



## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### NINETEENTH 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 2024 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 Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems (POARS) Steering Group and of the Technical Working Group of Africa Phytosanitary Programme (TWG). 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] **Codex Alimentarius:** Regular meetings are held with Codex *Alimentarius* to coordinate activities on the respective Observatories.
- [5] **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.
- [6] To prevent the development of duplicative or conflicting measures concerning sea container contamination, the IPPC Secretariat continues to engage with the CBD Secretariat to promote seamless coordination of related efforts in both organizations. The Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16) was held in October 2024, where the IPPC Secretariat provided a comprehensive update on the IPPC's progress and the work of the CPM Focus

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

Group on Sea Containers towards developing recommended actions to minimize pest risks posed by sea containers, including the revised CPM Recommendation 6 as adopted by CPM-18. 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 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.

- [7] **Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes (CIHEAM):** In 2024 CIHEAM, EUPHRESKO and the IPPC Secretariat took part in the High-level meeting of the IPPC governing and subsidiary bodies, CPM focus groups and regional workshops.
- [8] **Comité de liaison Entrepreneuriat-Agriculture-Développement (COLEAD):** The fruitful collaboration with COLEAD translated in 2021 with the signing of a Memorandum of Collaboration between FAO and COLEAD. COLEAD provided in-kind translation of over ten guides in French and invited over 15 countries to attend CPM-18 (2024) in person. The MoU with COLEAD has been renegotiated until 2027, along the same activities related to guides and training materials, and support to respective meetings. COLEAD and the IPPC Secretariat co-organized a project definition workshop to support the drafting of countries project proposals to strengthen priorities identified through Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations.
- [9] **Global Alliance for Trade facilitation (GATF):** In 2024, the GATF supported Colombia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Togo and Ukraine for implementing the IPPC ePhyto Solution. In addition, they are one of the stakeholders of the IPPC ePhyto Africa Initiative under development.
- [10] **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.
- [11] **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):** Cooperation with IAEA continued throughout 2024, 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 conducted its activities throughout 2024. The IPPC Secretariat and IAEA collaboration culminated with the organization of a joint workshop on the diagnostic of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *ubense* Tropical race 4. The training provided representatives from nine (9) COMESA countries on diagnostic techniques to detect *Fusarium* TR4. This was a train-the-trainer course and a follow up to assess knowledge share and uptake within the countries is being undertaken by African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU- IAPSC).
- [12] **International Grain Trade Coalition (IGCT):** In 2024, the IGTC contributed to the promotion and implementation of the IPPC ePhyto Solution including: supporting grain trade personnel around the world as they contribute to the successful implementation of the ePhyto Solution; providing industry perspective presentations in various meetings including the IAG/IPPC ePhyto webinars in Brazil, Canada and Egypt; and participating as an observer to the CPM Focus Group on Sustainable Funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution.
- [13] **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.
- [14] **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 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 recent years. In November 2024, the 21<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of IFQRG convened in FAO HQ, marking the first face-to-face meeting since 2018. The agenda focussed on various pressing topics, including the research to support international standards development, research underlying submissions for phytosanitary treatments, molecular tools for detection and diagnostics, and the development and assessment of forest product treatments. An additional session focused on phytosanitary considerations related to the international movement of wood chips and wood packaging materials. There will also be a special session to launch the FAO “Guide to implementation of phytosanitary standards in forestry - Volume 2”, the newly completed revision of the Guide first published in 2011. The newly updated guide is expected to further support pest management and promote understanding of the role of the IPPC in forestry. 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.

- [15] **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 Brazil, Canada and Egypt. 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 including for the IPPC ePhyto Africa Initiative. The IPPC Secretariat was invited to participate in the ISF e-commerce workshop in Geneva in early November 2024 and delivered a presentation titled, Overview of E-commerce: Trends and Implications.
- [16] **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. Contacts are being established to agree on new areas of collaboration.
- [17] **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, WOH, WBG, WHO and WTO. The IPPC Secretariat chaired and participated in the two STDF Working Groups. The IPPC Secretariat conducted in-depth reviews of several grant applications with a phytosanitary component, providing these comments to the Working Group, which reviews, approves and prioritizes STDF projects (including project preparation grants).
- [18] 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 mainstreaming, monitoring, evaluation and learning, electronic sanitary and phytosanitary certification and public-private partnerships.
- [19] **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).
- [20] **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE):** Following the adoption of the revised CPM Recommendation 6 on sea containers by CPM-18, the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers has continued to work throughout 2024 with the UNECE to include information on pest risks associated

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

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

with the international movements of sea containers and recommended actions to minimize these risks during the revision of the current Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code). The Focus Group previously drafted and proposed amendments to the CTU Code for the prevention of pest contamination, as outlined in section 3.4 of the 2023 Report of CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers (CPM 2024/25\_01). Following the initially proposed amendments, the Informal meeting on Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units, at the request of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24), reconvened several times to collectively progress the revision of the CTU Code. Focus Group and IPPC Secretariat representatives actively participated to ensure that proposed pest prevention amendments remained in line with the revised CPM Recommendation 6 on sea containers, whilst fitting with the proposed format of the revised CTU Code and taking into consideration comments from other members of the informal meetings. These amendments were subsequently presented to and considered at the WP.24 meeting, held on 16-17 December 2024 in Geneva.

