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Update on IPPC communications - Report on Communication and
Advocacy of the IPPC Secretariat

Agenda item 14.1

Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat

1. The purpose of this document is to report on communication and advocacy activities undertaken by the IPPC Secretariat in 2019 and 2020 within the framework of the IPPC Communication and Advocacy Work Plan for 2016-2020 approved by CPM-11 (2016)¹, and to present a communication and advocacy action plan for 2021.

I. Report on Communication and advocacy activities carried out by the IPPC Secretariat in 2019

2. In 2019, IPPC Secretariat organized a series of communication, advocacy and information management initiatives in the framework of the IPPC annual theme on “Plant Health and Capacity Development”² and in the path towards the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) in 2020³.

3. Activities related to the celebration of the annual theme included a keynote address delivered by the European Commission’s Director-General for Health and Food Safety, a special topic session, and a side event on the theme during CPM-14 (April 2019), and an additional IPPC seminar in October

¹ See Appendix 12 to CPM-11 Report:

https://www.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2016/07/Report_CPM-11_2016-07-19_withISPMs-revised.pdf

² Ref. <https://www.ippc.int/en/themes/capacity-development/>

³ Ref. <https://www.ippc.int/en/iypH/> and www.fao.org/plant-health-2020/

2019 attended by 90 participants⁴. The IPPC Secretariat published seven videos in 2019, which were watched 7 000 times on IPPC channels.

4. In 2019, the Integration and Support Team (IST) of the IPPC Secretariat engaged with the FAO Office for Corporate Communication to increase the quality and outreach of its communications.

5. New publications adhering to FAO corporate standards included: the 2018 IPPC annual report; one brochure on ePhyto; seven new factsheets on ePhyto, Implementation and Capacity Development (ICD) guides and training materials, plant health and environmental protection and plant health and capacity development; three new guides on surveillance, pest risk communication and pest free areas; an IPPC banner; two folders; and the 2019 and 2020 table calendars⁵, in addition to the communication materials produced for the IYPH 2020. These publications were widely distributed at IPPC meetings throughout the year and shared via the FAO publications page, the FAO weekly newsletters and the FAO 2019 publications manual.

6. IPPC communications resulted in enhanced prestige of media reach (with articles published on UN News, FAO homepage, Reuters, Ansa, Daily Mail, ReliefWeb, among others), and better quality of its headline news, published in a more newsworthy fashion. The IPPC headline news released in 2019 amounted to a record number of 118, with a record number of 86 announcements.

7. The revised International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) was launched on 20 December 2019 with a brand new structure and layout, and renewed contents that ensure readability and access to the various website sections. The restructured IPP homepage as well as news and announcements are now available in all six FAO official languages. The IPP restructuring was based on user feedback and on the template presented by the IPPC Secretariat at CPM-14 (2019). In July 2020 the IPP website migrated from the old Server to a new Amazon Cloud Server (AWS). The system is working but there was an occasional issue if the system is overloaded with a high volume of multiple requests, responding with a timeout error. Colleagues from the FAO CSI division, in coordination with the responsible people in the IPPC Secretariat, discovered that a software and environment upgrade of the IPP was necessary, along with the use of a new architectural storage for files and images to fully operate and obtain AWS advantages fully. In the last months of 2020, the IPPC Secretariat worked to upgrade the IPPC website to use the latest version of software and related packages and environment, allowing the implementation of the suggested architectural change to store the files, which should result in a gradual improvement of IPP performances as all stored files become available through the new AWS.

8. The IPPC Online Commenting System (OCS) was also upgraded to a new version with no cost implications⁶. 82 IPPC contracting parties and partners used the OCS in 2019 for submitting comments on draft standards and specifications, draft outlines and the draft Ministerial declaration on plant health.

9. Social media content generated by the IPPC Secretariat also reached wider audiences. Social media followers raised at 640 (increasing by 39%) on LinkedIn, 4 100 (increasing by 74%) on Twitter, and 8 376 (increasing by 86%) on Facebook, respectively⁷. As per the IPP, it was visited by 354 111 users throughout 2019 (with a 42% increase compared to 2018).

