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Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

### Third Session

Rome, 2-6 April 2001

### Report of the Working Group on Information Exchange

### Agenda Item 8.2 of the Provisional Agenda

## I. Introduction

1. The Second Session of the ICPM agreed that the Chair would initiate the development of an information exchange programme. The Chairperson began this process with an informal ad hoc meeting September 2000 in Rome to identify aspects of information exchange that may be addressed by the ICPM. This was followed by a Working Group meeting January 2001 in Paris that examined the issues in greater detail.
2. The Working Group considered the provisions of the Convention related to information exchange and listed these as activities according to the status of their implementation as:
  - procedures already implemented;
  - procedures under development;
  - procedures requiring no action by the ICPM.
3. The Working Group also considered that the interpretation of certain provisions of the Convention regarding information exchange required clarification. The Working Group recommended interpretations and formulated programme recommendations based on these interpretations.
4. Recommendations of the meeting are summarized as:
  - general recommendations;
  - specific recommendations; and
  - technical assistance programme recommendations.
5. Tables 1-3 summarize the status of implementation. Table 4 lists interpretations that are recommended by the Working Group.

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## II. General recommendations

6. The Working Group considered the nature of an information system that would provide an efficient mechanism for the information exchange requirements identified in the Convention. The Working Group recommended that the ICPM anticipate a fully Internet-based system administered by the Secretariat with oversight by an ICPM support group. It proposed that the system be known as the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) and rely upon countries for reporting and data management.

7. Two primary objectives of the system would be to make full use of links to national websites and links to RPPOs. The Working Group recommended that these sites clearly identify which information is provided to meet the information exchange obligations of contracting parties to the IPPC.

8. The Working Group recognized that many countries may not yet have Internet access or the possibility to put in place a national website. It anticipated that, at minimum, each NPPO would have access to a reasonably up-to-date computer and, until Internet capability was available, could be provided with CD-ROM copies of the IPP at periodic intervals. The Working Group also recommended that the posting of national information for countries without national websites would be by:

- provision in the IPP of Web pages available for NPPO use (controlled remotely by the NPPO); and
- NPPOs (including those no or limited Internet access) sending relevant information to the IPPC Secretariat using special templates to supply information in an electronic format.

9. The Working Group considered the nature of the information to be included in the IPP and recommended that the information would include:

### A. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE IPPC

10.

- Pest reports (Articles IV.2 (b) & VIII.1 (a))
- Description of the NPPOs (Article IV.4)
- Phytosanitary restrictions, requirements and prohibitions (Article VII.2 (b))
- List of regulated pest lists (Article VII.2 (i))
- Emergency actions (Article VII.6)
- Official contact points (Article VIII.2)

### B. SECRETARIAT INFORMATION

11.

- Provision of ISPMs, meeting reports, work programme activities, and other items of interest to ICPM Members and the general public.

### C. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

12. There is a large section of information that countries are not obligated to provide but may voluntarily provide because it would be of considerable use to other countries. This includes:

- phytosanitary diagnostics information (laboratories, experts, collections etc.);
- official pest risk analyses;
- technical and biological information (data sheets, databases, maps, pest lists etc.);
- treatments; and
- post-entry quarantine facilities.

13. Access to the information would be provided through the IPP, recognizing that a CD-ROM is periodically needed for countries with limited or no Internet access.

## **D. LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES**

14. The Working Group recommended that the IPP include links to other resources that are helpful to NPPOs (e.g. EcoPort, ProMed, CABI, etc.).

## **III. Specific recommendations**

15. The Working Group considered specific information exchange obligations in the Convention and recommended interpretations for the understanding and application of each as described below.

### *Pest reports (Articles IV.2 (b) & VIII.1(a))*

16. An ISPM on pest reporting is under development and is expected to be submitted to the ICPM for adoption in 2002. The present draft recommends that countries meet their pest reporting obligations using a global system put in place by the ICPM. The Working Group recommends that the Secretariat, in the framework of the IPP, develop a template for reporting that can be used by member countries with or without Internet access. It was noted that recommendations on a reporting time limit should be included in this ISPM. This system could also be used for transmitting information on pest free areas.

