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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Eighth Session
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Information Exchange: Secretariat Update
Agenda item 11.3
Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat

1. In 2003, the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) made a number of decisions aimed at ensuring that the contracting parties and other parties to the IPPC could meet their reporting obligations. These decisions were based on two expert working group meetings and advice from FAO Legal Office.
2. Core to the information exchange programme was the establishment of the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP – www.ippc.int) to facilitate and expedite meeting of obligatory and optional reporting requirements under the IPPC, as agreed by ICPM.
3. Contracting parties have provided a substantial amount of information through the IPP since its inception. Summaries of this information can be found at:
<https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1110726&L=0>
4. In the past 8 years, over 15 regional workshops around the world (only North America has not had a workshop) and 50 national workshops (mostly related to a specific project in Africa) were held to create awareness of reporting, obligations and processes available, thus facilitating regional and national networking to achieve these goals.
5. In addition to the official national information, the whole work programme of the IPPC Secretariat is based on the IPP and automatically contributes to meeting the Secretariat reporting obligations under the IPPC.
6. The IPPC national information exchange programme has largely become stagnant over the past 2 years due to the lack of resources in the Secretariat to support this programme adequately, and countries have become complacent in meeting reporting obligations.
7. As the Secretariat resources begin to improve, so the IPPC information exchange programme is in need of revitalization. Notwithstanding a large improvement in transparency and meeting

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reporting obligations over the past 10 years, there is still substantial progress that can be made with little extra effort.

8. Currently, the following trends are apparent:

- a) There is very inconsistent provision of national phytosanitary information through the IPP, particularly updates to existing data.
- b) There is seldom appropriate succession planning in a country to ensure continuity of the national information exchange programmes.
- c) A lot of countries still do not have functional internal IPPC information exchange systems to collect and verify the information required for publication on the IPP.
- d) An increasing number of contracting parties (still small thankfully) are reverting to a paper processes to exchange information under the IPPC, despite the agreement in ICPM (2003) of utilizing the IPP to facilitate and expedite the IPPC Information Exchange process.
- e) Much information is entered in “spurts” around the time of information exchange / IPP training workshops or CPM suggesting that information is available but is not being entered or updated regularly for some reason.
- f) The amount of national information entered is often dependent upon individual contact points who are active but when their position is taken over by others, the process often stops.
- g) In general, more information is being entered by developing countries than developed countries; some developing countries have reported during workshops that they will continue entering data when they see developed countries participating equally in the process.
- h) It is a fallacy that entering the data takes too long as this has been disproved by a number of developing countries during workshops. It appears the major bottleneck in most countries is the coordinating, accumulation and verification of data that needs to be reported under the IPPC – this appears to be the case in both developing and developed countries. Many workshop participants have reported that the technical ability is not an impediment but rather the management and political limitations.
- i) A significant number of contracting parties that do not meet IPPC reporting obligations consistently provide the same information they are supposed to provide under the IPPC to other organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- j) There should be an incentive or added value to encourage countries to meet their reporting obligations through the IPP.

9. Given the current situation, a review of the IPPC information exchange programme is necessary. This focus should include:

- a) The legal basis for the mechanisms of reporting, including through Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs), and possible role of the Secretariat in maintaining accuracy of data on the IPP – location, format and quality of data.
- b) Whether it is appropriate to prioritize the provision of reporting data as determined by the IPPC.
- c) Exactly how data is provided and relevant timeframes.
- d) Which value added services could the Secretariat provide in addition to those already being developed.
- e) How to work with other organizations to ensure consistency of reporting, reducing duplication and supporting each other’s work programmes, e.g. WTO.
- f) The most appropriate way of building sustainable national IPPC communication systems that would consistently support meeting national IPPC reporting obligations.
- g) The most appropriate way of strengthening the role of RPPOs in ensuring contracting parties meet their national reporting obligations.
- h) The most appropriate way of communicating this reporting to stakeholders, other than NPPOs and RPPOs.

10. NPPO and RPPO user expectations could be obtained via a survey that would complement the feedback already received through the numerous workshops.

11. The expected timeframe would be the review completed by October 2014 for CPM Strategic Planning Group (SPG) consideration and possible submission of the revised IPPC Information Exchange work programme to CPM-9 in 2014.

12. To facilitate this process an IPPC Information Exchange Advisory Group would be established for the duration of this revision. This Advisory Group would consist of two nominated phytosanitary personnel from each region who are knowledgeable about the IPPC information exchange obligations, while being computer and internet literate. This body could work virtually. If essential (and if resources are available), a single physical meeting could be arranged.

13. The CPM is invited to:

- 1) *provide* guidance as necessary; and
- 2) *endorse* the revision of the IPPC Information Exchange work programme.