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# COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

## **Fifteenth Session**

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

**New Zealand Statements on Selected Agenda Items**

**Agenda items 8.1; 8.3; 11.3; 13; 13.1; 19**

**Prepared by New Zealand**

At this Fifteenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-15) New Zealand would like to share with the Contracting Parties its written interventions on a number of agenda items.

### **Agenda item 8.1 Adoption of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030**

The CPM is invited to:

*1) adopt the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030.*

New Zealand strongly supports the adoption of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 (IPPC SF) at the CPM-15 and hopes it will be adopted without further discussion.

The IPPC SF has been under development since 2014. CPM-14 (2019) endorsed the contents of the IPPC SF and a final version was developed and endorsed by the CPM Bureau for adoption at the CPM-15.

The IPPC SF sets out the strategic mission, vision, and goal of the IPPC very well, and provides clear direction for the NPPOs to deliver these through the three core activities, three strategic objectives, and eight development agenda for the next ten years.

New Zealand recognises that we are living in an ever-changing world, Covid-19 is an example. The Commission can review the development agenda and other parts of the framework when necessary through its two main strategic groups: the IPPC Strategic Planning Group (SPG) and the CPM Bureau, and then seek agreement for proposed changes from the CPM.

### **Agenda item 8.3 Report from Strategic Planning Group - Terms of Reference for a CPM Focus Group on Implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework's 2020- 2030 Development Agenda Items**

Implementation of the IPPC SF now becomes vital. New Zealand would like to restate its view raised at the 2020 SPG<sup>1</sup>. It is important to carefully sequence and stage the implementation of the development agenda across ten years, focusing on a few items at a time and doing them well, rather than trying to do everything at once. This is especially important while we continue to work remotely. This is aligned to the report of the Friends of the Chair to CPM-14<sup>2</sup>, that “*Not all development agenda items will be started at the same time, they need to be started once proper planning and securing of funding has occurred*”. The proposed *CPM Focus Group on Implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework's 2020-2030 Development Agenda Items* should serve the CPM well in this regard.

### **Agenda item 8.3 Report from Strategic Planning Group - Establishment of CPM Focus Group on Climate change impacts on plant health**

The purpose of the Focus Group is to consider the impact of climate change on plant health and to develop a CPM action plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Prioritisation and staging of the Development Agenda programmes across the ten years of the IPPC Strategic Framework – New Zealand discussion paper <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/89022/>

<sup>2</sup> IPPC Strategic Framework for 2020-2030 - Friends of the Chair meeting to discuss the draft Strategic Framework 2020-2030 <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/87084/>

Our concern with the Term of Reference is that the specification for membership might be too biased towards climate change and modelling expertise rather than contracting party regulators and policy makers who can understand the impact of climate change on plant health and develop a practical course of action. We anticipate this CPM Focus Group will draw on previous research and findings, rather than produce original scientific analysis. The current proposed membership is overly biased towards skills that would deliver strong technical analysis of climate change impacts, but not be well suited to deliver on all of the functions CPM is requesting in paragraph 10 (Functions).

We suggest a more balanced membership is required between climate change experts, and regulators and policy makers, and propose the following wording be used in para 8 (Membership):

8. The IPPC focus group on climate change and phytosanitary issues is composed of up to ten members with relevant skills and experience in one or several of the following fields: plant health policy and regulation, climate change, plant pathology, agricultural entomology, climatology, modelling, economics, ~~genomics~~, statistics-biometrics, ~~spatial analysis~~, ~~Decision Support Systems (DSS)~~, ~~advanced automated trend/pattern analysis~~, ~~advanced optimization~~, ~~social sciences~~, ecosystems, phytosanitary measures or other relevant field.<sup>3</sup>

### **Agenda item 11.3 Update from the Sea Containers Task Force**

CPM is invited to:

- *request the SCTF to review and revise the CPM Recommendation R-06: Sea Containers following the established procedures for CPM Recommendations.*

New Zealand's views are well represented in "Proposal for a Path Forward for the Sea Container Task Force" submitted by Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and United States ([CPM 2021/INF/13](#)).

