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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

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Proposal for an *International Year of Plant Health*

Agenda item 13.2

Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At CPM-9 (2014) a member proposed that the IPPC Secretariat investigate the possibility of establishing an International Year of Plant Health or an annually re-occurring "Day of Plant Health". The proposal found considerable support in CPM-9. Consequently, the subject was referred to the Financial Committee and the CPM Bureau for discussion. The Financial Committee (FC) in its meetings in June and October 2014 discussed the issue and felt that in principle the observance of an International Year of Plant Health within the UN system could present considerable opportunities for plant health in general and the IPPC specifically. The FC recommended that the CPM Bureau support the organization of an international year and offered to provide leadership for its planning and operational phase. The CPM Bureau also discussed the matter and concurred with the FC recommendations.

2. To further investigate the matter and to clarify procedures, concepts and operational matters of international years, the IPPC Secretariat committed to present a discussion paper on the subject to CPM-10 (2015).

3. A discussion paper is presented in Attachment 1 to this document.

4. If the CPM-10 (2015) wishes to proceed with an International Year on Plant Health a number of issues should be decided at this meeting.

5. The CPM is invited to:

- *decide* to pursue an IYPH for 2020

- *request* the CPM Bureau and the Financial Committee to form a small steering committee to continue with detailed planning of an IYPH and present a detailed work-programme for the planning of the IYPH 2020 to CPM-11 (2016)
- *request* the IPCC Secretariat to report to FAO Council and Conference on the CPM intention to petition for and organize an IYPH in 2020 and start internal consultations with other FAO units
- *nominate* a Contracting Party to propose to FAO Conference, that an IYPH be held in 2020
- *request* Contracting Parties to inform their permanent representative to FAO as well as relevant authorities responsible for UN affairs about their support for an IYPH 2020
- *invite* Contracting Parties to pledge financial or in-kind support for an IYPH at CPM-11 (2016)

Attachment 1

**Discussion paper on the proposed:
International Year of Plant Health - 2020
"Healthy Plants to Feed the World"**

A. Background

International decades, years, months, weeks and days are also known as international observances, and generally mean a dedication or anniversary to a specified topic of international interest or concern. They are used to commemorate, promote and mobilize individuals, countries, organizations and resources for action. Many of these types of celebrations have been established by the United Nations General Assembly (UN). When deciding on an international observance the UN usually assigns a lead agency which implements its operational plan and, if appropriate, coordinates events worldwide. Usually a written report about the international observance event is produced and recommendations and evaluations are carried out.

Recently, FAO has been lead agency for several international years such as: the International Year of Quinoa (2013), International Year of Family Farming (2014) and the International Year on Soils (2015). In 2012, FAO established a policy on the proclamation and implementation of international years to be organized by FAO (FAO 2012; CL 144/13)¹. This policy sets out criteria for the selection of themes and procedures and other requisites to be followed.

Criteria for selection of themes

The criteria for the selection of themes for international years for which FAO would be the lead agency are as follows:

- 1) A subject proposed for an International Year should be consistent with the purposes and principles listed in the main constitutional instruments of concerned UN system entities (i.e. the United Nations Charter, the FAO Constitution, etc).
- 2) The International Year should address a priority concern to all, or the majority of countries, and should contribute to the development of international cooperation in solving global problems, in particular those affecting developing countries.
- 3) The International Year, if endorsed, should involve concrete action at the international and national levels and should be expected to generate significant follow-up at both levels in the form of new activities or the strengthening of existing ones.
- 4) There should be an interval of at least two years between two International Years, and a longer interval between years concerning similar subjects. The Conference will not call for the proclamation of more than one International Year at a time.
- 5) The proclamation of an International Year should be considered only when celebrations of shorter duration (a month, week or day) would not suffice.
- 6) An International Year should not be proclaimed when a World Conference has been convened separately on the same subject, or when a subject is already of wide international concern and effective programmes exist to further its ends.

