



COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES
SEVENTEENTH SESSION
CPM FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR – DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT
AGENDA ITEM 15.4

(Prepared by the Bureau and Reviewed by the SPG)

- [1] This Bureau policy statement is intended to ensure transparency, consistency, and general understanding on the operation of Friends of the Chair (FOC) meetings at sessions of the CPM.

1. Background

- [2] Friends of the Chair (FOC) meetings are informal, small groups convened at the discretion of the Chair during sessions of the Commission of Phytosanitary Matters (CPM) to help work through a given issue that has reached an impasse in the larger plenary session. This is a commonly used strategy to facilitate the resolution of a particular issue(s) in a smaller group setting.
- [3] Generally, a small group of interested contracting parties meet outside of plenary. The results of their effort to find a consensus solution are reported to the Chair and shared with the CPM for further consideration and potential decision making.

2. Chairperson Role

- [4] The Chair is responsible for facilitating CPM meetings and trying to move the contracting parties through complex discussions to a consensus position, decision, or agreement on different topics on the agenda.
- [5] To better equip the Chair in their responsibilities to facilitate meetings and reach consensus decisions, especially in cases where time has expired for continued discussion on a given issue or the issue is stalled in the larger plenary meeting, the Chair has the discretion to invite a smaller group of contracting parties to meet on their own time to attempt to find a way forward on that issue.
- [6] Generally, the Chair will charge the FOC to seek an agreed way forward on the issue at hand, ensuring contracting parties have the opportunity to exercise their decision-making authority and to report back to the Chair on areas of agreement and/or the key issues and concerns that remain unresolved and hinder an agreed solution. This information will then be reported to the CPM, providing a basis for a potential agreement or decision-making in plenary.

3. Participation

- [7] In forming the FOC, the Chair will primarily request the participation of those contracting parties who have demonstrated (in the course of the plenary discussions) a strong interest in the issue at hand, those who may bring necessary expertise on the subject, and others who wish to offer practical solutions to progress the issue.
- [8] The Chair will rely on contracting parties to be the primary participants given their status as officially sanctioned representatives of their governments and their decision-making authority on CPM related matters.
- [9] Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) may also be allowed to participate because of the integral role they play in implementing the IPPC at the regional level, their expertise, the resources they bring to various IPPC programs, and their routine interactions with National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) in their region.

- [10] By exception, and on a case-by-case basis, other parties beyond NPPOs and RPPOs may be considered by the Chair, in consultation with the Bureau. The Chair and Bureau may consider, amongst other factors, the expertise and value the party may bring and the extent to which their involvement is likely to assist the FOC to resolve the issue being considered. Their participation, if approved to attend, is at the sole discretion of the CPM chairperson.
- [11] The Chair may request a member of the Bureau, the Secretariat staff, or Chairs of the Standards Committee or Implementation Committee—depending on the topic—to facilitate the FOC meeting and report back to CPM in the subsequent plenary session.
- [12] The Secretariat will provide the administrative support for these meetings, consistent with their normal responsibilities (e.g., logistical, record keeping, and archival information).
- [13] The CPM is invited to:
- (1) *Approve* this policy statement on the operation of Friends of Chair Meetings at CPM Sessions.