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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

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Report from the CPM Chairperson (including update on CPM Focus Group on Strengthening pest outbreak alert and response systems)

Agenda item 6

Prepared by the CPM Chairperson

1. On December 2 of 2019, the start of the IYPH was announced at FAO headquarters by Director General of FAO Mr. Qu Dongyu. Over the following months, unexpected events had taken place around the world, COVID-19 pandemic, which changed the planned initiatives by contracting parties. CPM-15 has been moved from 2020 to 2021, to be held through teleconference, resulting from a poll conducted among CPs in December 2020 and January 2021.
2. Various IYPH events took place in 184 countries during the rest of 2020, to ensure the visibility of plant health in the eyes of decision makers who have authority over national plant protection organizations (NPPOs), as well as the private sector whose operations require compliance with International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), and of course, for each NPPO to reiterate its commitment to adherence to the international convention that brings them together.
3. The operation of NPPOs, aligned with the standards developed by the IPPC, makes the difference between taking care of or not taking proper care of the plants, agricultural and wild resources of each country, and as a whole, of the world. The correct operation of an NPPO contributes to the fulfilment of at least seven Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDGs 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 15 and 17. The availability of 43 ISPMs that are aligned to the principles of international trade and biodiversity organizations has favoured the development of international trade in agricultural and forestry goods, while protecting the world's plant resources from pests.
4. Despite the robustness of the standard setting process, the widespread implementation of each standard by its 184 contracting parties, is still an unfinished task. For example, in the case of a fundamental standard, such as ISPM 6 (Guidelines for surveillance), a pilot project that has been carried out in recent years, showing that the degree of implementation among the 184 contracting parties is still incomplete. The solid structure and leadership recently acquired by the Implementation and Capacity

Development Committee is a clear sign of maturity of the IPPC capacity for delivering results that are a clear priority under the Strategic Framework to be adopted by CPM-15.

5. CPM-15 is expected to adopt the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and with that, it will begin the development of commodity standards, after several standards have been developed that establish concepts and procedures, as well as a small number of commodity standards (the most notable is the ISPM 15 that establishes the condition under which the international movement of wooden pallets is safe). It is expected that the commodity standards will make the process of establishing export and import requirements more efficient. These new standards are meant to be practical deliverables of CPM, which should facilitate trade, while making it safer.

6. Indicators on the recognition of the work carried out by the CPM by the FAO governing bodies and management are observed. For instance, the Council approved in December 2018 an additional financial contribution, from the regular program, of five hundred thousand dollars, thus strengthening recent progress that have been achieved in matters of implementation: electronic certification is a reality for dozens of NPPOs. Additional resources are available to the IPPC Secretariat by means of the savings resulting from absence of travel during pandemic period, or cancellation of various activities. However, important tasks that are charged to the Secretariat remain in the responsibility of personnel that does not hold a regular and continuing FAO position.

7. The CPM-14 adopted two ISPMs, six diagnostic protocols (DPs) as Annexes to ISPM 27 (Diagnostic protocols for regulated pests) and some others standards that were reviewed. All these standards were based on the contribution of prominent scientific specialists and national experts in the field of plant protection as well as countries that hosted meetings along the year, whose expert work, generosity and dedication I greatly appreciate.

8. COVID-19 prevented CPM-15 to take place in 2020, so the CPM Bureau decided to examine ways to progress the annual IPPC work plan to the extent that both FAO procedures and CPM Rules of Procedure allowed. Besides, in the absence of explicit mechanisms for governance in an emergency situation such as the one created by COVID-19, NPPOs were consulted on procedures for Bureau to advance the program as much as possible. The Bureau developed a position in regards to Authority and Decision-Making role for the Bureau on behalf of the CPM during the COVID-19 crisis. The Bureau met virtually every month of 2020, starting from April. The decisions made during this period have been reported as usual. The ones that are worth highlighting in this report, are the following:

9. During the April meeting, four areas were deemed to be procedural and urgent; hence, discussion by the Bureau took place about being potential points to be placed under the authority of the CPM Bureau:

- CPM recommendations on food aid and on contaminating pests
- Extending the reporting period of the Sea Containers Task Force from 2020 to 2021.
- Continuation of work on the Pest Outbreak Alert and Response System, and
- Progress the work on commodity standards.

10. During the May meeting, it was agreed to develop an official communication to all Contracting Parties on the proposed course of action that the CPM Bureau would take to help ensure the continuity of work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, the Bureau supported the IPPC Secretariat towards organizing IYPH events through the remainder of the year and through 1 July 2021.

