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Facilitating safe trade for plants and plant products - Action Plan

Agenda item 8.5

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I. 2020-2021 Action Plan

1. At the thirteenth meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-13) in 2018 a draft of this paper was considered. However, a number of contracting parties requested more time to consider the subject and that the draft Trade Facilitation Action Plan be presented for review and discussion at the SPG meeting in October 2018.
2. At its meeting in October 2018, the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) reviewed the draft *Facilitating Safe Trade Action Plan* (the Plan) and decided to propose it for adoption by CPM-14 (2019). The final Plan is in [Attachment 1 to this paper](#). The Plan was renamed to better align it with the current draft IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030, and to distinguish it from the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Relevant elements of the draft IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and the associated draft 5-year investment plan have also been incorporated into this amended Plan.
3. The Plan brings together a number of existing and proposed priorities that facilitate safe trade and reflects implementation elements of the TFA. Activities to develop and implement commodity and pathway standards have also been included in the Plan as a trade facilitation initiative.
4. CPM is reminded that ePhyto and work on sea containers are funded, whereas e-Commerce and the International Trade Facilitation Conference are not. Project proposals are needed to identify necessary funds and to encourage donors to contribute extra-budgetary resources. The e-Commerce

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project work plan and budget referred to in this paper has been updated and incorporated into the Plan and is presented for CPM-14 (2019) decision at Agenda 8.7 (CPM 2019/16). Actions to develop the concept of commodity and pathway standards are proposed in another paper for CPM-14 (2019) decision (CPM 2019/27, Agenda 8.4).

5. The CPM is invited to:

- 1) *Discuss* the revised *Facilitating Safe Trade Action Plan*.
- 2) *Adopt* the *Facilitating Safe Trade Action Plan*.
- 3) *Encourage* contracting parties to contribute extra-budgetary resources through the multi-donor trust fund to support the implementation of unfunded elements of the *Facilitating Safe Trade Action Plan*.

Attachment 1**Facilitating Safe Trade****2019 – 2021 Action Plan****I. Description**

- [1] The World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) was ratified on 22 February 2017. The Agreement prescribes the rights and obligations on signatories to harmonise border actions to facilitate the movement of goods. The World Customs Organization (WCO) and World Bank Group (WBG) have taken the lead in facilitating the global implementation of the TFA in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- [1] Activities of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) to implement their obligations under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) will overlap with those of other border agencies, particularly around the inspection and clearance of goods, passengers, mail and courier parcels.
- [2] The TFA includes elements that are already practiced or are under development by the IPPC community. These include risk-based interventions, authorization of third parties, e-Commerce, electronic transmission of phytosanitary certificates (ePhyto) and systems approaches (safe or trusted traders). The international movement of sea containers is of common interest to many countries.
- [3] The CPM Bureau agreed in June 2017 that a summary regarding the TFA¹, with an IPPC Action Plan for the next 3 years be drafted for review and adoption by the CPM. The Action Plan is expected to direct implementation of the TFA with regards to e-Commerce, ePhyto, sea containers, commodity and pathway standards, the IPPC-WCO Cooperation Agreement and collaboration in capacity building, within the framework created by the draft IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030. The plan will culminate in an IPPC Secretariat organized conference in 2021 dedicated to plant health and the implementation of the TFA.

II. Strategic context/alignment

- [4] The *Facilitating Safe Trade 2019-2021 Action Plan* (the Plan) provides a summary of IPPC Community activities that help facilitate safe trade. It draws on the draft Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and incorporates actions and outcomes through 2019 to 2021 for new or existing projects including ePhyto, eCommerce, sea containers, commodity and pathway standards, and risk-based inspection.

III. Outcomes

- [5] This Plan will give visibility to activities that are undertaken by the IPPC Secretariat, alone and potentially in collaboration with the WCO and other relevant international organizations as well as representatives of industry, to help facilitate safe trade in plants and plant products, to help reduce the international spread of pests.

1. IPPC-WCO Cooperation Agreement

¹ CPM June 2017 Bureau Report

- [6] The Cooperation Agreement between the IPPC Secretariat and the WCO was signed on 19 June 2018. It promotes cooperation on matters of common interest that help facilitate the international trade of plants and plant products in a safe and efficient manner. It supports the exchange of documents and publications, and information on events and activities that may be of mutual interest, and provides a platform for regular consultation on policy issues. Each organization will participate as an observer at relevant meetings or events and may also agree to engage in joint activities in accordance with internal regulations and rules and subject to available resources.
- [7] A joint WCO-IPPC Secretariat work plan is under development and includes:
- exploring opportunities to organize joint events especially in the context of TFA implementation,
 - promotion of communication and advocacy and
 - cooperation on: e-Commerce, electronic data exchange (ePhyto), sea containers, single window and the use of the WCO Time Release Study tool

The IPPC Secretariat through FAO, in consultation with the Bureau, may enter into agreements with other international organisations in the interests of facilitating safe trade at the global level. This may include cooperation agreements with the World Bank Group (WBG), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and World Trade Organization. These are in addition to cooperation agreements/MoUs that are already established with other Secretariats such as with the Secretariat of the CBD or the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) represented by the Ozone Secretariat. .

