**UPDATE ON IPPC SECRETARIAT STAFFING ISSUES**

1. The purpose of this document is to inform the SPG on the issue of IPPC Secretariat staff sustainability and succession planning.
2. The current “permanent” Secretariat consists of three General Service staff members, and five Professional Service staff. The remainder of IPPC Secretariat associated staff consists of a variety of project post positions, in-kind support, APOs, consultants and assorted short term contract employees.
3. While the Secretariat has been fortunate in staffing the five professional service staff positions with personnel with a background in IPPC related work; in the remaining positions, only a few of the employees have any extensive background in IPPC-related activities. While those personnel are of the highest calibre, hard-working and dedicated, the circumstances of their contractual arrangements under the FAO system does not adequately support sustainability in what are often vital to the mission junior level professional positions. In most cases, these employees are contractually retained for a period of eleven months, with a mandatory one month break between year one and two, and a mandatory six month break after year two.
4. As a result, there are some key challenges for the permanent staff in ensuring consistency of product and presentation, as well as the challenge of retaining non-permanent staff who have gained a solid knowledge of IPPC operations. Repeated turnover on a more frequent than normal basis requires detailed attention to training new employees provided by the permanent staff members which in turn takes them away from their assigned duties. Continuity of staffing is a constant issue, and recent employment reforms instituted by the FAO have necessitated the renewal of contracts for some IPPC Secretariat employees on even a *monthly* basis. Naturally, in the current global economic environment, such circumstances have the possibility of effecting employee performance and morale. Without clarity with regard to long term prospects, non-permanent staff logically would not consider themselves tied to the Secretariat and if offered a permanent position elsewhere would be likely to accept it.
5. While project posts offer a better opportunity at sustained staffing, and better accessibility to potential employees with an IPPC-related background, the positions will last only as long as the project exists. Resource mobilization and increased donor contributions can aid in addressing these issues to a certain extent; but due to the nature of this type of support, there may be limitations as to the work performed, as there are often specific tasks assigned by the donors which must be fulfilled. One possibility could be long term annual pledges to the IPPC Trust fund which would allow for the development of long term committed project posts. This is an approach that is being utilized by the Rotterdam Convention.
6. The Secretariat has also been fortunate recently receiving high quality APO support from the United States; regrettably this support has ended. This type of support has been extremely useful in that it has provided some staffing sustainability for a longer period of time, and the NPPO providing the APO will get, at the conclusion of the assignment, a staff member fully knowledgeable about the activities and operations of the IPPC. Additional in-kind support at the Secretariat has been provided by France and soon, Japan.
7. The SPG is invited to:
   * *note* the current staffing situation in the IPPC Secretariat, and
   * *consider and provide advice on* alternative strategies for ensuring sustained staffing.