11. During the June Bureau meeting, the Bureau endorsed 12 May as the date for the establishment of an International Day of Plant Health and requested the Secretariat to inform FAO and the FAO Committee on Agriculture, about the Bureau's support for the proposal. Besides, it was decided to organize a virtual meeting with all the IPPC contracting parties, to brief them informally.

12. During the July meeting, the Bureau decided to continue acting on behalf of the CPM with wisdom by taking decisions through virtual means, properly informing and communicating all relevant information with IPPC contracting parties. One decision taken was to extend the mandate of the Sea Container Task Force for one additional year, until the end of 2021.

13. Another decision taken was to establish a CPM Focus Group on Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems; the Bureau reviewed and provided comments on proposed Terms of Reference (TOR), which were later approved through an e-Decision. These TOR are presented in Appendix 1. A paper on this issue was also presented to the SPG (2020) and a Call for experts for this focus group was opened on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) from 24 September until 22 November 2020.

14. Twenty-eight (28) excellent nominations were received and the Bureau reviewed the nominees against the criteria laid out in the TOR. The CPM Bureau selected the following experts to be part of the FG, listed in alphabetical order by last name:

- Ms Catherine ABADIE, CIRAD (Network of researchers)
- Ms Kitty CARDWELL, ISPP (Network of researchers)
- Ms Mariangela CIAMPITTI, SC Representative
- Mr Nitesh DATT, South-West Pacific region
- Mr Roger DAY, CABI (International Organization)
- Ms Eleonora DUPOUY, FAO/WHO (International Organization)
- Mr Walter ENKERLIN, FAO/IAEA (International Organization)
- Mr Keith HAMILTON, OIE (International Organization)
- Mr Lucien KOUAME KONAN, CPM Bureau Representative
- Ms Olga LAVRENTJEVA, IC Representative
- Ms Xiaonan LI, Asia region
- Ms Mireille MARCOTTE, North-America region
- Mr Hector Emilio MEDINA, Latin America and the Caribbean region
- Ms Panagiota MYLONA, Europe region
- Mr Carlos URIAS, RPPO expert (OIRSA)
- Mr Jan Hendrik VENTER, Africa region

15. Virtual meetings of the Focus Group are foreseen to be organized monthly from mid-January 2021 until July 2021. The CPM Bureau met twice in September 2020 to discuss the IPPC positioning in the new FAO structure, the role of the CPM Bureau in the selection of the new IPPC Secretary, and preparations for the 2020 Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meeting. The discussion triggered sending of a letter from the CPM Chairperson to the FAO Deputy Director-General Ms Beth BECHDOL underlining the key elements of what needed to be address in the positioning of the IPPC Secretariat within FAO, and the role of the CPM Bureau in the selection of the IPPC Secretary.

16. At the October meeting, the Bureau discussed preparations for the SPG, which would be focused on the sequencing and implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and its eight development agenda items.

17. At the November meeting, the Bureau agreed to initiate the necessary arrangements to hold CPM-15 according to a new schedule through virtual means.

18. At the December meeting, the Bureau revised the CPM-15 agenda according to the new proposed modality and recent developments, and decided to proceed with the proposals to CPM-15 (2021) to establish the following three CPM Focus Groups on:

- Implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 development agenda items, with Mr Peter Thomson as CPM Bureau Representative.

- Impact of climate change on phytosanitary matters, with Ms Marica Gatt as CPM Bureau Representative.
- Communications to review and update the IPPC Communication Strategy (2013-2018) aligning it with the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030.

19. During the meeting, the CPM Bureau selected experts for the Focus Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems, as shown in the text below, as per the Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1 below) and nominated Mr Lucien Konan Kuamé as the CPM Representative for the focus group.

20. The CPM is invited to:

- 1) *Note* the report from the CPM Chairperson, including decisions taken by the CPM Bureau by virtual means throughout 2020.
- 2) *Note* that the CPM Bureau, on behalf of the CPM established a CPM Focus Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems.
- 3) *Note* that the CPM Bureau approved the Terms of Reference for a CPM Focus Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems, attached as Appendix 1 to this paper.
- 4) *Note* the composition of the CPM Focus Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems as selected by the CPM Bureau.

Appendix 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CPM FOCUS GROUP ON STRENGTHENING PEST OUTBREAK ALERT RESPONSE SYSTEMS

1. Background

1. A Development Agenda identified in the IPPC Strategic Framework (2020-2030) is entitled “Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems”¹. A CPM paper was prepared which proposed initial steps towards Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems.

