Proposal to establish an IPPC format for a regular phytosanitary conference: The

“International Phytosanitary Conference”

*(Prepared by KEPHIS**)*

1. Introduction

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) specifies that contracting parties agree to cooperate in the development of international standards. Consequently the IPPC established an ambitious work programme to develop and adopt “International Standards on Phytosanitary Measures” (ISPM). The convention makes also provision for application of phytosanitary measures by governments to protect their plant resources from harmful pests which may be introduced through international trade. Phytosanitary measures include any legislation, regulations or official procedure aimed at preventing the introduction and spread of harmful pests. Phytosanitary measures play an important role in trade facilitation, and the protection of plant resources and the environment. Non-compliance to these measures may lead to introduction of harmful or quarantine pests which not only leads to restriction in market access but can adversely affect agricultural production and the environment. However, if phytosanitary measures are not technically justified and applied in a reasonable manner, they can constitute unnecessary barriers to trade.

KEPHIS/COPE organized the first International Phytosanitary Conference from 12th to 16th September 2016 at KEPHIS Hq, Karen, in Nairobi whose theme was “Phytosanitary regulation for improved trade facilitation and food security”. The conference created opportunities for participants from the NPPOs and those in agricultural trade to share their success as well as challenges encountered. The conference also offered the participants an opportunity to discuss emerging issues such as new pest outbreaks. Over 100 delegates from 25 countries across the world gathered in Nairobi to discuss matters pertinent and emerging in plant health. The function was opened by the Principal Secretary, State Department of Agriculture in Kenya Dr. Richard Lesiyampe. He mentioned that between 1900 till now, many new pests have come to Africa from other countries. Over 233 new pests have been recorded to have been introduced from outside Africa – approximately 30% of these were new insects and mites while 70% of these were new plant diseases. Pests have no borders and can travel thousands of kilometers, destroying crops in their path. Globally, pests and diseases affect the quality of crops and reduce crop production by 33% resulting in loss of income and disruptions of international markets, thus affecting trade between countries.

During the conference participants agreed that it would be highly desirable to establish an agreed format of an international phytosanitary conference to be held every two years under the authority of the IPPC. The conference participants also thought that such conferences could be combined with the celebrations of an International Day of Plant Health as foreseen in the preliminary outputs for the International Year of Plant Health 2020. It was thought important that the proceedings of these conferences need to be published, possibly into a journal format, and thus could be considered an important component of the review of the state of plant protection in the world.

2. Proposal

Kenya proposes that, as an element of the “Review of the Status of Plant Health in the World” (IPPC Article XI), the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) considers to establish the format for a regular conference on plant health matters. This regular conference should be named “**International Phytosanitary Conference**”.

It is proposed that the CPM investigates and decides on possible format details including:

* Selection of venue
* Organizational procedures
* Programmatic structure
* Budgetary rules
* Roles of host countries

Kenya further proposes that the proceedings of the conferences are published as the “Review of the Status of Plant Health in the World”.

In consideration of the proposals made, it is important for the IPPC to consider the **International Phytosanitary Conference** as part of its calendar of activities and to lobby members to host it.

3. Justification

Article XI of the IPPC (Commission on Phytosanitary Measures) sub-section 2 (a) states “the functions of the Commission shall be to promote the full implementation of the objectives of the Convention and, in particular, to review the state of plant protection in the world and the need for action to control the international spread of pests and their introduction into endangered areas”. This task of the CPM has not been addressed at all since the CPM had been established. This proposal to establish a regular phytosanitary conference and to publish their proceedings offers the possibility to address a key component of the CPM tasks in a regular manner.

4. Timing

It is suggested that the format for the “**International Phytosanitary Conference**” is adopted by the CPM in 2018. This would leave time to organize the next meeting of the “**International Phytosanitary Conference**” during the IYPH in 2020. This would then allow to have the proceedings of the conference be published as the “Review of the Status of Plant Health in the World” and as a major output of the IYPH 2020.