



## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### EIGHTEENTH SESSION

#### REPORT FROM THE CPM CHAIRPERSON

##### AGENDA ITEM 6

*(Prepared by the CPM Chairperson, Greg Wolff)*

- [1] This report won't repeat the detailed information diligently assembled by the Secretariat and lead representatives of the various committees and subgroups. Instead, this report will highlight some of the key achievements of 2023 and ongoing challenges.
- [2] On behalf of the Bureau I would like to express our condolences to the families and colleagues of Dr. Ahmed Kamal El-Attar of Egypt and Ms. Margaret Milinga Matengu of Namibia. Their loss is also deeply felt by the IPPC community.
- [3] It has been a very active year for all of those involved in IPPC work, including resumption of the full range of physical meetings of all IPPC bodies. Thankfully this reflects the normalisation of our activities following the immense disruptions presented by the covid pandemic.
- [4] Among other things, the resumption of our important normal activities emphasises the clear need for sustainable funding to support predictably the capacity for the IPPC to achieve its objectives. In reviewing several previous reports provided by CPM chairpersons, the need for sustainable funding has been a consistently recurring theme throughout our history since CPM-1. We therefore continue to rely on a high level of voluntary contributions made by several contracting parties, which means we are relying on goodwill, organisational (and, to an extent, political) support for these donations, and ongoing budgetary availability of such funds – all of these are indicators of an inherent lack of stability and predictability, and, therefore, sustainability, for IPPC resources. As the key intergovernmental body responsible for plant health, and as plant health is so critical for all aspects of our lives, the fact that we still have not arrived at a point at which we can consider our funding model to be sustainable is disappointing. The bureau and the Secretary have been working to raise the profile on this, and indeed the Secretary has been indefatigable in his engagement with FAO leaders on this topic and on seeking increased core funding from the FAO.
- [5] As stated above, plant health is critical for all aspects of our lives. The IPPC community is of course well aware of this, and it is reflected in your passion, energy, innovativeness, and willingness to compromise and find consensus in protecting and improving plant health. However, another challenge that was also evident in several previous reports from the chairperson is the lack of recognition of the importance of plants and plant health to our societies. We have made great efforts over the years to raise awareness through elaborate communications approaches and activities such as the plans for the International Year in Plant Health, which sadly became a casualty of the pandemic, the annual International Day in Plant Health, and the ongoing evolution and implementation of the IPPC Communications Strategy. We all have a role to play here in our regions and in our home organisations and countries. Recently, largely as a result of the Secretary's efforts, another opportunity to raise the profile of the importance of plant health, and indeed the IPPC, became apparent: engaging actively in the concept of One Health. Despite the efforts of several

countries over the past few sessions of the CPM, I believe that we have not focused enough on this to date. Although this may be partly because One Health has been oriented through its historical development mostly on the linkages between human and animal health, this situation may also have come about because we as the IPPC community have not been proactive enough in seeking to engage with One Health leads and in raising awareness. Thanks to the communications and efforts of the Secretary, the opportunities presented by raising the profile of plant health in One Health became clear to the Bureau who then presented considerations on this to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). Louis Pasteur is quoted as saying that “chance favours the prepared mind” and, in conjunction, with the discussions of the Bureau and the SPG on One Health, an increasing receptiveness to, or understanding of, the importance of plant health also seems to be becoming increasingly evident in activities and reports of the leading bodies involved in One Health. A clear opportunity is now presented to us to engage and raise awareness, including at the 8th World Congress on One Health later this year. A related CPM paper elaborates on all of these points.