10. The launch event for the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) took place in Rome on 2 December 2019, which also enhanced awareness of the IPPC.

⁴ Ref. <https://www.ippc.int/en/who-we-are/ippc-seminars/>

⁵ Latest IPPC publications available at <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/>

⁶ Ref. IPP news on OCS upgrade: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/a-new-version-of-the-ippc-online-comment-system-launched-today-for-opening-of-2019-consultations/>

⁷ Ref. IPPC social media accounts: <https://twitter.com/ippcnews>, <https://www.facebook.com/ippcheadlines/>, <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3175642/>

11. Overall, the impact of IPPC Secretariat communications has increased in numerical range and quality of the products and initiatives, which are now fully compliant with FAO policies and standards.

II. Report on Communication and advocacy activities carried out by the IPPC Secretariat for 2020

12. A large number of initiatives were undertaken for the IYPH 2020 at the global, regional and national level. A report of IYPH activities has been published under the relevant CPM-15 agenda item, while a full list of events and communication materials is available on the IYPH website⁸.

13. In 2020, the IPPC Secretariat coordinated the production of about 100 publications. These include the brochures providing an overview of the IPPC standard setting procedure and on reducing the spread of invasive pests by sea containers, available in all FAO languages; six thematic factsheets in all FAO languages (on IPPC, plant health and food security, plant health and trade facilitation, plant health and environmental protection, plant health and capacity development, and sea containers), revised versions of the five ePhyto factsheets in all FAO languages; two IPPC guides on sea containers; eight IPPC guides translated into French in cooperation with the Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP); and IYPH-related publications. The IPPC Secretariat, in cooperation with FAO, also produced seventeen videos, available in the IPPC and IYPH playlists on the FAO YouTube channel.

14. Increased efforts were made on producing informative news for both the IPPC and on the FAO websites. Three podcasts were also produced and published on the United Nations and FAO podcast channels.

15. Social media content generated by the IPPC Secretariat also reached wider audiences. Social media followers raised at 793 on LinkedIn (increasing by 23.9%), 6 690 on Twitter (increasing by 63%), and 25 678 on Facebook (increasing by 206%). As per the IPP, it was visited by 384 618 users throughout 2020 (with a 8.6% increase compared to 2019).

16. Standardization of communication and advocacy procedures, materials and tools of the IPPC Secretariat continued in 2020 under the coordination of the IST.

III. Communication and Advocacy Action Plan for 2021

17. As the IPPC Communication Strategy expired in 2018, the Strategic Planning Group proposed the establishment of a CPM Focus Group on Communications, tasked with overseeing the development and implementation of a new IPPC Communication Strategy.

18. If endorsed by CPM-15, the CPM Focus Group on Communication will meet throughout 2021 in accordance with its Terms of Reference to initiate the development for the IPPC Communication Strategy 2022-2030, which would be presented to CPM-16 (2022).

19. For 2021, the IPPC Secretariat developed an IPPC publications plan in line with previous years, and has planned for the development of web and social media contents in line with the 2021 IPPC work plan and budget.

20. Key initiatives include communication efforts towards CPM-15, the launch of the study on climate change impacts on plant health (1 June 2021), the first International Plant Health Conference (28 June-1 July 2021), and the closing event of the IYPH (1 July 2021), as well support to the youth declaration on plant health and various IPPC thematic webinars. The IPPC Secretariat will also

⁸ Ref. IYPH website: <http://www.fao.org/plant-health-2020>

coordinate efforts for the proclamation of an International Day of Plant Health and preparations for its first celebration on 12 May 2022, should the United Nations General Assembly approve its observance.

21. CPM is invited to:

- 1) *Note* the report of communication and advocacy activities carried out by the IPPC Secretariat in 2019 and 2020.
- 2) *Note* the IPPC Secretariat's communication and advocacy action plan for 2021.
- 3) *Agree* to develop a new IPPC Communications Strategy 2022-2030 under the auspices of the CPM Focus Group on Communications.
- 4) *Encourage* contracting parties to continuously report on national level activities, which may be advertised via the IPPC Secretariat's communication channels.