



## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### EIGHTEENTH SESSION

#### UPDATE ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

##### AGENDA ITEM 21.2

*(Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat)*

- [1] The IPPC Secretariat reviewed and updated the External Cooperation web page on the IPP<sup>1</sup>, highlighting the organizations we are currently cooperating with and describing the areas of mutual interest that we are currently addressing jointly.
- [2] The following sections provide highlights of the main cooperative activities in 2023 with external organizations and regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs).

#### International Organizations

- [3] **Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI):** CABI is a member of the Steering Group. CABI had also contributed to the FAO/IPPC Technical Working Group on Quarantine and Phytosanitary Measures responsible for the coordination of all the technical activities related to the prevention of FAW spread to new areas. As CABI is in the process of signing a MoU with FAO, the IPPC secretariat is the contact point for strengthening phytosanitary capacity development activities.
- [4] **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** The IPPC Secretariat continued work on addressing the protection of the environment from the impacts of plant pests, as one of the IPPC strategic objectives. Through the work of the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers, it has been recognized that whilst the scope of the IPPC is limited to plant pest risks, pest contamination via the sea container pathway may convey risks to both plant and animal health, and as such reducing contamination of sea containers generally will also reduce the spread of other organisms. The December 2022 Conference of the Parties (COP), in its Decision 15/27 on Invasive Alien Species, specifically called for continued collaboration between the CBD Executive Secretary and the IPPC, as well as other members of the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species, towards developing a globally harmonized and operational voluntary guidance on the cleanliness of sea containers and their cargoes. This request aligns directly with Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- [5] To prevent the development of duplicative or conflicting measures concerning sea container contamination, the IPPC Secretariat is actively engaging with the CBD Secretariat to promote seamless coordination of related efforts in both organizations. In November 2023, the IPPC Secretariat participated in the 12th Meeting of the Interagency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species providing a comprehensive update on the IPPC's progress and the work of Focus Group towards developing recommended actions to minimize pest risks posed by sea containers, including the revised CPM Recommendation 6. Notably, there was an expressed intention to recommend collaborative efforts towards broader joint agency guidance. A focus was given to providing an overview of available IPPC guidance materials, with the IPPC Secretariat confirming support to the CBD Secretariat in the crafting of globally harmonized and operational voluntary guidance on the cleanliness of sea containers and their

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<sup>1</sup> IPP web page on External Cooperation: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/external-cooperation/>

cargoes as per the request of the COP. It was suggested that existing IPPC materials be utilized as a basis model, as well as work, observations and experiences of the previous Sea Containers Task Force and the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers to be drawn upon when developing guidance materials.

- [6] **Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes (CIHEAM):** In 2023 CIHEAM, EUPHRESKO and the IPPC Secretariat took part in the High-level meeting on the management strategy of transboundary plant pests and diseases in NENA region, in June, Bari, Italy.
- [7] **Comité de liaison Entrepreneuriat-Agriculture-Développement (COLEAD):** The fruitful collaboration with COLEAD translated in 2021 with the signing of a Memorandum of Collaboration in between FAO and COLEAD. COLEAD provided in-kind translation of three guides in French and invited over 15 countries to attend CPM in person.
- [8] **International Advisory Group for Pest Risk Analysis (IAGPRA):** The International Pest Risk Research Group (IPRRG) accepted IAGPRA former roles and responsibilities. The chair of IAGPRA informed the IPPC Secretariat that the IPRRG should replace IAGPRA as an external organization providing expert advice on pest risk analysis to the IPPC.
- [9] **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):** Cooperation with IAEA continued throughout 2023, particularly for the development of international standards and with the Technical Panel on Phytosanitary Measures (TPPT) in which IAEA has a member as outlined in the TPPT specification. IAEA also actively participated in the CPM Focus Group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems. IAEA has also a representative on the Steering group on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems which will start in 2024.
- [10] **International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC):** In 2023, the IGTC took advantage of any opportunities for direct involvement with the IPPC related to the IPPC ePhyto Solution. Work specifically related to the ePhyto Solution included:
- (1) Supporting grain trade personnel around the world as they contribute to the successful implementation of the ePhyto Solution and the more than five million certificates that have been exchanged to facilitate the safe trade of plant products for the benefit of global food security.
  - (2) Service as an active member of the ePhyto Industry Advisory Group (IAG); recruitment to have more plant product sectors included in this group has been a priority.
  - (3) Providing industry perspective presentations at international fora on the ePhyto Solution and the role it plays in trade facilitation, including during the jointly sponsored IAG/IPPC ePhyto webinars in a number of countries and,
  - (4) Addressing the long-term sustainability of the ePhyto Solution as an active observer to the CPM Focus Group on Sustainable Funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution.
- [11] **International Maritime Organization (IMO):** The IPPC Secretariat continues collaboration with the IMO especially in the area of IMO CTU Inspection Programmes. A representative of the IMO Secretariat frequently takes part in CPM Focus group on Sea containers.
- [12] **International Forest Quarantine Research Group (IFQRG):** IFQRG, formed in 2003, is an independent science group that carries out analysis and scientific research in response to international forest phytosanitary issues. The IPPC Secretariat, the Technical Panel on Phytosanitary Treatments (TPPT) and the CPM Standards Committee utilizes the IFQRG in obtaining answers to key scientific questions and supports the work of this group within the IPPC community. The IPPC Secretariat participates in the yearly IFQRG symposiums held virtually in the recent years. The IPPC secretariat gave updates about the IPPC work, the work on pest diagnosis with focus on molecular methods and highlighting opportunities for future collaboration with the development agenda items of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 on i) Research Coordination, ii) Laboratory Diagnostic Networking.
- [13] **International Seed Federation (ISF):** An ISF representative (who is also Chair of the ePhyto Industry Advisory Group (IAG) co-organized together with the IPPC Secretariat virtual workshops at national level for ePhyto adoption in Ghana and the United Kingdom. This representative is also a member of

