meeting of the ICPM Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) was convened in Rome on 11-14 October 2005. This report provides a summary of the major topics discussed under the specific Strategic Directions. Items that require decisions by CPM-1 are dealt with in more detail under separate agenda items.

I. Specific topics, outside of the Strategic Directions

A. Electronic Certification

2. Based on a working paper by the Secretariat, the SPTA discussed the Terms of Reference of the working group on electronic certification and amended them. It was noted that the planned meeting of the working group would take place in early 2006. For this reason it was decided to give the working group the mandate to make recommendations directly to CPM-1 in 2006, instead of submitting them through the SPTA, as decided by ICPM-7. In view of the limited financial resources of the IPPC Secretariat, the Netherlands generously offered to sponsor the meeting of the working group. Further details on this matter can be found under agenda item 12.7.

B. Report of the Focus Group - Composition of a Working Group and Terms of Reference for a Feasibility Study on the International Recognition of Pest Free Areas

3. The SPTA discussed in detail the report of the Focus Group in relation with the composition of a working group and terms of reference for a feasibility study on the international recognition of pest free areas. Modifications/additions were made covering various issues and the annex was modified accordingly. The subject is discussed in more detail under agenda item 12.8.

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

4. The SPTA discussed various aspects of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for Technical Panels. Minor suggestions were made.
5. The Secretariat and Bureau had developed specifications and Terms of Reference for the glossary working group (GWG) based on those for Technical Panels. The SPTA recommended that the GWG should be transformed into a Technical Panel (see also agenda item 11.4).
6. The SPTA discussed the report of the 17th Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (TC-RPPOs) in relation with discussions on the use of the words "must", "shall", "should" and "may" in ISPMs. The TC-RPPOs had recommended that the current system of usage continue with a statement of obligation, and that in future ISPMs the word "should" be interpreted as a moral or political commitment that something will be done. Previously adopted ISPMs should be reviewed in this regard when they were due for review. There were times where it may be necessary to use the terms "shall" and "must" in ISPMs, particularly in situations where the IPPC itself was quoted. The SPTA supported the recommendations of the TC-RPPOs.
7. The SPTA discussed the selection criteria and procedure for selecting topics and priorities for standards. Based on a working paper by the Secretariat, the SPTA agreed on amending the criteria and procedure for selecting topics and priorities for standards as adopted at ICPM-4. The SPTA undertook some minor modifications on the draft proposal by the Secretariat and will submit it to the CPM for adoption after consideration by the Standards Committee.
8. Based on submissions from countries, the SPTA discussed the strategic priorities for the inclusion of new standards into the standard setting work programme of the CPM, in accordance with procedures established under ICPM-4 (2002). Considering the relatively high number of standards in the work programme and the shortage of financial resources during the biennium 2006/2007, the SPTA agreed that only urgently needed standards be proposed for the standard setting work programme. The SPTA identified the revision of ISPM No. 15, and problems related to export and re-export certification especially in connection with ISPM No. 12 and No. 7, as needing to be urgently addressed (see agenda item 11.4).
9. The Secretariat informed the SPTA that several explanatory documents had been commissioned, but only one had been posted (ISPM No. 20). Various reasons for this had been identified including lack of funds to hire consultants, lack of resources and possible disagreement between the author and the SC.

III. Strategic Direction 2: Information exchange

10. Due to the lack of financial resources the SPTA recommended that activities on information exchange would need to be prioritized and possibly postponed. Based on the draft budget for 2006 it was anticipated that the IPP Support Group would not meet. The same topics would be kept but there would be a cut back on development work and resources would be spent on maintenance.
11. The SPTA agreed that with the funds available, the primary work priority would be to maintain the IPP as much as possible. Some resources from the Trust Fund for the IPPC could be made available for workshops to train developing countries on IPP use (see agenda item 13.2).

IV. Strategic Direction 3: The provision of dispute settlement mechanisms

12. The Secretariat reported that there had been no dispute settlement activities during the previous 12 months. There had been enquiries about procedures but no formal request for

assistance. The SPTA noted that a proposal on the interpretation of ISPMs had been considered by the subsidiary body on dispute settlement (SBDS). The SBDS had concluded that it fell within the terms of reference for the group, albeit it was noted that such interpretations would not involve justification of measures but only clarification of the ISPMs.

13. The chairman of the SBDS presented various documents developed or under development by the SBDS. The SPTA noted the dispute settlement manual, the 'Guide to Dispute Settlement under the IPPC' and the nomination forms for the roster of experts.