New Zealand regulates sea containers by setting import requirements under the New Zealand Biosecurity Act as sea containers can be defined as "risk goods" under the Act. New Zealand's Import Health Standard for sea containers is outcome focused, and states "that containers must be clean and free of pests and biosecurity contamination".

The management of the sea container pathway is not something that a National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) can undertake alone. Only by engaging with supply chain operations, shippers, importers / exporters can robust systems be established to manage the risk associated with sea containers. A robust system should encourage stakeholders to participate and take responsibility.

The Sea Container Hygiene System (SCHS) is a formal agreement between the New Zealand NPPO and industry entities to manage the biosecurity risks associated with sea containers from high or low risk profiles (e.g. country, port of load and/or shipping line). The SCHS ensures a high degree of confidence that container processing entities export supply chain will be exporting clean containers to New Zealand. These containers do not require any additional cleaning or treatment in New Zealand.

New Zealand believes that the SCHS and/or its variations can be utilised in most countries to manage the risks associated with sea containers. The principles allow basic hygiene processes to be implemented and, if followed, gives confidence to exporters / importers and NPPOs.

New Zealand commends SCTF for its work on "The IPPC Sea Container Supply Chains and Cleanliness: An IPPC Best Practice Guidance on Measures to Minimize Pest Contamination".

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<sup>3</sup> Underlined text is for addition. Strikethrough text is for deletion.

New Zealand supports the proposal of an International Workshop on Sea Containers that engaging NPPOs, international organisations, and industry stakeholders.

New Zealand also recommends the SCTF reports back to CPM-16 on the critical elements and content the SCTF considers are critical for successful future development of an international standard.

### **Agenda item 13.1 ePhyto: Long-Term Financial Sustainability**

CPM-15 (2021) is invited to:

- (1) review the options presented in this document,*
- (2) decide upon the two or three preferred options to be consider in detail,*
- (3) agree a small working group, comprised of government and industry partners be established reporting to the ePhyto Steering Group,*
- (4) charge the small working group to evaluate the remaining options in depth following the process outlined above and prepare a final decision document on sustainable funding for the IPPC ePhyto Solution for CPM-16 (2022).*

New Zealand has been a strong and long-standing supporter of the IPPC ePhyto work programme. The Covid-19 pandemic has strongly underlined the value of electronic data exchange. We commend the ePhyto Steering Group (ESG) and the Secretariat for the progress made so far in establishing the ePhyto Hub, piloting its use, developing the web-based Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS), and supporting implementation in developing countries.

#### ***Long-term financial sustainability***

New Zealand has been advocating for a more sustainable funding model for ePhyto. At CPM-14<sup>4</sup> and SPG 2020<sup>5</sup> New Zealand expressed concern over the funding arrangements for the ePhyto Solution, which currently relies on substantial voluntary donor funding. The financial uncertainty this creates may discourage members from uptake of ePhyto Solution in a truly paperless way. For countries that have transitioned to ePhyto, it becomes a critical part of their infrastructure for imports and exports. The lack of a sustainable funding mechanism will present a significant risk to a fundamental part of the international trade system of plants and plant products.

New Zealand commends the ESG and the Secretariat for exploring and presenting to CPM-15 the options for long-term financial sustainability.

We consider that:

- a future funding model should consider the objective of international trade facilitation, including future expansion of the ePhyto Solution for the exchange of other types of certificate or document, e.g. sanitary certificates, and organic certificates.
- The funding model should cover the costs of the Hub and the GeNS.
- Consideration should be given to allow fee exemptions for members of low usage of ePhyto and members that are classified as UN Least Developed Countries, such that no one in the IPPC community is left behind.
- It should be recognised that there is benefit from the electronic exchange both on the import and export side, and hence any volume component of a charging model should include both export and import transactions.

