



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Fifteenth Session

Virtual Meeting, 16, 18 March and 1 April 2021

International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020

Agenda item 14.2

Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat and Mr Ralf Lopian, Chairperson of the IYPH International Steering Committee

I. Report of Activities

1. The International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020 was officially launched by the FAO Director-General QU Dongyu on Monday 2 December 2019 at FAO headquarters. The event, promoted as a special session of the FAO Council, included attendance by the FAO Director-General, the Ministers of Agriculture of Ireland and Nicaragua, and Permanent Secretaries from Finland and the United Kingdom. It had a high-level and large audience, and triggered high attention by the global phytosanitary community, the media and social media platforms. The launch was completed by a plant health exhibition installed with contributions by the Irish and Italian national plant protection organizations and other stakeholders, and a reception hosted by the IPPC Secretary.

2. FAO published a media advisory and press release¹, while three news stories were published on the IPPC website². The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres sent a message for the occasion³.

3. Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, FAO with input from the IYPH International Steering Committee agreed to postpone some of the IYPH key global events into 2021. These include the first International Plant Health Conference (please see also paragraph 16) and the IYPH closing

¹ Ref. FAO press release: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1253551/icode/>

² Ref. IPP news: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/the-official-launch-event-of-the-international-year-of-plant-health/>, <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/plant-health-exhibits-hosted-by-ireland-and-italy-at-the-international-year-of-plant-health-launch-event/> and <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/reception-marks-the-launch-event-of-the-international-year-of-plant-health/>

³ Ref. UNSG message: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2019-12-02/secretary-generals-message-the-launch-of-the-international-year-of-plant-health>

ceremony (now scheduled on 1 July 2021). The CPM Bureau, pending the agreement of IPPC contracting parties, also agreed to hold the fifteenth session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-15) in March/April 2021, which due to its virtual nature would no longer include a Ministerial Segment, which was suggested to be held during CPM-16 (2022).

4. As of February 2020, the IYPH International Steering Committee⁴ met 14 times either face-to-face or virtually to advance the implementation of the IYPH action plan with the support of the IYPH Secretariat, with more meetings scheduled in 2021.

5. On 2 December 2019 the new IYPH website was launched at www.fao.org/iyp. This includes a section for IYPH advocates, friends and IYPH-related events at all levels. The IPPC Secretariat has been participating in or collecting information on such events, which reached over 600 across all regions and virtually as of December 2020.

6. The IYPH Secretariat has also collected human interest stories related to plant health based on the related call, resulting in the publication of twelve stories, and launched a photo contest on 2nd December, with deadline on 15th January 2021, an art and drawing competition for children, and "A day in the life of a plant health professional" social media campaign.

7. The following additional materials were developed:

- IYPH brochure
- IYPH communications guide
- IYPH activity book
- IYPH YouTube list, including IYPH promotional video, IYPH animation, four videos for various stakeholder groups, IYPH video by the IPPC Secretary, IYPH talk with Monty Don and Diarmuid Gavin, and eight IYPH promotional videos with Diarmuid Gavin
- Trello board (for social media posts)
- Three IYPH podcasts by UN News and FAO
- Monthly IYPH newsletter

8. All IYPH graphic materials and publications were made publicly available, including logotypes in over thirty languages⁵.

9. Countries also stepped up in promoting IYPH-related initiatives, including the use of the IYPH visual identity, e.g. by issuing twenty-two stamps and minting three commemorative coins.

10. The proposal for an International Day of Plant Health as a key legacy for IYPH 2020 was reanimated by the IYPH ISC and endorsed by the CPM Bureau at their virtual meeting in December 2019. Following a proposal by Zambia the 27th session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture, and the 165th session of the FAO Council adopted resolutions for an IDPH. Next steps will be the review of the proposal by the FAO Conference in July 2021, and the subsequent possible declaration of 12 May as IDPH by the United Nations General Assembly by December 2021.

11. Another ongoing IYPH initiative is the global study on the assessment of climate change impacts on plant health, which is expected to be presented at a high-level event on 1 June 2021, and further discussed at the first International Plant Health Conference in Helsinki (or virtually) on 28 June to 1 July 2021.

