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INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Third Session

Rome, 2-6 April 2001

Items Arising from the Second Session of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures Official Control

Agenda Item 6.5 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The 14th Meeting of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in March 1999 noted significant trade impacts related to the lack of a definition for official control. The point was raised in the context of the Committee's charge to monitor the use (or non-use) of international standards. Delegations of Chile, the European Community, Hungary, Japan, and the United States supported a recommendation for the Committee to formally raise the issue with the IPPC.
2. The IPPC Secretariat and the Chairperson of the ICPM subsequently received communication from the WTO-SPS Secretariat formally transmitting the request for the IPPC to consider undertaking the development of a definition for official control. This represents the first and only formal notification to date that the IPPC has received from the SPS Committee identifying areas of concern with respect to international phytosanitary standards.
3. An interim response from the Secretariat indicated that the issue had been considered once in the Working Group on Regulated non-quarantine pests, and was to be addressed again with the Glossary Working Group and the Committee of Experts on Phytosanitary Measures (now the Interim Standards Committee). The IPPC Secretariat has also provided the SPS Committee with updates on progress through interventions at subsequent meetings of the Committee.
4. The situation was summarized for the ICPM at its Second Session. The ICPM recommended that an open-ended working group be formed in conjunction with the Glossary Group with the purpose of reviewing the concept, defining the term, and providing guidelines, if necessary, for consistency of its application. The Glossary Group met 20-21 March 2000 in Paris France and, among its other work, also further developed a draft definition. The open-ended working group met immediately afterward on 22-24 March in Bordeaux, France. The United States provided assistance for some developing country participants to attend. EPPO assisted

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with local arrangements. The meeting was attended by 24 participants representing 18 countries and 2 regional plant protection organizations

5. The meeting drafted a definition and guidelines for the interpretation and application of the concept. The meeting noted that the definition required interpretation to be properly understood and therefore recommended that the definition should not stand alone. Instead, it was suggested that the definition along with the guidelines for the interpretation and application of the concept be added together in the Glossary as a supplement. It was envisioned that certain other Glossary terms might also be usefully addressed in the same way.

6. The Secretariat subsequently formatted the results of the open-ended working group as the first supplement to the Glossary and submitted this to the Interim Standards Committee at its first meeting in May 2001. The Interim Standards Committee considered the draft and, after minor modifications, approved it for distribution to countries for consultation. Comments from countries were collected by the Secretariat from June to October 2000. The comments were then provided to the Interim Standards Committee for its further consideration at its next meeting in November 2000. The Interim Standards Committee reviewed the comments and agreed on certain changes as a result. The draft was then approved by the Committee for submission to the ICPM to be adopted at the present Session.

7. The ICPM is invited to:
1. *Endorse* the concept of explanatory supplements to the Glossary for certain terms such as “official control”.
 2. *Recommend* future actions with regard to a response from the IPPC to the WTO-SPS Committee.