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

14. The Secretariat reported that a Letter of Agreement had been signed with CABI for the evaluation of the PCE tool. CABI was in the process of formulating questionnaires and undertaking the study. The SPTA expressed its wish that the report would be available at its next meeting in 2006 and possibly available for the CPM meeting.

15. The Secretariat informed the SPTA about priorities identified by the PCE informal working group (IWG) which included: holding of a PCE facilitators workshop, enhancement of the PCE to enable the storage and retrieval of information of various versions for an NPPO and the production of interactive learning tools to increase awareness and knowledge of the IPPC and ISPMs as an integrated component of PCE. It was further recommended that a mechanism be established as part of the IPP work plan for releasing both CD-ROM versions and enabling the PCE to be downloaded from the IPP, and that it be updated regularly to reflect new developments. The SPTA agreed to submit all the IWG recommendations to the CPM for consideration (see agenda item 15.4).

16. The Secretariat reported on the recommendations of the working group on Technical Assistance. These included several modifications of Strategic Direction 4 in the Strategic Plan to make technical assistance more effective. The SPTA decided that the Bureau and Secretariat would go through proposals and make a revised version with the changes and amendments clearly indicated and present as a paper for CPM-1 (see agenda item 12.6.2).

VI. Strategic Direction 5: The maintenance of an effective and efficient administrative framework

A. Analysis of Funding Options for the IPPC

17. The Focus Group on funding options developed a series of conclusions for discussion by the SPTA, including the implications of reduced funding on the work programme, expansion of the use of the trust funds and voluntary assessed contributions. The SPTA felt that in particular, sponsorship of meetings would be of long term benefit in meeting budget shortfalls. The SPTA recommended that: contracting parties be invited to support the IPPC by providing in kind contributions, particularly the sponsorship of meetings (including Expert Working Groups, Technical Panels, etc.), including travel for delegates, meeting rooms and document production.

18. Fees as a means of funding the IPPC activities were discussed. The SPTA recommended that the CPM endorses a study on service fees and charges, but that such an analysis should first look at the framework of evaluation of the IPPC, and that the Secretariat discuss the use of fees with other organizations that are in similar field of activity, e.g. OIE, ISTA.

19. Voluntary assessed contributions were considered. It was felt that with good analysis and background information, the issue could be raised again at the CPM but that it would be better to defer any final decision to CPM-2. The SPTA recommended that the Secretariat develop an information "package" analysing how the voluntary trust fund would work, including a schedule of contributions, an estimate of budget to be covered, and possibly a breakdown of what countries

would contribute and that the information package be available at CPM-1 for information and discussion.

B. Evaluation of the IPPC and its Structure

20. A desk review had been initiated to form the overview of the project and the evaluation unit was putting together an evaluation team. The evaluation would be stand alone with the primary target being the usefulness of the IPPC and had to be available for the 2007 FAO Conference. It would consider the resources of the IPPC, its mechanisms and its requirements.

C. Preparations for Entry into Force of the New Revised Text of the IPPC

21. The Secretariat announced that the revised IPPC has come into force. The FAO Director General would have to formally convene the First Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) in April 2006. At that point the ICPM would no longer be relevant. The new Commission would have to approve Rules of Procedure, elect a new bureau and establish, if so wished its subsidiary bodies.

22. The SPTA discussed the benefits of an enlarged bureau of seven persons, representing each FAO Region. The “enlarged Bureau” could take over the functions of Focus Groups and constitute the core group of the SPTA. Rule II of the Rules of Procedure may have to be modified. The SPTA agreed that the Bureau and Secretariat would develop a discussion paper for the CPM-1 considering possible Terms of Reference, and how the Rules of Procedure should be changed to enable it.

23. FAO Legal service advised that it was not necessary to re-adopt decisions made by the ICPM as the ICPM made its decisions on behalf of the FAO Conference, the governing body until the 1997 amendments came into force. However as far as the subsidiary bodies were concerned, they would cease to exist and would have to be recreated and readopted (including Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure). Decisions made by ICPM that were not linked to subsidiary bodies did not need to be re-adopted, so many decisions would not need to be readopted. Also standards would not have to be re-adopted.

D. Information Exchange under the IPPC

24. The Secretariat provided an initial revision of the information exchange paper produced for ICPM-7 as ICPM 2005/25 which gives guidance on the information exchange obligations under the IPPC which had been referred back for further development with the SPTA. Feedback from workshops had indicated some confusion as to who was responsible for reporting what and how. The SPTA welcomed the document as valuable information on information exchange, and decided that it be submitted to the CPM as an annex to the information exchange report (see agenda item 13.1).