Considering these criteria, an International Year of Plant Health would fulfil all the criteria set out in the FAO policy. Plant health as an overarching global concern which includes hunger and poverty alleviation as well as environmental and trade implications is a prime example of an important subject for all countries. In this context it should be noted that new procedures in FAO policy require that international years under FAO are envisaged taking place every other year. Since 2016 is earmarked to

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/025/md855e.pdf>

be the International Year of Pulses, the next international years under FAO can only be in 2018 and 2020.

B. Conceptual Aspects of an International Year of Plant Health (IYPH)

1. Justification

In many countries, plant health has experienced a low public awareness and consequently political support and resources for plant health policies and structures has been decreasing. To remedy this development, the international plant health community should observe an IYPH which should be primarily focussed on raising the public awareness of plant health and the plant health community, its aims and policies, as well as its efforts to contribute to the reduction of hunger, poverty alleviation and the protection of the environment. It should be noted that the observance of an IYPH is NOT a celebration of the IPPC. It is an observance for the plant health discipline with its multiple players on global, regional and national levels. Only with the raised awareness for all plant health related organizations and groups can the overall sector can be strengthened, including the IPPC.

2. Main Objective

The main objective or mission of the IYPH could be defined as:

"Celebration of the International Year of Plant Health will raise awareness of the importance and impacts of plant health in addressing issues of global concern, including hunger, poverty and threats to the environment."

3. Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the IYPH would primarily focus around awareness raising and communication issues and would consequently lead to stronger public and political support to plant health as well as to a better coordination within the plant health community. Specific objectives could be set as:

a) raising the awareness of the public and political decision makers at the global, regional and national levels about plant health and its contributions to:

- *Protecting sustainable agriculture and thus enhancing global food security through the prevention of pest spread*

The growing food security concerns and the availability of future food to growing populations around the world present massive problems to many countries. Plant pests are one of the most limiting factors in agricultural production. Plant health policies and practises play a substantive role in developing the capacity of countries to monitor and respond to plant pest risks, thereby providing a key line of defence in safeguarding on a global, regional and national level food supplies.

- *Protecting the environment, forests and biodiversity from plant pests and thus contributing to the prevention of biodiversity loss*

The Aichi biodiversity target No. 9 states that *"by 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment."* Whereas the CBD addresses biodiversity and the environment in general, plant health deals specifically with those invasive alien species that are pests of plants and provides guidance for protection against them, thus contributing to the reduction on the direct pressures on biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable use. By preventing the spread and controlling plant pests, plant health directly contributes to improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.

- *Facilitating economic and trade development through the promotion of globally harmonized scientifically based phytosanitary measures*

For many years global and regional plant health policies have been focussing on creating internationally-harmonized phytosanitary measures to facilitate the safe expansion of trade. Trade is an increasingly important part of many national economies, and trade-related national capacity and the continued development of international standards must be strengthened to help countries increase their

capacity to define policies and develop phytosanitary systems to take advantage of new trade opportunities. By improving the access to trade opportunities these plant health efforts especially contribute to poverty alleviation, particularly in rural populations.

b) promoting a strengthening of global, regional and national plant health efforts in light of increasing trade and new pest risks caused through climate change.

Over decades trade volumes as well as the differing types of traded commodities have increased significantly. In addition new trade channels, such as commercial transactions via the internet have opened up new trade pathways. Consequently, the risk of pest establishment and spread has been amplified. This is further intensified through the expansion of pest habitats in response to climate change. Developing and sustaining a mechanism to transfer phytosanitary information on traded commodities rapidly and efficiently by means other than the traditional paper shuffling will be a vital part of a future plant health system and even more importantly, ensuring that this information is accessible, retrievable and useable is also extremely important.

c) rallying global, regional and national political support for plant health and increasing global, regional and national resources for plant health policies and systems.

In many countries plant health has experienced a decline in political support and accessibility to resources. The fact remains however that plant health has an equal value for food security and economic well-being. Having an IYPH, highlights the value of scientifically based plant health policies and programs which serve the public good and provides a catalyst in developing and growing support for plant health globally.

4. Possible Programme

When designing the programme for the IYPH greatest efforts should be attributed to plan activities where different plant health interest groups can be addressed and be included into the planned activities. Different interest groups, such as academia, trade, producers, civil society and regulatory authorities should be equally attracted by the events carried out during the IYPH.