- [21] **UN Environment Programme (UNEP):** The IPPC Secretariat participated in inter-agency communication coordination with the environment and biodiversity-related organizations throughout 2024 and plans to continue this collaboration. Participating in such meetings allows the IPPC Secretariat to take part in a cycle of interviews and discussions underlining IPPC contributions to biodiversity and the environment.
- [22] **The World Bank (WB):** In 2024, the WB supported Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Ghana, Malawi and Zambia for implementing the IPPC ePhyto Solution.
- [23] **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 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. The IFU Team Lead also attended the WCO-PTC in April 2024 and made a presentation highlighting collaboration on e-commerce, ePhyto and sea containers. In addition, a concept note on potential collaboration between the WCO and IPPC Secretariat on “Enabling digital collaboration between Customs and NPPOs through data standardization” is currently being prepared. The ESG welcomed this collaboration and highlighted that exchange of data between Customs and NPPOs should not imply modifications to the ePhyto data model
- [24] **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.

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<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/>

<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/>



- [25] As usual, the IPPC Secretariat presented updates at all WTO-SPS Committee meetings held in 2024, and all documents are available at the WTO website<sup>7</sup>. The SPS members highlighted the importance and benefit in having the participation of the standard setting bodies, including the IPPC Secretariat, to ensure collaboration, experience sharing and mutual understanding.<sup>8</sup>
- [26] The IPPC Secretariat continues its international cooperation efforts in the SPS Technical Activities in participating in the 2024 edition of the WTO-SPS Transparency Champions Course, which took place from 30 September to 11 October 2024. During the session, the IPPC Secretariat highlighted the IPPC's role in advancing transparency in global plant health standards, emphasizing the importance of communication, national reporting obligations and penciling on the monitoring of international standards. More information at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/ippc-continues-international-cooperation-at-wto-sps-transparency-champions-course/>.
- [27] **The World Animal Health Organization (WOAH):** Regular meetings are held with WOAH to coordinate activities on the respective Observatories.
- [28] **Universal Postal Union (UPU):** The IPPC Secretariat continues to participate as an observer in the UPU postal security group (PSG) meetings and as a member of their Illicit Goods Mitigation Expert Team (IGMET). The Secretariat made presentations about plant health and e-commerce to both groups in 2024. A representative of the UPU participated as a panelist in the CPM-18 side session on e-commerce.
- [29] **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** The IPPC 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.
- [30] **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

- [31] 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.
- [32] 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 and adopted by CPM-18 (2024).
  - (2) **University of Florence:** the IPPC Secretariat in collaboration with Plant Production and Protection (NSP) lectured the class of natural resources and plant pathology students of the University of Florence, Department of Agricultural, Food, Environmental and Forestry Science and Technology (DAGRI), Plant pathology and Entomology section during their recent visit to FAO Headquarters in Rome on Friday 22 November 2024. The visiting team of lecturers and students were led by Prof. Laura Mugnai, Professor in Plant Pathology and Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Phytopathologia Mediterranea*, IPPC Secretariat together with NSP Divisional units of Rotterdam Convention, Locust and Transboundary Pests, Pesticides and IPM provided a three-hour lectures in their specific areas of specializations in the King Faisal meeting in FAO.

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<sup>7</sup> WTO website: <https://www.wto.org/>

<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)

## Regional Plant Protection Organizations

- [33] 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. The IPPC Secretariat supported the meeting of Technical Consultation among RPPOs
- [34] In 2024, the IPPC Secretariat engaged AU-IAPSC, NEPPO African countries and RECs on the proposed Africa Phytosanitary Program (APP). In coordination with IAPSC and NEPPO as members operational coordination group (OCG), the IPPC Secretariat continued to support 11 pilot phase countries of APP with the plan for the rest of the countries in Africa to join over the next four years. Eight second phase countries have been selected and priority pests identified. 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.
- [35] The AU-IAPSC is one of the key stakeholders of the IPPC ePhyto Africa Initiative currently under development. This Initiative aims at encouraging and supporting countries to adopt and implement the IPPC ePhyto Solution at national level across Africa. AU-IAPSC is a chair of operation coordination group (OCG) of the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP).
- [36] NEPPO: is a vice chair of the operation coordination group (OCG) of the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP).

## FAO

The FAO Mesoamerica office provided outstanding support to share expertise on how to best organize a simulation exercise on *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 in Africa. This simulation exercise was the first of its kind organized in Africa in Kenya, from 20 to 24 May 2024, recording the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the country, as well as representatives from 12 COMESA countries. The national FAO office was strongly involved in all logistics.

- [37] FAO Country Offices in Africa provided support for APP implementation in the 11 pilot countries. This collaboration has mainly focused on supporting organization of training as well as shipping and distribution of tablets for plant pest surveillance to NPPOs of the pilot phase countries.

## Recommendations

- [38] The CPM is invited to:
- (1) Note the report on the 2024 international cooperation activities.