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<sup>4</sup> Five year strategic plan for ePhyto: Transitioning from project to business as usual operation - Statement on Sustainable Funding for e-Phyto (New Zealand) <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/87074/>

<sup>5</sup> Discussion Paper - New Zealand - Harmonization of electronic data exchange <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88830/>

***Preferred options***

New Zealand prefers further exploration of options 1, 2 and 3 as outlined in CPM 2021/31. We suggest as these options are developed, a mixed model be considered with a fixed annual/overhead component combined with a variable transaction/volume component. This would mitigate the risk by protecting the fundamental operation of the system from a sudden downturn in trade.

***Less preferred options***

New Zealand considers that Options 4, 5, 6, and 7 are less preferred and should be dismissed.

- Option 4: *Multiyear voluntary contribution agreements from national governments, donor organizations and industry organizations (not individual firms)*. This is still reliant on voluntary contribution from donors and is similar to the status quo. This option presents a significant risk to the infrastructure of international trade of plants and plant products if no sufficient donor contribution is available.
- Option 5: *FAO to cover all operational costs as a component of business as usual operations for the organization*. Provision of an electronic certification system for trade is not central to FAO's mandate, it could be challenging to get approval for funding from FAO members.
- Option 6: *Access fee charges for blockchain companies and/or private industry to access the ePhyto*. The ePhyto Solution provides a government to government assurance therefore the system should be restricted from access by non-government organisations. Having private organisations directly funding is likely to result in them wanting significant influence over the system.
- Option 7: *Establishment of a government/private sector consortium (including other international organizations interested in and/or participating in the Hub for exchanging their certificates) which manages and develops a unique funding mechanism*. A public-private partnership could be considered in the future, once the ePhyto Solution is much more established, but the private party would need to be free from conflicts of interest.

***Establishment of a small working group***

New Zealand supports the establishment of a small working group and to charge the working group to evaluate the preferred options in depth following the process outlined above and prepare a final decision document on sustainable funding for the IPPC ePhyto Solution for CPM-16 (2022).

The small working group should report to the CPM Bureau. Whether industry partners should be included in the small working group will be dependent on the options CPM-15 selects to be investigated further.

**Agenda item 13 ePhyto – Establish of a Governance Body**

As suggested in its discussion paper for the 2020 session of the Strategic Planning Group “*Harmonization of electronic data exchange*”<sup>6</sup>, New Zealand believes it is time to establish a robust governance body to steer the ePhyto Solution into the future. The oversight of a robust governance body

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<sup>6</sup> Discussion Paper – New Zealand – Harmonization of electronic data exchange  
<https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/88830/>

(non-technical) will provide contracting parties with strong confidence that financial, operational and assurance controls are in place, and that change decisions are carefully approved and implemented.

As contracting parties go paperless with phytosanitary certificate exchange, they will become heavily reliant on the ePhyto system and need confidence that appropriate governance mechanisms exist that are fit for a global data exchange system. While we have confidence in the UNICC for day-to-day operational hosting, management, and delivery of the ePhyto Solution, this does not provide the robust governance contracting parties will expect. The ePhyto steering group, Bureau and Secretariat will still play an important tactical role identifying and prioritising future needs of the system and continuing to support global implementation.

The governance board would report to and receive guidance from the CPM on an annual basis. When in place, good governance will increase trust, confidence and the long-term sustainability of the ePhyto system.

### **Agenda item 19 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**

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).*

In the unprecedented time of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the CPM Bureau has shown it is able to provide strong and active leadership guidance to IPPC Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, and the CPM subsidiary bodies. The Bureau has also made decisions on actions that were urgent and important, as well as administrative and operational to ensure the essential IPPC work programmes are progressed.

New Zealand endorses and supports the CPM Bureau to continue to operate as it has done in the past year.