There would be the need to plan a number of global and regional or sub-regional events as well as to ideologically support national efforts to commemorate the IYPH. Events should be coordinated and jointly organized with other, collaborating agencies or organizations (e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), members of the Biodiversity Liaison Group, the Food and Agriculture Organization and Regional Plant Protection Organizations). Possible major programme events for the IYPH could be:

- a) Ministerial level CPM meeting
- b) Donor Conference
- c) Regional plant health conferences on regionally specific plant health issues
- d) Regional Ministerial conferences (with assistance from RPPOS)
- e) Other meetings with international groups such as APEC or OECD, which have an agriculture component.
- f) Patronage for specific national plant health events
- g) Multi-agency conference on plant health and its impact on biodiversity
- h) Multi-agency conference on trade and plant health
- i) STDF specific seminar on plant health impacts
- j) Tailored activities on plant health impacts by other capacity development service providers
- k) Seminar on "plant health and academia" organized by a group of reputed universities.

The above list of major events may look difficult to organize; however, many players in the plant health community could take a lead role in their organization. For organizational aspects see also Chapter D.

5. *Outputs*

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of an IYPH it should be necessary to define certain measurable outputs. This will help to plan and focus the activities undertaken in the IYPH. Outputs should be measurable and result in the strengthening of national, regional or global plant health systems and structures. Possible outputs of an IYPH could be:

- a) Public well informed about plant health issues (numbers of popular publications, articles, etc.).
- b) Adoption of a new IPPC Plant Health Strategy for 2020-2030
- c) Adoption and publication of the "Review of the Status of Plant Protection in the World" (Article 11, 2 (a) of IPPC)
- d) Establishment of the 6th December 2021 as an international day of plant health (70 years after IPPC signature), possibly re-occurring annually
- e) Establishment of a financial mechanism for the IPPC
- f) Increased donor commitments to plant health
- g) Increased commitments on sustainable financing of national plant health systems
- h) Increased reflection of plant health matters in national academic curricula
- i) Greater stakeholder involvement in national plant health decision-making
- j) Better plant health legislation and infrastructure on national levels

6. *Outcome*

The final outcome of an IYPH is that the aims and objectives of plant health are well known to the public and political decision makers. This should lead to stronger public and political support to plant health as well as to a better coordination within the plant health community. Consequently, the plant health community should be better equipped to contribute effectively to the challenges of our time, such as poverty alleviation, reducing hunger and protecting our environment.

C. **Organizational Aspects of an International Year of Plant Health**

1) *Procedure and activities leading to the declaration of an International Year of Plant Health*

The procedures and activities leading to the declaration of an international year by the UN general assembly are not necessarily complicated but involve significant high level political decision making and negotiations. Proposals to hold international observances should be initiated by countries. The procedure leading to the declaration of an IYPH would be as follows:



As already indicated above the initiative for an IYPH must be initiated by a country. A contracting party would have to champion the initiative and make proposals to CPM, FAO Council/Conference and the UN General Assembly. An isolated country, however, is not likely to be successful without support from others. Especially at the FAO Conference and UN General Assembly level, the country championing the proposal should have strong support from many other countries, preferably from several regions.

Decision by CPM

Although from a purely legal point of view a CPM decision would not be necessary, a country could make a proposal directly to FAO Conference, it would however be prudent to start the process with a CPM decision. This would signal that the international plant health community is in support of the IYPH. Such a decision could already be taken at CPM-10 (2015) in 2015. All it would take at CPM-10 (2015) is one contracting party to make the proposal to commemorate the International Year of Plant Health in 2020.

Decision by FAO Conference

The decision to hold an IYPH must also be taken by the FAO Conference since FAO most probably would be assigned as lead agency in the implementation of the IYPH. The IPPC Secretariat may be the technical unit to assist in the implementation. Also the decision to be taken by the FAO Conference would have to be proposed by a member state. The IPPC Secretariat should have no role in proposing an IYPH. Preparatory bodies, such as the Programme and Finance Committee of FAO and the FAO Council, may prepare the decision by the FAO Conference in order to integrate the IYPH into the overall FAO programme of work.

