



## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### NINETEENTH SESSION

#### REPORT ON THE 8TH WORLD ONE HEALTH CONGRESS, A RELATED PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP AN IPPC RECOMMENDATION ON BEST PRACTICES TO LIMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMR THROUGH THE USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS IN CROP PROTECTION, AND CONSIDERATIONS OF FUTURE IPPC WORK ON SEAWEED

#### AGENDA ITEM 13.3

#### *“Plant health is planet health”*

*(Submitted by members of the CPM Bureau)*

- [1] At the 18th Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-18) in April 2024, a decision was taken for the IPPC Secretariat and members of the Bureau to engage more proactively with representatives of the One Health framework and to try to raise the profile of plant health within One Health. One of the outcomes of this decision was for the IPPC Secretariat to obtain arrangements for a dedicated plant health session at the 8th World One Health Congress in September. An unexpected benefit resulting from the diligent efforts of Dr Osama El-Lissy, former IPPC Secretary, was that the IPPC was invited to provide a keynote address on plant health during the plenary opening to the Congress.
- [2] The opportunity for the IPPC to provide a keynote speech resulted in the profile of plant health being raised significantly and highlighted links to the dedicated plant health session arranged to take place later in the proceedings. The keynote speech had been written by Dr. EL-Lissy: it contained effective messaging on the importance of plant health to One Health in relation to hunger stemming from crop losses to pests, provision of oxygen, cooling of areas, carbon sequestration, and linked all of these to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. It was thought-provoking and was well received. During the rest of the first day and throughout the second day, numerous participants commented during side conversations on how it had caused them to reconsider the importance of plant health, and several presenters included comments on plant health in their formal addresses.
- [3] The dedicated plant health session that took place two days later had approximately 50 participants. Strong messaging on the importance of plant health to One Health was provided by two Bureau members and there were several questions and comments from participants. Key messages provided in the IPPC presentations reiterated the points from the keynote speech outlined above but also included that:
- the healthy environment which is the foundation for good One Health cannot exist without plants and its status is a reflection of the health of those plants;
  - almost all animal and human food energy relies upon photosynthesis;
  - plants in biodiverse areas are a source of bioactive compounds, many of which are expected to have therapeutic qualities;
  - there are also linkages between mental health and wellbeing and access to trees and planted areas;

- there are some cross-kingdom pathogens, which, although not felt to be a major One Health factor, should be monitored especially as the effects of climate change continue to be realised;
- pollinators are an example of interdependent species;
- we are witnessing huge impacts on human society at present from pests such as fall armyworm and *Fusarium oxysporum* TR4;
- plant protection practices may contribute towards the development of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria and fungi;
- the One health community appears not to have taken advantage of the opportunity to cross-reference research work conducted within one of the One Health disciplines (such as plant pathology) and that may have relevance and value to others (such as animal and human pathology). Examples include splash-dispersal of pathogenic propagules, and the role of vectors in pathogen dispersal and spread. It is possible that the use of artificial intelligence may help to identify such research findings with potential cross-disciplinary importance. Cross-referencing such work may avoid duplication of research and advance understanding and the rapid development of effective measures across the One Health framework;
- the impacts from plant pests are disproportionately damaging to expanding populations in low income countries;
- the level of food insecurity in Africa is extreme and is increasing (56% of Africa's population does not currently have food security);
- there are increasing anticipated needs for more food production for the world's population.

[4] A key message from the IPPC presentations at the dedicated plant health session was that a more fully comprehensive One Health concept would benefit all disciplines.

[5] The organisers of the Congress took into account the importance of plant health by making specific reference to plant health in a proposed addition to the UN Pact for the Future. Specifically, they proposed to insert the following text after item 9 of the Pact:

*We recognize the unifying concept of One Health that acknowledges the interconnectedness of human, animal, plant, and ecosystem health and well-being, as essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.*

[6] Although it appears that this proposal was not subsequently taken up, nevertheless it demonstrates the importance ascribed to plant health, which it seems was at least partly because of the efforts by the IPPC to engage and the speech and presentations delivered. This was an extremely positive starting point and would seem to support the merit of the One Health-related decisions taken at CPM-18, and to support the proposed ongoing One Health-related IPPC activities as outlined at CPM-18, in order to build on this and maintain engagement and advocacy.

### **A prevailing Congress theme of concerns regarding anti-microbial resistance**

[7] During the proceedings of the One Health Congress there was an extremely strong focus on concerns over antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This focus emphasises how important to the One Health framework AMR is and, therefore, the importance and urgency of taking action to limit the development of AMR.

