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**Sea containers - Complementary Action Plan -
Positive Action to Address Potential Risks of the Spread of Pests Associated
with Shipping Containers**

Agenda item 8.6

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English only¹

¹ Translation in Chinese provided

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Positive Action to Address Potential Risks of the Spread of Pests Associated with Shipping Containers

I. Background: Five Recommendations made by China on April 7, 2016

1. During the Special Session on Sea Containers of CPM11, the Chinese experts introduced the China NPPO's experience concerning entry-exit sea container quarantine management and practice. The data showed that the sea containers with pests intercepted by China increased by almost 10 times in the past 11 years. Therefore, China thought that the unmentioned risks should not be neglected anymore and called for urgent IPPC's intervention. China made five recommendations including division of responsibilities for container cleanliness management, responsibilities of the NPPO, regulation of containers in hub ports, notification of non-compliance, and shipping companies benefit from ISPM on sea containers.
2. The recommendations made by China is in Attachment 1

II. What we have done after CPM 11

3. The Special Session on Sea Containers agreed to spend five years to assess and manage pest threat relevant to sea containers through a set of complementary action, and reconsider the standard draft preparation on "Minimizing Pest Spread by Sea Containers (2008-001)".
4. After CPM 11, China actively conducted the following works:
 - We submitted the suggestions to the CPM bureau meeting in June 2016, and most of China's suggestions were adopted in the "Complementary Action Plan".
 - We reaffirmed China's opinion on developing ISPM on sea containers in APPPC meeting in July 2016.
 - We organized an expert group in China, which focused on assessing and managing the pest threats associated with sea containers.
 - We started the project establishment and research for the national standards for plant quarantine of containers. At present, the expert group submitted 3 standard project establishment applications to the Standardization Administration of China, i.e. Rules for the Plant Quarantine of Entry Containers, Rules for the Plant Quarantine of Exit containers, and Guideline for the Establishment of Plant Quarantine and Epidemic Prevention System for Entry and Exit Container Depot.
 - We completed the translation draft on CTU CODE of 80,000 characters, and get

ready for the promotion of its implementation in China.

III. What we are going to do after CPM 12

5. We will recommend experts work for SCTF.
6. We will publicize the plant quarantine risks of sea containers to stakeholders, and guide the establishment of industry operation specifications fitted to national situation of China by promoting the implementation of CTU CODE.
7. We will carry out the study on assessing and managing the pest threats associated with sea containers and seek for bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

Attachment 1**Recommendations for the ISPM on Sea Containers by China****(I) Necessity for Development of Standards on sea Containers**

Sea containers are the major pathway of movement and spread of plant pests, invasive alien species and other organisms. No matter empty or loaded, the containers all are all exposed to biosecurity threats. The pests in loaded containers possibly come from loaded goods and other contaminated resources. The pests in empty containers come from incomplete unloading and contamination during depot. Here we don't take into account acts of smuggling using empty containers or ill-intentioned movement of wastes and contaminated items. Before boarding on ship, an inbound loaded container is cleaned interiorly. This is a definite requirement in CTU Code, and the consignor is highly concerned about it. Therefore, cleanliness of the interior part of an inbound loaded container before entry is guaranteed. Besides, due to concerns of North American countries over Gypsy moths, loaded containers exported from some Asian countries are also cleaned exteriorly before boarding. The inbound empty containers, however, are treated quite differently. Their cleaning and management after the last unloading and during depot in container yards involve many parties. According to our survey, shipping companies, wharf companies, container yards and consignees may all involve in the cleaning of a container after it is unloaded. However, due to lack of inspection before boarding, the cleanliness and management of an empty container is not guaranteed between unloading and stacking. Compared with loaded containers, the empty ones suffer a longer and more complicated transport routes, making them susceptible to multiple contaminations. These contaminated empty containers can only be cleaned before reloading. Thus the empty containers carry higher quarantine risks.

We are pleased to see the amendments to the CTU Code have positive effects on the reduction of pest risks through sea containers. However, from the perspective of sea container logistic management, the CTU Code has no binding force over the cleanliness management of exterior parts of loaded containers or empty containers, and the main reason is that no one is held accountable for this. This is a blank space the CTU Code has left in container cleanliness management; thus we need to develop a comprehensive ISPM to help the NPPO to monitor the cleanliness management of exterior parts of loaded containers and empty containers, and to fill the blank space of CTU Code.

(II) Five Considerations on Amendments to the Standard Draft

1. Division of Responsibilities for Container Cleanliness Management

After unloading and before reloading, an empty container should meet criteria of a clean container. Since shipping companies have contacts with both yards and consignees, they should take charge of the cleaning of the empty container, and may entrust yards or consignees to clean containers as appropriate. Kept in yards before board, empty containers should be cleaned in yards. Such arrangement is unlikely to disrupt the transport of sea containers. When the empty containers are kept in a yard, the yard should manage containers and maintain their cleanliness in accordance with the CTU Code.

Outbound loaded containers should also meet criteria of clean containers. Shipping companies should be responsible for their exterior cleaning while consignors for their phytosanitary status inside.

2. Responsibilities of the NPPO

NPPOs of contracting parties should establish country-specific regulation systems for container cleanliness management.

The NPPO of a country, where the departing port of a returning empty container is located, can issue a phytosanitary certificate for the empty container based on verification documents provided by a shipping company or a third-party company, whereby to certify that the container meets the cleanliness criteria and carries no quarantine pests. The NPPO of a country, where the port for reloading of a returning empty container is located, should check the compliance of the certificates by verifying the documents or by inspecting the container.

The NPPO of a country, where the departing port of an outbound loaded container is located, can issue a phytosanitary certificate for an outbound loaded container based on verification documents provided by a shipping company or a third-party company, whereby to certify that the exterior part of the container meets the cleanliness criteria and carries no quarantine pest. The NPPO of a country, where the port for unloading of an inbound container is located, should check the compliance of the certificates by verifying the documents or by inspecting the container.

3. Management of Containers in Hub Ports

A large number of containers, including loaded and empty containers which enter a hub port, change a ship and go to the next port. The time loaded containers stay in a hub port is usually very short. Therefore, it is suggested that the standard draft do not regulate whether the NPPO of the country where a hub port is located is entitled to conduct quarantine inspection to the exterior parts of the loaded transit containers, which shall be decided by the NPPO. The time empty containers stay in a hub port varies a lot, from 1 to 3 days for a short period, to 1 month or more for a longer period. The NPPO of a hub port country should re-issue a phytosanitary certificate for empty transit containers that stay in the hub port for more than 20 days.

4. Notification of Non-compliance

In case of non-compliance, the importing country can take measures or issue a notification in accordance with ISPMs 13 or 20.

5. Shipping Companies Benefit from ISPM on Sea Containers.

Since shipping companies are required to take charge of the cleaning of both the exterior part of outbound loaded containers and the empty containers, there should be provisions in the standard that can benefit them.

Inbound containers with phytosanitary certificates issued by the NPPO of an exporting country or region should be less spot-checked and enjoy more rapid customs clearance during entry.