The timing of a proposal to the FAO Conference to hold an IYPH is relatively straightforward. The next FAO Conference is in June 2015 (39th FAO Conference June 6-13, 2015). This may come too early for the adoption of an IYPH since the Programme and Finance Committees meet before CPM-10 (2015) and the FAO Council the week after CPM-10 (2015). The most realistic time-frame for the adoption of an IYPH would be at the next FAO Conference in 2017. This would leave ample time to prepare the matter in the appropriate FAO bodies. It may, however, be considered to introduce the general idea of an IYPH at the 39th FAO Conference in order to "spread the idea" and to announce an intent with a view to reserving the topic for 2020.

Decision by UN General Assembly

The final decision for agreeing to declare an IYPH is done by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Before the General Assembly of the United Nations can make a decision, the proposal and its documentation must be considered by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Again member states are the initiator and driving force of the proposal.

Based on the above described decision-making processes the following overall time-frame could apply:



Such a time-frame would allow ample time to plan and prepare individual activities connected to the adoption process. It would also satisfy the FAO internal procedures by allowing adequate time for full consultations, including the fact that a final decision on a proposal is taken by the United Nations General Assembly not earlier than one full year after the introduction of the proposal in order to take

into account the views expressed by Members, and to allow a thorough assessment of the proposal by the competent organs. In addition, this time-frame would also satisfy the FAO requirement that there should be a period of two years between the proclamation and the beginning of an International Year.

2.) *Cooperation with other UN agencies, international organizations, RPPOs and national authorities*

The FAO internal procedures provide that there should be effective coordination of the activities of United Nations organizations and bodies concerned so as to build on inherent synergies and avoid duplication. In the case of an IYPH an effective coordination with other UN organizations, but also with other global and regional international organizations, should be carried out. The cooperation with other organizations may help to promote plant health to a much wider audience and it certainly may create synergies with regard to the aims and objectives of plant health. Beside the external coordination it should be considered that an internal FAO coordination would also be essential.

Within the plant health context, there are a number of organizations which may play an important role in the IYPH, such as:

- NPPOs
- Regional Economic Integration Organization
- CBD
- UNDP
- WB
- GEF
- Council of Europe
- IFAD
- UNEP
- RPPOs: APPPC, CA, COSAVE, EPPO, IAPSC, NAPPO, NEPPO, OIRSA and PPPC
- STDF
- WTO (SPS)
- CABI
- IUCN
- Ozone Secretariat

There may also be the opportunity to engage stakeholders in the planning and organization of an IYPH. Plant Health is a discipline where stakeholders are considerably affected and involved. Consequently, private stakeholders should be visible in an IYPH.

It may be important to consider that such organizations can contribute to the programme of an IYPH by subjecting their own meetings under the umbrella of an IYPH. This could mean that NPPOs or organizations like WTO or UNEP organize meetings which are topically related to plant health. An effective coordination and incorporation with other organizations will help to bring plant health objectives to a much wider audience and will assist in approaching plant health through a broader scope.

3.) *Planning and oversight of the IYPH*

Planning and oversight of an IYPH may require considerable resources. The major activities in relation to this administrative aspect are listed below.

➤ *Establishment of expectations and outputs*

When planning the IYPH one should carefully map the expectations and outputs one would like to achieve with the international year. An initial and preliminary mapping could be carried out by a dedicated working group or an existing group such as the CPM Bureau or its Financial Committee. At a later stage, when the idea of an IYPH is more accepted, other partners should be involved and an oversight committee should develop detailed plans. By establishing and agreeing to specific expectations and outputs will help to carry out an evaluation if the IYPH has achieved its objectives.

➤ *Oversight*

The planning of events, the coordination with other organizations and the establishment of work plans would need some forum which could have the form of an IYPH oversight and coordination committee.

Representatives from contracting parties, FAO, IPPC Secretariat, cooperating agencies and organizations would be members.

➤ *Preparing possible CPM decisions/initiatives/agreements*

If it is envisaged that certain decisions or recommendations should be made during the IYPH, e.g. during a ministerial CPM, these would need to be prepared very carefully in advance. The adoption of a new IPPC strategy, finance mechanism or status of plant protection in the world would require several years of negotiations and development. In order to be ready principal decisions to develop such matters would need to be done during 2015/16. The preparation of such matters could be carried out by existing CPM bodies, such as the SPG.

