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منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Sixteenth Session

Virtual Meeting, 5, 7 and 21 April 2022

Comments from Australia related to various CPM agenda items

Agenda item 7; 8.5; 8.8.1; 8.6; 9; 9.3.3; 11.3; 11.4

Prepared by Australia

Australia welcomes the opportunity to submit this Conference Room Paper to allow for interventions that would normally be presented verbally at a face-to-face CPM meeting, to be presented to Contracting Parties as we meet in this virtual format for CPM-16.

Item 7 – Secretariat report

Australia notes The IPPC Secretariat report and thanks the Secretariat for their continued dedication and effort to the work of the IPPC.

Engagement with the multitude of parties has been particularly challenging over the past couple of years and the Secretariat has done a good job adapting to the changed circumstances and introducing new ways of working to ensure that the work continues as smoothly as possible.

Item 8.5 – The IPPC Secretariat and One Health

Australia acknowledges the linkage between human, animal, plant and environmental health. However, Australia considers that the inclusion of plant health into One Health may weaken the status of plant health and the resources available to it.

Australia is comfortable for the IPPC Secretariat to continue its participation as an observer in the FAO One Health discussions.

In line with discussions at SPG 2021, Australia agrees that the IPPC Secretariat’s work commitments should continue to strictly align with the IPPC Strategic Framework. This includes limiting involvement with One Health committees to the required FAO groups and groups linked to plant health, to ensure that Secretariat resources are directed to the core business of the IPPC. The Secretariat should keep a ‘watching-brief’ on One Health developments report back to the CPM, SPG and Bureau.

Item 8.8.1 – Recommendations and report from the CPM Focus Group on Pest Outbreaks Alert and Response Systems

Australia appreciates the effort that the Focus Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems (POARS) has dedicated to investigating how global pest response systems can be improved.

Australia considers that the conversation on how to better prepare for emerging plant pests has been very useful but considers that the proposed scope of the POARS would be better addressed through alternative arrangements, including through the FAO regions and Regional Plant Protection Organisations (RPPOs). The proposed POARS relies heavily on pest reporting, which is already part of the National Reporting Obligations (NROs) and an area identified as a weakness for many contracting parties. Further, the proposed POARS Steering Group has significant budget implications and potential overlap with existing initiatives.

For these reasons, Australia does not agree to the establishment of the POARS Steering Group to advance the POARS workplan.

Instead, we suggest that the IPPC consider supporting the same model that has been shown to work for fall armyworm and banana wilt disease TR4, which uses technical working groups to gather information and develop supporting materials for specific emerging pests.

Alternatively, a Steering Group could be established that is tasked to explore solutions to the issues identified at SPG 2021 rather than to continue to progress the POARS workplan. Namely, the Steering Group should explore how contracting parties will be incentivised to report in the proposed POARS and how POARS will complement existing initiatives such as the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Plant Pests (ECTPP).

Item 8.6 - Proposed establishment and draft ToR CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers

Australia has supported and would like to congratulate the Sea Container Task Force (SCTF) on the important work accomplished and strongly supports the continuation of work by the IPPC to improve global sea container cleanliness through the establishment of a CPM Sea Container Focus Group.

Sea container cleanliness and contaminating pests are a major phytosanitary issue responsible for a significant proportion of pest interceptions in global trade. To continue our work to fulfill the IPPC mission of 'protecting global plant resources from the introduction and spread of plant pests' it is imperative that we continue to work towards an appropriate solution to this complex issue.

The SCTF was a successful mechanism to understand the concerns and constraints faced by industry and to work together with industry to investigate a solution to this multifaceted matter.

Australia notes the difficulty faced by the SCTF in agreeing on an industry-led solution and therefore considers, it would not be appropriate for the Sea Container Focus Group to use the same mechanism to try to achieve a different outcome.

As a result of the efforts of the SCTF, the position of industry is now well understood. Australia considers that industry consultation for this second stage of work under the Focus Group would be more productively achieved through consultation at the global sea container workshop proposed for September 2022 and through designated sessions throughout the course of the work, rather than through direct industry participation in the Focus Group.

Australia accepts however that other contracting parties may feel strongly about the inclusion of industry in the Focus Group. Thus, Australia agrees to approve the ToR of the Focus Group provided that the proportion of industry membership is significantly reduced and contracting parties hold the balance in the Focus Group.

Australia considers that this approach would assist progression towards the goals of the SCTF while keeping industry engaged and their interests considered.

Item 9 – Standard Setting

Australia thanks the Standards Committee and the supporting secretariat staff for the work achieved under difficult circumstances again this past year.