- [6] I referred earlier to the recent covid pandemic. One of the many impacts of the pandemic was the negative effect on supply chains and all of the related problems caused by this. These supply chain impacts were acutely apparent with regard to the sea container logistics pathway and provided a clear example of the sensitivities of such complex logistics systems and the importance of national economies and, ultimately, the entire global economy on efficient movement of sea containers. This stark example reflects concerns discussed for over a decade within the various IPPC bodies charged with working on guidance to reduce the plant pest risks presented by this pathway. Not least, we have a better idea now of the need to avoid unnecessary impacts to the movement of sea containers, while identifying effective and practicable measures and activities that will reduce pest spread. This requires a delicate balance which is reflected in the report of the Focus Group on Sea Containers, and in the revised Recommendation presented to CPM-18 for adoption.
- [7] All organisations and situations are in a constant state of evolution. Successful achievement of objectives may be most feasible by the development of robust strategies and, crucially, their effective implementation. We are now firmly into the implementation phase of the IPPC’s Strategic Framework 2020-30. As part of this work we presently have several CPM Focus Groups working to implement and advance specific issues, and we have held effective workshops at which private and public sector representatives have shared ideas and identified promising approaches for effective support of the IPPC’s objective. The Secretary has also led the development of the Africa Phytosanitary Program which can subsequently be modelled in other regions. Of course, for the Strategic Framework to be fully effective we must be alert to and aware of changes in our global “operating environment” that may be unexpected or more rapid or significant than anticipated, and be willing to adapt the Framework as necessary. Maintaining this awareness requires efforts from all IPPC bodies and potential adaptation is best served by obtaining input from their representatives. The above activities are part of this, but so also is the work of the Standards Committee, the Implementation Committee, the Technical Panels, expert working groups, and of course the Secretariat. With this combined expertise, we are well placed to support an effective IPPC, as long as we ensure that related information is well communicated, is well understood, and is acted upon appropriately.
- [8] Also in terms of evolution of the IPPC, it is interesting to review our interaction and collaboration with other bodies and groups over the years. We have increasing engagement with the private sector, to the benefit of all, for example in relation to the work on sea containers and e-phyto. One of the most effective ways to ensure that guidance and requirements are well implemented is to involve those who may be the focal point of such direction in its development in order that there is widespread understanding, receptiveness and, ideally, support for such efforts. This seems to be evident in our work on sea containers, especially as a result of the workshops held in 2022 and 2023. Going beyond this, as we gain more knowledge about dependencies and factors that contribute to plant health, and as the way the world works becomes increasingly complex through continuing advances in technology and information availability and exchange, it seems that all of our objectives and challenges are increasingly interconnected. Therefore, engaging with all other relevant multilateral bodies is crucial and the Secretariat staff spare no effort in this

regard. We also benefit from the proactive efforts of other plant health-related bodies, for example the International Forest Quarantine Research which voluntarily formed to support the IPPC's work.

- [9] In every year there will be changes. This year, in particular, we will see several changes in leadership among the regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs). The importance of the work of the RPPOs cannot be understated as they are able to engage directly with and represent the individual national plant protection organizations in their regions to support the understanding and implementation of IPPC plant health objectives in those regions and also to provide regional perspectives for the CPM's decision-making and planning. I am pleased to note in this regard that the RPPOs will be providing a presentation on their role at this year's CPM.
- [10] There is another important change to this year's CPM that I would like to highlight and that is the number of contracting parties to the IPPC. I feel honoured to be chairing the first CPM during which the Federal Republic of Somalia is our newest contracting party, having adhered to the IPPC in 2023. I would like to state my profound congratulations and thanks to the Federal Republic of Somalia and all those who worked to achieve this outcome.
- [11] I have provided a few comments on the Secretariat staff. One additional comment that I must emphasise is how much we all rely on them throughout the entire year, and how much gratitude I and the Bureau have for their efforts expertise, and endurance. Without them, none of what we do and achieve would be possible.
- [12] The same is true of the Bureau, the year-round body of the CPM working to act on previous CPM decisions and identifying new actions requiring CPM deliberation.
- [13] I should note that this report has been prepared nearly three months prior to the CPM meetings and so unforeseen current events relating to plant health that may be evident in April 2024 cannot be referred to. Nevertheless, I am confident that with the attributes of CPM participants and the IPPC community that I referred to earlier, we will be able to work through the challenges that may be presented to us and identify opportunities for continued success.

## **Recommendations**

- [14] The CPM is invited to:
- (1) *Note* this report.