2. The desired outcome for this Development Agenda is that a global pest alert system, with mechanisms to evaluate and communicate emerging pest risks, is in place, providing regular information to NPPOs on changes in pest status around the world. NPPOs are using this to quickly adapt their phytosanitary systems to reduce the risk of introduction and spread. In case of outbreaks, strengthened pest outbreak response systems and tools will help countries take much more timely action against especially new incursions. NPPOs, RPPOs and the FAO have collaborated to develop and roll out a comprehensive but easy to use toolbox to support countries responding quickly and effectively. RPPOs are playing an active role to assist NPPOs and coordinate outbreak responses across their regions.

3. The CPM generally recognizes the long standing objectives laid out in the IPPC to promote and ensure timely communications on changing pest status and emerging threats. The new and more challenging aspect for the IPPC Community, however, is developing a practical and feasible approach for assisting NPPOs or RPPOs to respond to major pest incursions or introductions. This has to be considered in the context of the Convention’s obligations and the resource and capacity constraints of NPPOs, RPPOs and the IPPC Secretariat.

2. Process

4. A CPM Focus Group would meet virtually and complete the tasks outlined below. The report of this meeting will include recommendations on how to Strengthen Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems and would be presented to the CPM via the SPG.

3. Composition of the FG and criteria for selection of experts

5. The focus group is skills and knowledge based and should be composed of:

- at least one expert from each FAO region,
- at least one expert from an RPPO,
- at least two experts representing entities involved in monitoring and responding to outbreaks such as the CBD, FAO, OIE, World Bank Group, World Health Organization, etc.
- one representative from each of the Bureau, IC and SC
- noting experts may represent more than one role

6. Criteria for experts, they should have combined expertise and knowledge in:

- working with outbreaks,
- designing and managing outbreak alert systems,
- designing and managing outbreak response systems,
- phytosanitary systems related to pests outbreaks,
- existing global and/or regional outbreak frameworks, and

¹ <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/89170/>

- addressing issues related to invasive species.

7. A call for experts will be made by the IPPC Secretariat and nominations will be reviewed against the above criteria. Experts will be recommended to the Bureau. The Bureau will review and select the experts.

4. Tasks

8. Considering the indicative budgeted action plan for Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems noted by CPM-14 (2019), the CPM Focus Group will:

- identify and review existing material and experiences on the topic,
- discuss and agree on the components necessary for an efficient and effective programme to Strengthen Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems, considering the pre-requisite for an effective global alert system is an effective NPPO system, including timely detection and diagnosis of new pests,
- examine the practicalities need for such a system including legal frameworks and liability issues for the IPPC Secretariat and FAO for distributing pest alert information, and consider how legal risk can be managed,
- review and clarify the roles of the FAO, the IPPC Secretariat, RPPOs, NPPOs, and other prominent institutions that are, or have been, involved in coordinating or supporting pest response programs, and how these entities may be positioned to work in a coordinated fashion in the future,
- establish broad criteria for a pest to be considered in the framework of the programme (considering the RPPOs' work in this regard),
- identify efficient methods for early identification of outbreaks and communication of alerts to NPPOs,
- identify and prioritise the systems and tools that may be most useful to RPPOs and NPPOs who might be involved in a pest outbreak and consider how to efficiently establish a toolbox as a resource for NPPOs,
- review how Contracting Parties could meet their National Reporting Obligations (NROs) in a timely manner and recommend changes to contribute to Strengthen a Pest Outbreak Alert System,
- recommend processes NPPOs could use to rapidly engage expertise and response resources,
- consider what tools are needed for the Pest Outbreak Alert and Response system and propose a way to present them, and if needed develop them,
- review and refine the action plan to Strengthen Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems considering the focus group discussions and inputs from the CPM Bureau, the TC-RPPO, the SPG, the IC and the SC,
- consider and estimate the resources required to establish and then operate a pest outbreak and alert system with components as determined in 2) above.

5. Organization of the Focus Group meeting

9. The IPPC Secretariat will organize the FG meeting virtually, using available virtual tools. The meeting shall be held in English.

6. References

CPM-14 (2020) Report²

IPPC Strategic Framework (2020-2030)³

FAO Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES)⁴

FAO Emergencies – Plant Pests and Diseases⁵

² https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2019/07/CPM-14_Report_withISPMs-2019-07-31.pdf

³ <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/89170/>

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/empres.html>

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/emergency-types/plant-pests-and-diseases/en/>