2. ePhyto

- [8] The IPPC ePhyto Solution Project will facilitate multilateral electronic certificate exchanges based upon a single, harmonized communication protocol, eliminating the cost and complexity of multiple bilateral exchange protocols. A simple web-based Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS) to issue, send and receive electronic phytosanitary certificates, for those countries that do not have an existing national system, has been developed for global implementation. Ultimately, the combination of these two systems, known as ‘the ePhyto Solution’, will make it easier for countries - especially those with limited resources - to exchange electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos).
- [9] Priority areas for the development and integration of ePhyto in trade are harmonization, collaboration, implementation and sustainability. Actions to 2021 include:
- Completion of the STDF project, ensuring the sustainability of the ePhyto Hub and GeNS
 - Guidance for implementation, e.g. legislation, technical specifications, operating model, capacity development and business process change tools
 - CPM adoption of a five year implementation plan (2019–2023), including development and implementation of an ePhyto business model, including funding options
 - Implementation targets
 - A Global Symposium in 2020
 - Collaboration with the World Bank including integration with single window concepts through global partnerships (WB and WCO)
 - Consideration of expanding the scope of the hub to include eSPS certificates (animal health, food safety)

3. e-Commerce

- [10] In April 2017, the twelfth meeting of the CPM held a special topics session on e-Commerce and requested the Bureau to develop a way forward, including resource considerations. Following a teleconference on e-Commerce with a number of organizations, it became evident that a lack of

knowledge on phytosanitary import and export regulations amongst stakeholders plays a major role in non-compliance of goods that are purchased on-line.

- [11] The Bureau in their June 2017 meeting agreed² that the TFA provided a platform for working through e-Commerce issues and a range of actions.
- [12] The IPPC e-Commerce Project Work Plan and Budget (e-Commerce plan) has been developed to coordinate international efforts to address the spread of pests and pest host material sold through e-Commerce and distributed through mail and courier pathways. This objective is aligned with those of the draft IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030.
- [13] The implementation of the e-Commerce plan through collaborative partnerships between NPPOs, the IPPC Secretariat and WCO Secretariat and commercial operators involved in e-Commerce will demonstrably reduce the incidence of pests and other phytosanitary risks on and in goods traded through e-Commerce. Key outcomes include:
- The phytosanitary risks associated with e-Commerce are identified and defined
 - NPPOs and relevant stakeholders are informed of these risks
 - Measures that NPPOs can take to raise awareness in the public and among e-Commerce participants of risks from online trading and the responsibilities that these stakeholders have to comply with laws to protect crop and food production, natural environment and trade, are identified and described
 - IPPC Secretariat activities link with and ultimately support a multidisciplinary and integrated approach across NPPOs, Customs and other relevant government agencies to facilitate safe trade via e-Commerce transactions.
- [14] The implementation of the e-Commerce work plan will require coordination to support and drive the proposed activities. This coordination and the participation of the IPPC Secretariat and relevant experts must be funded from extra-budgetary resources.

4. Sea Container Task Force

- [15] At CPM-12 (2017) a "set of complementary actions" was agreed, which offer value in assessing and managing the pest threats associated with sea containers. The actions complement the implementation of the IMO/International Labour Organization (ILO)/The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units Code (CTU code)³ and CPM Recommendation R-06 on Sea Containers⁴ to address the risks of sea containers being contaminated and introducing pests and diseases to new areas as they move in trade.
- [16] Central to the Complementary Action Plan endorsed by the CPM is the Sea Container Task Force SCTF, which is operating under the oversight of the CPM Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC). The SCTF will measure the impact of the CTU Code until 2021, increase awareness of

² June 2017 Bureau meeting report, available at: https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2017/08/Bureau_Report_2017_June-2017-08-01_NEW.pdf

³ IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code) - http://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/safety/cargoes/cargo_securing/pages/ctu-code.aspx

⁴ CPM Recommendation R-06 on Sea containers; available at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/84233>

pest risks of sea containers and facilitate the collection and sharing of information to assist NPPOs better manage these risks.

[17] The SCTF is facilitating the implementation of the actions in the Sea Container Complementary Action Plan and is complementing them with other actions including:

- providing information on pest risks of sea containers and their management;
- coordinating with CPs, RPPOs, industry and other international organizations;
- establishing a mechanism for CPs to report to CPM on their progress and achievements;
- providing advice on how the CTU Code or any other instrument could be updated;
- providing, through the IC, updates on its activities to be presented annually to the CPM, as well as a final report for presentation to CPM-16 (2021).

[18] A multiyear action plan of the SCTF was developed in November 2017 at its first meeting and has been updated since⁵. There are several areas where the implementation of the SCTF Action Plan potentially connects with the WCO, IMO, WBG and industry. This includes access to the container database maintained by the WCO to record container maintenance and safety; integrating any proposed programs to better manage container hygiene at sea ports with Customs operations; identifying and using any shared communications or messaging with national governments for safe and secure movement of sea containers, as well as incorporating CTU cleanliness among the selection criteria for the container inspection programmes and involving the industry into promotion of CTU code Cleanliness aspects to shippers/packers.