⁴ Ref. IYPH ISC page: <https://www.ippc.int/en/ph/iypmisc/>

⁵ Ref. IYPH workspace: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/79e79i1wt9jahcf/AADD04FRDDS4IDRMvcL0E-b3a?dl=0>

12. Finally, the IPPC Secretariat has been promoting the drafting of an IYPH youth declaration as another possible IYPH legacy.⁶

II. Recent Developments and Future Actions

13. In 2020, the IYPH ISC decided that the flagship event of the IYPH 2020, the First International Plant Health Conference (IPHC) in Helsinki would be, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, delayed until June 28 – July 1 2021. The ISC thought that the conference could be held as a “hybrid” event where part of the participants would be physically present and part online. Another option had been that the conference could be held virtually in its entirety. There was also a suggestion in the ISC that the conference could be further delayed.

14. The Finnish government⁷ has focussed very much on the prevention of the COVID-19 introduction and has in particular issued strict travel restrictions during large periods of 2020. The occurrence of new variants and the international increase in COVID-19 infections has triggered anew travel restrictions imposed by Finland, which almost exclude non-essential travels to Finland by non-Finnish citizens from most countries in the world. These restrictions are currently timed until end of February 2021, but could easily be extended. Currently, participating at a conference would not be considered essential travel by Finnish health authorities.

15. These developments had a substantial impact the organization of the Helsinki conference. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland had, after considerable consultations, concluded that organization of a physical conference in Helsinki at the end of June is highly unlikely. It is expected that the Finnish vaccination programme would not have been concluded at this time and that therefore travel restrictions will continue to be applied in some form.

16. Based on this information, the IYPH ISC decided at its 14th meeting on 4 February 2021 that the IPHC should not be held as previously planned. The remaining key global activities for the IYPH 2020 would thus encompass the following:

- 1) 1 June 2021: High-level virtual launch of the global study on “Climate change and its impacts on plant health”.
- 2) 29 June 2021: IYPH webinar on Plant Health and its relevance for the Food Systems Summit.
- 3) 30 June 2021: Technical/scientific webinar on the impacts of climate change on plant health.
- 4) 1 July 2021: The IYPH closing ceremony for the IYPH 2020, to be held in Rome and virtually.

17. The ISC discussed and felt that the organization of a physical conference would be preferable to a virtual meeting. It was thought that a physical conference would be better, because a virtual conference would be largely based on lecture style system that would not facilitate interactions between regulators and scientists. It was especially felt important that for the first conference of its kind a memorable setting is needed in order to establish a regular international plant health conference in the meeting circuit. The ISC also thought that after one year of COVID-related lock-downs the desire of people to participate in another lengthy virtual meeting is waning.

18. Instead the ISC discussed alternatives to holding the IPHC and suggested that it could be held as the flagship event for the International Day of Plant Health on 12 May 2022. The ISC thought that the first International Day of Plant Health in 2022 could provide the perfect setting for a large conference, which then could be organized regularly (e.g. every four years) in the week of the International Day of Plant Health.

⁶ Ref. IPPC call: <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-expression-of-interest-drafting-of-a-youth-declaration-for-the-international-year-of-plant-health-2020/>

⁷ Ref. <https://raja.fi/en/guidelines-for-border-traffic-during-pandemic>

19. To assist with the funding of the IPHC in 2022, the ISC also decided that all funds contributed to the IYPH 2020 and not depleted should be used for the IDPH 2022 preparations exclusively. In addition it was also thought that to prepare the conference, a number of additional webinars could be organized in the second half 2021 under the name “The Road to the International Plant Health Conference”. This would allow for the continuation of the public awareness activities during 2021 and build up expectations for the IPHC in 2022.

20. The ISC considered that its mandate is ending with the closing ceremony of the IYPH 2020 in July 2021. It believed that a new group possibly under IPPC supervision should undertake the planning of the conference, including finding a new location. It suggested that the “Technical Advisory Body” for the IYPH 2020, which was originally established as the IPPC IYPH Steering Committee, should be reinstated by the CPM-15 to be responsible for the planning of the IPHC and the IPPC activities for the International Day of Plant Health 2022. This would also include the planning of the webinars to be organized in the second semester of 2021.

21. The CPM is invited to:

- 1) *Note* the report on IYPH 2020 contained in Section I of this paper.
- 2) *Note* the remaining IYPH 2020 activities to be undertaken in 2021 and contained in paragraph 16.
- 3) *Agree* that the First International Plant Health Conference be organized as an IPPC event for the week of 12 May 2022.
- 4) *Mandate* the IYPH 2020 Technical Advisory Body to function as the IPPC preparatory body for the planning and organization of the IPHC and the webinars leading to it.
- 5) *Call* upon IPPC contracting parties to volunteer for hosting the IPHC in 2022.