the CPM Focus Group on sustainable funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution and has supported various ePhyto stakeholder meetings.

- [14] **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA):** The IICA is the specialized agency for agriculture of the Inter-American System that supports the efforts of Member States to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being. In 2023, IICA hosted the IPPC Regional Workshop in Latin America.
- [15] **Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF):** The STDF is an organization housed in the WTO and composed of the following core members: Codex, FAO, IPPC Secretariat, WOA, WBG, WHO and WTO. The IPPC Secretariat participated virtually in the STDF Working Group (WG) meetings in May and in person in the November one as Vice-Chair. The IPPC Secretariat conducted in-depth reviews of several grant applications with a phytosanitary component, providing these comments to the WG, which reviews, approves and prioritizes STDF projects (including project preparation grants).
- [16] Full details on approved projects and their outcomes can be found on the STDF website<sup>2</sup>. The IPPC Secretariat is active in several STDF practitioners' groups working on a variety of initiatives including gender, monitoring, evaluation and learning, electronic certification and public-private partnerships.
- [17] **The Phytosanitary Measures Research Group (PMRG)<sup>3</sup>:** The PMRG, is an independent science group that provides a forum where critical phytosanitary treatment issues can be addressed through discussion and collaborative research. The mission of the PMRG is to harmonize research on phytosanitary treatments and other measures with application to international trade of horticultural commodities to support IPPC Technical Panels, plant protection organizations, and researchers. The TPPT utilizes the PMRG to support the development of international phytosanitary treatments to be considered and approved by the Standards Committee (SC).
- [18] **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE):** The CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers during its work in 2023 provided inputs into the UNECE informal work to revise the current Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code). These inputs included revised information on pest risks associated with the international movements of sea containers and recommended actions to minimize these risks. In December 2023, the IPPC Secretariat attended the Special Session of the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics on the Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units. It was noted that the inputs provided should be retained in the draft revision, however, remain in abeyance until the outcomes of CPM-18 in relation to the proposed adoption of the revised CPM Recommendation 6 on sea containers to ensure the consistency of information to be included in the formal draft revision.
- [19] **UN Environment Programme (UNEP):** The IPPC Secretariat participated in inter-agency communication coordination with the environment and biodiversity-related organizations throughout 2023 and plans to continue this collaboration. Participating to such meetings allows the IPPC Secretariat to take part in a cycle of interviews underlining IPPC contributions to biodiversity and the environment.
- [20] **The World Customs Organization (WCO):** As per the 2018 agreement between the secretariats of the WCO and the IPPC<sup>4</sup>, both sides continue to cooperate on matters of common interest to help facilitate safe and efficient trade of plants and plant products. The IPPC Secretariat continues to collaborate with WCO on sea containers and to explore the potential value in the use of Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) programmes and adding data elements to assist in tracking the cleanliness status of container units under the Data Model (DM) of WCO. The IPPC Secretariat continues to attend meetings of the

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<sup>2</sup> STDF website: <https://standardsfacility.org/>

<sup>3</sup> PMRG webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/external-cooperation/organizations-page-in-ipp/phytosanitarymeasuresresearchgroup/>

<sup>4</sup> Agreement between FAO (on behalf of the IPPC Secretariat) and the WCO: <https://www.ippc.int/en/partners/wco/publications/2019/01/agreement-between-fao-on-behalf-of-the-ippc-secretariat-and-the-wco/>

WCO Working Group on E-commerce as an observer and to raise awareness about phytosanitary issues related to plants and plant products traded online and distributed through postal and courier pathways.