[8] On the subject of AMR, a discussion paper (04\_SPG\_2024\_Oct<sup>1</sup>) was submitted to the Strategic Planning Group jointly by the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. This paper identifies linkages between the use of antimicrobials in plant protection and the related potential for development of AMR, suggests approaches through which the use of such antimicrobials

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<sup>1</sup> SPG 2024/04, *Antimicrobial resistance in plant health*; available at: [https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2024/10/04\\_SPG\\_2024\\_Oct\\_Antimicrobial\\_Resistance\\_in\\_Plant\\_Health\\_2024-08-16.docx](https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2024/10/04_SPG_2024_Oct_Antimicrobial_Resistance_in_Plant_Health_2024-08-16.docx)

may be reduced, therefore reducing selection pressure on microorganisms, and identifies areas in which more information is needed. In doing so, the joint paper presents what could form the basis for a CPM Recommendation on limiting the development of AMR through the use of antimicrobials in crop protection.

- [9] Given that the IPPC was represented for the first time at the World One Health Congress this year and is seeking to raise the profile of plant health in One Health, and that AMR is of such fundamental importance to One Health, there is an opportunity for the IPPC to demonstrate to the One Health community that we understand these priorities, have a key part to play in essential One Health work, and take One Health responsibilities that pertain to plant health seriously. This could be achieved by the development in due course of a CPM Recommendation on “best practices to limit the development of AMR through the use of antimicrobials in crop protection”. As plant health is a key component of One Health, and the IPPC is the international organisation responsible for plant health, it would seem important for the CPM to proceed with this in the near term and to signal its intent to do so at its earliest opportunity.
- [10] A draft CPM recommendation on this subject could be concise, drawing partly on the joint paper referred to above. In particular, that paper notes the importance of the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques, AMR-resistance-related pesticide management techniques, improving understanding of AMR transmission between humans, animals, plants and the environment, and antimicrobial stewardship training (on the IPM aspect, there are potential linkages to the use of systems approaches as described in ISPM 14). It could outline the crop protection activities that can contribute to the development of AMR, make references to the One Health framework, and then provide a series of recommended best practices, and a call for the IPPC community to contribute to research in plant health-related AMR, in a clear and succinct manner.
- [11] In addition to the decisions on One Health referenced in the opening paragraph, CPM-18 also established a CPM Focus Group on Plant Health in the context of One Health to develop recommendations and outputs for CPM consideration in 2025. Among the tasks for the Focus Group was to “consider whether a formal CPM Recommendation would be of use and value and, if so, provide an outline of what it may address”. Given the experience at the World One Health Congress, it would seem appropriate for CPM-19 to take a decision on proceeding with the development of a CPM Recommendation on AMR in order that this planned work is made clear to the One Health community at the earliest opportunity. The Focus Group on One Health could be asked to proceed with drafting the proposed CPM Recommendation on AMR, taking into account the content of the CPM paper presented under agenda item 16.1. It should be noted that, in addition, the Focus Group may propose and develop a broader or other IPPC CPM Recommendation(s) on other aspects of the linkages between plant health and One Health, such as were described in the paper presented to CPM-18 on the subject<sup>2</sup>.

### **Questions on the scope of the IPPC in relation pests of seaweed moved in trade**

- [12] Another interesting subject arose during the Congress meetings. On the margins of the 8th World One Health Congress, a representative of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) commented on plant pest concerns regarding seaweed. CPM Recommendation 4, IPPC provides some guidance on aquatic plants although does not make direct reference to seaweed. It would appear that, other than developing CPM Recommendation 4, the IPPC has not considered whether seaweed is within the scope of our work. It seems unclear or perhaps doubtful that any other multilateral organisations would be responsible for providing internationally harmonised guidance relating to plant pests of seaweed moved in trade and the biological relationship between seaweed and pests seems to reflect that of terrestrial plants and their pests. Therefore, the IPPC may indeed be the best-placed and appropriate body to undertake related work. Given that the volume of trade in seaweed is anticipated to rise significantly and the various end uses for such trade are so wide-ranging, the CPM may wish to

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<sup>2</sup> CPM 2024/31, *International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) role and contributions to One Health – how to position IPPC in this space?* And its annex, *The fundamental importance of plant health to One Health*, available at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/93086/>

consider whether future work on seaweed on the context of the IPPC should be undertaken. A paper<sup>3</sup> on this subject was submitted to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) and provides further information on the trade volumes, end uses, and current gaps in information. SPG participants did not have a unanimous view on how to approach the subject, not least due to the incomplete information on pests presently available.

### **Recommendations**

[13] The CPM is invited to:

- (1) *Consider* the merit of the proposed CPM Recommendation specifically on AMR in relation to plant protection practices;
- (2) *Request* the Focus Group on One Health to prepare a draft CPM Recommendation on this subject for presentation to the Bureau and potentially for CPM-20 (in 2026) to approve for consultations;
- (3) *Identify* any related issues that should be considered by the Focus Group on One Health;
- (4) *Consider* and *discuss*, on a preliminary basis, whether work on the movement of pests through trade in seaweed is within the scope of the IPPC and whether future work on this subject may be appropriate for the IPPC.

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<sup>3</sup> SPG 2024/23, Consideration of IPPC work on seaweed moved in trade, available at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/publications/93955/>