E. Strategic Plan

25. The SPTA discussed in detail the strategic plan and made amendments (see agenda item 12.6.1). With regard to information exchange, the SPTA agreed to add a new section (2.1.5), requiring the Secretariat to fulfil reporting obligations and communicate administrative matters efficiently.

26. Concern was expressed in that the strategic direction did not highlight the underlying importance of science to the IPPC. The SPTA considered the need for a seventh Strategic Direction, “Strengthen the Scientific basis of the IPPC” and would put it on the agenda for the SPTA meeting in 2006. In the meantime it was included as a new sub-goal “6.3: Strengthen the Scientific basis of the IPPC” with 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 being moved in to the area.

F. Business Plan

27. The SPTA recommended that the business plan should be adjusted by the Bureau following the FAO Conference and submitted to CPM-1.

G. Budget

28. Based on information by the Secretariat, the budget report for 2005 was discussed. It was noted that the Regular Programme money and available arrears would be exhausted over 2005. The Secretariat informed that it was not in financial problems until the end of 2005 and activities would carry on in an organized way until the end of the year.

29. The Secretariat reported that the FAO contribution to the anticipated budget for 2006 would only include regular programme funds and no longer include financial resources made available through arrears. This would mean that the overall financial resources available to the IPPC would substantially decrease. Exact details on the budget could only be provided after the meeting of the FAO Conference in November 2005 and when FAO internal discussions on budget allocations are completed. The SPTA expressed its strong concern and disappointment with the financial situation of the IPPC for the year 2006.

H. Trust Fund for the IPPC

30. The Secretariat reported that the Trust Fund for the IPPC would not be fully spent in 2005. There would be a carry over of some funds to next year. To date only two countries (Canada and New Zealand) had donated to the Trust Fund for the IPPC. The SPTA agreed to the financial report, which would be updated as the year progressed and be presented through the Bureau to CPM-1.

31. In regard to the trust fund budget for 2006, the SPTA expressed its concern on the low amount of contributions to the Trust Fund for the IPPC. It recognized that the Canadian contribution would finish in 2006 and there was no indication as to whether other donors would continue to contribute to the Trust Fund for the IPPC. The SPTA agreed that the Secretariat should start to intensify its efforts to invite potential donors to contribute to the trust fund.

I. Prioritization of Activities for 2006

32. Due to the depressing financial outlook for the IPPC in 2006, the SPTA discussed in detail, on the basis of a proposal by the Secretariat, the prioritization of IPPC activities for 2006. The anticipated revenue was calculated at approximately US \$2.5m, primarily to be received through regular budget, trust funds and possible carry-overs. The estimated expenditure on activities for 2006, which should be undertaken to achieve the strategic/business plan, came to approximately US \$4m, which left a shortfall of approximately \$1.5m.

33. In analysing the IPPC activities on the basis of the strategic directions, the SPTA recommended that standard setting activities need to continue in order to avoid a disruption of the standard setting process in the years to come. However, there would be a need to reduce standard setting activities from its current level. The SPTA further recommended that information exchange would be reduced to the maintenance of the IPP, with issues relating to the assistance to countries to participate in the IPP being substantially reduced. In regard to the activities on dispute settlement, the SPTA recommended that this would be given low priority with activities being limited to the development of manuals. Staff support to technical assistance would continue at lower levels, with greater reliance on regional and sub-regional plant protection officers for such activities. SPTA also recommended that there would need to be greater reliance on extra budgetary funding for regional workshops and working groups on PCE. At the anticipated funding levels only 3 regional workshops on draft ISPMs could be funded and it would not be possible to offer positions to visiting scientists. SPTA also recommended that liaison with other

organisations would be substantially reduced, participation in the work of the CBD would be given lower priority and participation in regional plant protection meetings would be curtailed.

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

A. Future Working Group on Liaison with Research and Teaching Organization

34. A pilot project had been undertaken early in 2005 and a draft policy document developed as a basis to progress liaison linkages between the NPPOs and research and education institutes (REI). Further options included holding an informal working group on REIs to *inter alia* establish a work programme. The SPTA appreciated the importance of the need for a link with education and research bodies and that some kind of plan/progress report should be reported to the CPM.

B. Cooperation with other Organizations

35. The Secretariat summarized the activities undertaken/anticipated by the Secretariat/Bureau with other organizations. These included: Convention on Biological Diversity, Codex Alimentarius, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Montreal Protocol, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Seed Testing Association, Biological Weapons Convention, WTO-SPS Committee.

C. Report of the 17th Technical Consultation among RPPOs

36. The Secretariat had distributed the draft report and was waiting for comments from the RPPOs. The SPTA noted the draft report.

37. The ICPM is invited to:

1. *Note* the report of the SPTA.