- [21] **The World Trade Organization (WTO) and the SPS Committee:** The IPPC is an intergovernmental treaty<sup>5</sup> signed by 185 contracting parties (as of December 2023), aiming to protect the world's plant resources from the spread and introduction of pests, and facilitate safe trade. The Convention introduced the development and implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs)<sup>6</sup> as its main tool to achieve its goals, making it the sole global standard setting organization for plant health. The IPPC is one of the "Three Sisters" recognized by the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Agreement, along with the Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety standards and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) for animal health standards.
- [22] The collaboration with the WTO-SPS Committee was strengthened during 2023, a result from the SPS 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Declaration (MC12)<sup>7</sup> "Responding to Modern SPS Challenges", which is now paving the way for the 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Declaration. Moreover, the IPPC secretariat continued engagement with the SPS committee and SPS secretariat participating in meetings (virtual and face to face), technical assistance activities and the informal group developed by the "three sisters standard setting bodies" regarding the monitoring of the international standards or observatories to share best practices and solutions to improve the efficiency of surveys and the response rate of contracting parties.
- [23] As usual, the IPPC Secretariat presented updates at all WTO-SPS Committee meetings held in 2023, and all documents are available at the WTO website. The SPS members highlighted the importance and benefit in having the participation of the standard setting bodies, including the IPPC secretariat, to ensure collaboration, experiences sharing and mutual understanding<sup>8</sup> A report from the WTO-SPS Secretariat will be presented to the CPM-18.
- [24] **The World Animal Health Organization (WOAH):** Quarterly meetings are held with WOAH to coordinate activities on the respective Observatories.
- [25] **Universal Postal Union (UPU):** The UPU participated in the peer review of the IPPC e-commerce guide, which was published in October 2023, *E-commerce - A guide to managing the pest risk posed by goods ordered online and distributed through postal and courier pathways*<sup>9</sup>
- [26] **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** The Secretariat has been in contact with an IPCC representative to seek their collaboration by appointing a specialist in climate change to compose the CPM Focus Group on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues. Among the goals of the focus group are to enhance the recognition of phytosanitary matters in the international climate change debate, and to strengthen collaboration and exchange information with relevant organizations such as the IPCC.
- [27] **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA):** Discussions were held with EFSA for the IPPC secretariat to be included in the MoU that is being signed between EFSA and FAO.

## Research and academia

- [28] The IPPC Secretariat has also increased its liaison activities with research and academia, in line with the new development agenda on phytosanitary research coordination foreseen by the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030.

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<sup>5</sup> Convention text: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/governance/convention-text/>

<sup>6</sup> Adopted ISPMs: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/ispms/>

<sup>7</sup> SPS MC 12: [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_declaration\\_mc12\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_declaration_mc12_e.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/events\\_e/events\\_by\\_year\\_e.htm?Year=2022](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/events_e/events_by_year_e.htm?Year=2022)

<sup>9</sup> E-commerce: A guide to managing the pest risk posed by goods ordered online and distributed through postal and courier pathways: <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8209en>

[29] Liaison activities were carried out with the following organizations:

- (1) **EUPHRESKO**: For phytosanitary research coordination collaborative work, the Focus Group on this DAI of the IPPC SF 2020-30 has been established by CPM-17 and its terms of reference have been reviewed by Bureau and SPG in October 2023 and are finalized by December Bureau and recommended them to CPM-18 (2024) for approval.

### **Regional Plant Protection Organizations**

[30] The IPPC Secretariat provided continuous support to participating RPPOs taking part in the work of some CPM Focus Groups as well as for the delivery of regional workshops and other events. In the first quarter, the IPPC secretariat supported the 34th Technical Consultation among RPPOs in a virtual meeting and in person on the side of CPM-17. In the last quarter of 2023, the 35<sup>th</sup> TC-RPPO convened in person in Bogota, Colombia led by the Chair from North American Plant Protection Organization.

[31] The IPPC Secretariat also collaborated with OIRSA through the regional simulation exercise against *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 (*Fusarium* TR4) held in Nicaragua in March 2023 and the emergency mission against *Fusarium* TR4 held in the Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela in April 2023. A joint workshop was organized with OIRSA in August in Santo Domingo on ePhyto so all OIRSA countries connecting to the Hub or GENs. OIRSA promoted the IPPC eLearning course on Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) and is also providing in-kind translation of this course in Spanish.

[32] IPPC Secretariat attended a meeting organized by AU-IAPSC for African member countries in Doula, Cameroon in February 2023, to discuss and prepare for CPM-17. The reason for IPPC Secretariat's participation was to follow-up on AUC meeting's recommendations, and to engage countries and RECs on the proposed Africa Phytosanitary Program (APP). In coordination with FAO Near East Office, IAPSC and NEPPO, the IPPC Secretariat launched a pilot phase of APP involving 11 countries with the plan for the rest of the countries in Africa to join over the next four years. A hands-on training was provided to 100 plant health experts from 11 African countries at the Train-the-Trainer Workshop held in September 2023 in Cairo, Egypt. The overall goal of APP is to safeguard plant resources against pests and to facilitate the safe trade of agricultural products, hence contributing to sustainable food security and economic growth by empowering NPPOs with the capacity necessary to rapidly detect and respond to plant pests that have regulatory, economic, and environmental consequences.

### **Recommendations**

[33] The CPM is invited to:

- (1) *Note* the Report on the 2023 international cooperation activities.