Certain administrative matters maybe carried by dedicated FAO units.

4.) *Financing*

Perhaps the most challenging aspect in planning the IYPH is mobilizing resources. According to the FAO guidelines an International Year will not be proclaimed unless full financing (which in principle should be based on voluntary contributions) and all organizational arrangements are confirmed. This presents a veritable challenge to contracting parties wishing that such an IYPH be organized.

Typically, the budget for an international year in FAO orbits around USD 2 million. This amount, however, does not need to be available in cash before the year commences. Some financing can also be made in-kind. Conferences or events placed under the IYPH umbrella but organized by other organizations, such as RPPOs and NPPO could be calculated as in-kind contributions.

Although some contributions maybe made in-kind, it is absolutely necessary to collect also extra budgetary financial contributions to realize an IYPH. Countries showing interest that such a year be celebrated should consider how they can contribute.

5.) *Communications*

An international year is primarily a "tour de force" in communications. The most important aspect of international years is to raise awareness - and that can only be done through extensive efforts in communicating. For an IYPH different kind of communication material would have to be developed: a specific web-site, a specific logo, publications, artworks, moving plant health exhibition or conference stands, radio or video material and so on. Although some of the communication material maybe developed by specific services within FAO it would be primarily the IPPC Secretariat who would be responsible for deciding the scientific/technical content.

If the CPM would express its wish that an IYPH be celebrated, that would mean that efforts in communications should be stepped up. The best way to do this may be to include certain provisions about an IYPH into the communications work-plan which has to be adopted pursuant to the adopted communications strategy.

But not only the IPPC Secretariat or FAO would be challenged to carry out extensive communications efforts. Also NPPOs, RPPOs and national governments would be challenged to communicate plant health topics to the public and private stakeholders. As an example, each NPPO could negotiate with their national postal service for a commemorative IYPH stamp. This type of initiative should not cost money, but would require some effort.

6.) *Evaluation*

The FAO guidelines for conducting international years also incorporate that arrangements for evaluation should be established in the preparatory phase and form part of the implementation of, and follow-up, to each International Year. Consequently, the preparation for the IYPH should already include considerations on how its effectiveness and implementation will be evaluated in 2021.

D. Challenges for the CPM and the IPPC Secretariat

The challenges for CPM and IPPC Secretariat for realizing an IYPH are considerable. The planning and preparation of the IYPH would draw considerable resources from the Secretariat and would possibly require contracting parties to provide in the beginning assistance in the form of voluntary expertise. At a later stage direct financial extra-budgetary contributions would be needed to help realize parts of the programme.

For the IPPC Secretariat the challenges would be mainly be associated with the timely implementation of organizational matters. The planning and content of communication activities, coordination of the establishment of a logo, website and other promotional activities would be necessary. The participation at planning meetings and coordination of events will be especially needed in the last part of the process and may be very labour intensive. If the decision is taken by the CPM/FAO/UN to hold the IYPH it must be anticipated that the organization of the event would require a significant degree of discipline in implementing activities within a strict time-frame. The Secretariat may not be able to implement all activities without reallocating staff from other IPPC activities.

E. Role of Contracting Parties

As already outlined in a previous chapter, contracting parties are the driving forces in the efforts to have an IYPH approved by the FAO and the UN General Assembly. The IPPC Secretariat cannot make a proposal for an international year it must come from a member. A country, functioning as a champion, proposes to the FAO Conference that an IYPH is declared. Other countries should support this issue. The more countries from diverse origins support the proposal the better the chance of acceptance is.

Contracting parties do also have an important role to play in the promotion and implementation of the IYPH. For instance, meetings and conferences organized by national plant protection organizations can be topically adjusted and then labelled an activity within the IYPH programme. The IYPH logo and communications platforms such as an IYPH web-site can be utilized.

Contracting parties may also support the IPPC Secretariat in planning and implementing the IYPH by providing financial or in-kind assistance.