Australia supports adoption of the Draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), Annexes and the CPM Recommendation presented to this CPM-16 meeting.

Item 9.3.3 - Standards Committee recommendations to the CPM:

Australia strongly supports the proposal to establish a CPM Focus Group on Food and other Humanitarian Aid to progress the globally important issue of the safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid.

Australia considers the development of a standard and other supporting material on safe aid is a high and urgent priority, due to:

- The current real and experienced increase in natural and other disasters due to climate change and other world events;
- The historical examples of plant pests introduced through aid;
- The tendency for disasters to disproportionately affect countries and fellow contracting parties that are already vulnerable from a food security perspective.

Additionally, safe aid and food security are highly relevant to the IPPC's consideration of the impacts of climate change, as well as the FAO's broader sustainable development goals including SDG 2: Zero

hunger, especially for regions that are seeing a higher frequency of natural disasters and a subsequent increase in shipments of aid.

Australia appreciates that the PPPO's 2021 Call for Topics submission for development of a standard to support this issue is being given additional consideration by the CPM. Although we appreciate there may be some concerns about the number of Focus Groups already established, safe aid is a high priority issue for the Pacific and many other regions. Thus, this should not be a deciding factor when addressing this important topic.

Item 11.1 – Report Implementation and Capacity Development Committee

Australia strongly supports the important work of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) and thanks all members and experts for their continued efforts and contributions.

The development of a new webpage containing all published IPPC guides and training materials is an excellent initiative. Given the central importance of this material in supporting contracting parties to meet their obligations under the IPPC, Australia considers navigation and access to the IC materials could be improved to ensure they are easier to find, particularly for users not familiar with the IC. Australia considers one option could be linking the materials more directly with the ISPMs they support. Australia is willing to discuss this further with the Secretariat, if desired.

Paper 11.1 proposes removal of some of the topics listed in the IC workplan, though they remain an ongoing part of the IPPC work, namely the Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems (POARS) project and the PCE modernisation project. Australia seeks clarification from the IPPC Secretariat on where these projects will sit in future and what oversight these projects will receive if not through the IC, prior to agreeing to the removal of these topics from this list.

Item 11.4. Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations (PCE)

The Phytosanitary Evaluation (PCE) is a valuable tool for the review of a country's phytosanitary system, to identify gaps and provide recommended actions for improvement of the system. This is an integral mechanism for IPPC contracting parties and can support greater progress towards the goals of the IPPC.

Whilst the PCE is a useful tool which is fundamental for capacity development, improved access and flexibility in the use of the PCE is required for contracting parties to better realise the benefits of the PCE. To improve uptake and to allow contracting parties to make more regular use of the tool, a more open and flexible access mechanism is requested.

(Recommendation 1) Australia notes the procedure for PCE facilitator certification. Australia considers that the use of a certified facilitator should be the decision of the NPPO and should not be a requirement for the use of the PCE tool which was originally designed as a self-assessment tool.

(Recommendation 2) Australia notes that work will begin to develop a Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation facilitators training course. Australia suggests this work is better initiated following the findings of the PCE desktop review to ensure that the development of the training is able to accommodate the findings and decisions regarding any changes in scope to the PCE tool.

(Recommendation 3) Australia notes the Confidentiality Agreement, though does not consider this to be an impediment to appropriate consideration of the requests made by Australia and New Zealand in their joint paper to SPG 2021 as well as the issues discussed in the CPM-16 conference paper 'Proposal for expanding the use of the PCE Tool'.

(Recommendation 4) Australia notes that a desk study on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation will be undertaken. Australia has submitted a CPM conference paper 'Proposal for expanding the use of the PCE Tool' to share views and requested inclusions for this review.

This paper includes suggested areas for investigation towards improving the benefit derived by contracting parties. Suggestions include options to make the tool regionally appropriate, the availability of a self-assessment option and development of a PCE 'lite' version. Likewise, the ability for contracting parties and donors to have full visibility of what the PCE involves and the outcomes that will be achieved by undertaking a PCE will be important.

Australia believes that it is important for all contracting parties to have the opportunity to provide input into the PCE review and modernisation project, while having the chance to review and discuss results of the review so that we may come to a collective decision about the best way forward for the PCE.

Australia would like to request assurance that the Secretariat will seek input from all contracting parties and the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) throughout the planned review of the PCE and that the results of the review be presented to CPM for decision regarding the future direction of the PCE tool.

(Recommendation 7) Australia does not agree that the management of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation should be more intrinsically embedded within the IPPC Secretariat but rather considers that the access and implementation of the PCE should be more explicitly in the hands of contracting parties. Australia thanks the Secretariat for their continued assistance on this important topic.