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منظمة  
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# COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

## Fifteenth Session

**Virtual Meeting, 16, 18 March and 1 April 2021**

**CPM authorization for the CPM Bureau to operate on its behalf during 2021 - Role of the CPM Bureau and IPPC Secretariat during times of emergencies or crises**

## Agenda item 19

**Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat and the CPM Bureau**

1. COVID-19 has been an unexpected situation. No current Rules of Procedure, nor any other FAO procedures include provisions on how to maintain the effective operation of the IPPC and its governing bodies, in situations in which travel is not feasible.
2. The CPM Bureau and the IPPC Secretariat have been confronted with the following dilemma: to refrain from doing anything that is not specifically foreseen by current procedures, let time pass by while we wait for a return to normality and accept that the progress of the IPPC work plan would be limited to only those things that CPM had already agreed; or proactively taking responsibility to advance the work of the IPPC by taking decisions and acting in anticipation of CPM agreement at some future point in time.
3. Plant pests are not taking a break from the pandemic, trade needs to continue to be supported and facilitated to sustain national economies and ensuring food gets to markets and peoples' tables.
4. The CPM Bureau, IPPC Secretariat, the various IPPC working groups, committees continued working during 2020 to keep operations alive and the IPPC work advancing.
5. To ensure continued effectiveness during 2021, again under virtual and remote working conditions, the CPM Bureau needs CPM support in endorsing active leadership by the Bureau to direct the IPPC work in 2021.
6. Examples of continuous effectiveness of the IPPC in times of emergencies can be shown from observing the reality of the CPM Bureau's and IPPC Secretariat's work during 2020. The lessons learnt

during 2020 show that governing actions need to take place in order to advance the complex IPPC work plan.

7. The CPM Bureau concurs that not advancing is not an option. During this period of disruption the Bureau has continued to take decisions on actions that were urgent and important, but also administrative and operational to ensure that the work is not stopped. Such decisions are detailed in the CPM Bureau reports, which are publicly available on the IPPC website. It is clear that decisions like adopting International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) or CPM Recommendations remain under the exclusive authority of CPM. However, practically many other type of decisions need to be taken by the CPM Bureau. Making frequent use of the already established mechanisms of consultations by CPM Bureau members with their constituents will continue to be pursued.

8. The CPM Bureau has a legal responsibility, as governing body, to advance the tasks that have been mandated by the CPM. An abbreviated CPM-15 will be occurring virtually in March/April 2021. One approach that has been applied during 2020, and could be repeated in the future, is that the CPM Bureau would take reasonable decisions, which would then be communicated to IPPC contracting parties. Decisions would be in line with decisions taken at CPM-15 but may have to extend beyond the scope of CPM-15 decisions due the abbreviated scope of the CPM-15 agenda. The observance of a period of two weeks between a CPM Bureau decision and action would be applied. If no objections were voiced in the given timeframe, the CPM Bureau would be entitled to proceed with the actions that result from the decisions taken. And by the same token, the IPPC Secretariat would be in the position to operate accordingly under the direction of the CPM Bureau.

9. The CPM is invited to endorse and support the CPM Bureau in:

- 1) *Advising* the IPPC Secretariat on administrative and operational matters necessary to continue advancing the CPM-approved initiatives being carried out by the various IPPC staff, committees, focus groups and working groups;
- 2) *Addressing* and making any other operational related decision necessary to ensure the IPPC work plan and CPM agenda are addressed in an efficient and timely fashion, including ensuring that funding is directed to CPM approved work plan activities, as well as resolving any administrative or procedural issues that may hinder or impede CPM agreed work activities from progressing;
- 3) *Providing* advice and direction to subsidiary bodies to enable them to progress their work.
- 4) *Seeking* CPM concurrence electronically on decisions or issues that the Chairperson of the CPM Bureau may consider sufficiently important or sensitive to require CPM awareness and engagement (using a two-week silence consent procedure).