5. Commodity and Pathway Standards

[19] Significant advances in facilitating safe trade would be made if standards (ISPMs) were developed that established harmonized pest risk management options for the major pests or major groups of pests associated with a commodity or a pathway. Countries would still be free to negotiate measures for pests of concern not properly covered by the commodity or pathway specific ISPM, if this was technically justified.

[20] The draft IPPC Strategic Framework 2020–2030 has identified the benefits of developing commodity and pathway standards to facilitate trade. It notes that the IPPC community can respond to changes in demands for products that are driven by the global trading system and international markets by generating commodity and pathway specific standards that will facilitate safe trade and reflect both traditional and changing business practices for the international movement of plants and plant products. These standards would be accompanied by pest-specific diagnostic protocols, phytosanitary treatments, surveillance methods, risk-based sampling provisions and other guidance material to help countries to fully implement new standards. The commodity- and pathway-specific ISPMs may also include provisions for verification, such as audits.

[21] In October 2018, a Focus Group on Commodity and Pathway Standards developed this concept, and defined the purpose, benefits and outcomes of commodity and pathway standards. A proposal to CPM-14 (2019) (CPM 2019/27) recommends the acceptance of the concept by contracting parties, and agreement to facilitate the ongoing development and implementation of these standards.

[22] The timeline and proposed activities by this Focus Group would see it present a draft standard on the concept, framework and governance for the development and use of commodity and pathway standards to CPM-15 (2020). This will be accompanied by a draft commodity or pathway standard to illustrate their benefit and utility. The concept standard will be recommended to CPM-16 (2021) for adoption and the first draft commodity or pathway standards presented for approval for consultation.

⁵ SCTF multiyear plan available at: https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2018/06/SCTF_multiyear_plan.pdf

6. The Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy

The Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) is a process developed and managed by the IPPC Secretariat for a country to undertake a self-diagnostic to identify both strengths and weaknesses in its existing phytosanitary systems. The process is implemented through a consensus driven and confidential process involving concerned stakeholders (public and private). It usually leads to the revision of the legislation or regulation and to the production of a national phytosanitary capacity development strategy. Strengthening the phytosanitary system will pave the way to enhance trade facilitation. Having taken ownership of this strategy to strengthen the phytosanitary system, a country may approach donors to fund relevant activities.

The IC is currently developing a strategy for the PCE. The implementation of this strategy is part of this work plan for facilitating safe trade.

7. International Safe Trade Facilitation Conference 2021

- [23] An IPPC Secretariat organized conference, planned for 2021, will be dedicated to plant health and the implementation of the Plan and will provide a focal point for short to medium term outcomes that may be included in the IPPC-WCO joint work plan, as well as providing a mechanism to assess the current status and future directions of programs such as ePhyto, e-Commerce, commodity and pathway standards and sea containers.

IV. Benefits

- [24] The outcomes sought will contribute to harmonising the management of phytosanitary risks in the interests of facilitating safe trade, along with establishing a collaboration platform with other border agencies, particularly Customs.

V. Approach

- [25] This Plan will provide the frame of reference for activities that will contribute the effective implementation of the TFA in collaboration with other border agencies, including Customs.

VI. Products

- [26] Products developed from priority activities in the lead up to proposed the September 2021 International Safe Trade Facilitation Conference are as follows:

| | Action | Who | When |
|---|--|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | IPPC-WCO Cooperation Agreement Joint work plan | Secretariat | June 2018 July 2018 |
| 2 | ePhyto Hub – go live GeNS prototype available for piloting GeNS – go live ePhyto 5-year plan – draft CPM-14 endorsement International Symposium Expansion of country participation Scope expansion of Hub to eSPS | ePhyto Steering Group | Mid- 2018 Late- 2018 Early – mid-2019 October 2018 April 2019 2020 2019 Ongoing |
| 3 | e-Commerce Draft project plan Convene ad hoc working group Implement the agreed work programme | Bureau | October 2018 May 2019 Ongoing |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| 4 | <p>Commodity and pathway standards</p> <p>CPM-14 agreement to progress</p> <p>Focus Group meet to draft concept standard and governance</p> <p>Bureau/SPG/IC/SC review draft</p> <p>CPM-15 adopt concept and agree to circulate the concept standard for consultation</p> <p>Adoption of concept standard and first draft commodity standard agreed for consultation at CPM-16</p> | Focus Group on Commodity and Pathway Standards | <p>April 2019</p> <p>June 2019</p> <p>Late 2019</p> <p>April 2020</p> <p>April 2021</p> |
| 5 | <p>Sea Containers Task Force</p> <p>The development of a joint IPPC / International Maritime Organization (IMO) / industry protocol for the collection of data related to contamination of sea containers</p> <p>Monitoring of the CTU Code uptake by NPPOs and industry</p> <p>Collecting and analysing data on sea containers cleanliness</p> <p>Providing advice on how the CTU code or any other instrument could be updated</p> <p>Providing the final report to CPM -16 (2021)</p> | SCTF | Ongoing |