### *Description of the NPPO (including agencies with delegated responsibilities) (Article IV.4)*

17. The meeting recommended that the description of the official plant protection organization according to Article IV.4 should identify the organizations that execute the functions as provided in Article IV.2 (a-g). It recommended that organograms be provided for relevant parts of the government, including a brief description of the relevant functions related to the responsibilities. The information should also contain a listing of the relevant organizational sections together with a short summary of their functions and locations. A letter from the Secretariat has been sent to NPPOs requesting this information.

### *Phytosanitary restrictions, requirements and prohibitions (Article VII.2 (b))*

18. The Working Group recommended that all information on restrictions, requirements, and prohibitions be:

- made available in electronic format;
- available through national or RPPO websites and/or national Web pages within the IPPC website linked through IPP; and
- published in at least one FAO language (as noted in Article XIX.2(b)), preferably in English.

### *List of regulated pest (Article VII.2(i))*

19. An ISPM on the preparation of lists of regulated pests is under development and is expected to be submitted to the ICPM for adoption in 2002. The Working Group recommended that countries supply the data according to the ISPM in the form of a link to a national or RPPO website or in electronic format to the Secretariat. However, in view of the importance of the availability of such pest lists, the Working Group recommended that countries provide pest lists in the currently available format (preferably electronically) with the aim of moving toward an Internet-based format as soon as possible.

### *Emergency actions (Article VII.6)*

20. The Working Group noted that descriptions for the concepts of emergency actions and emergency measures are under development. It recommended that Article VII.6 be understood to involve both actions and measures (refer also to Principle 14 in ISPM #1). While emergency actions are usually only reported to affected trade partners, emergency measures should be reported to the relevant trade partners, the Secretariat and RPPOs.

21. The Working Group noted the WTO system of emergency notification and suggested that the IPPC and WTO systems be considered together to avoid duplication. It recommended that the Secretariat provide a similar form and procedures for countries to use to notify emergency measures. It was proposed that this be used in the same manner as for pest reporting.

*Official contact point (Article VIII.2)*

22. The Secretariat has invited countries to identify their designated contact points in conformity with their obligations under the interim measures corresponding to Article VIII.2. The information is provided by the contracting party, i.e., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or equivalent. Listings for contact points are managed, updated, and made available by the Secretariat.

#### **IV. Technical assistance programme recommendations**

23. The Working Group noted the concerns of developing countries regarding aspects of information management, including:

- the need for up-to-date surveillance data on pest incidence to facilitate trade;
- PRA training, inspection;
- institutional framework (in particular a sustainable information system, sustainable financial mechanisms, feedback mechanisms, and dissemination and communication across sectors);
- Internet access combined with information technology training at minimum for every contact point
- diagnostic facilities and expertise at points of entry; and
- the lack of resources for adequate representation at relevant international meetings.

24. The Working Group also noted the benefits of cooperation, sharing information, and harmonizing phytosanitary measures on a regional and sub-regional basis.

25. The Working Group highlighted the importance of institutional frameworks in the development and maintenance of plant health systems. This included factors such as communication with the public and commercial sectors, sustainable financing, etc.

26. The Working Group recommended that a technical assistance programme contain the following elements:

- a) seminars on information exchange (re: obligations);
- b) development of a mechanism for Information Exchange i.e. networking and provision of equipment; and
- c) training on the use of information exchange systems and equipment.

27. The Working Group estimated that an initial technical assistance programme on this subject would require approximately US\$2 million over a period of 3 years and recommended coordination through the IPPC Secretariat.

28. **The ICPM is invited to:**

1. *Adopt* the proposal for an IPP as described above in General Recommendations, taking account of the resource requirements needed for implementation and maintenance.
2. *Nominate* a support group to provide guidance to the Secretariat in the implementation and maintenance of the IPP.
3. *Adopt* the Specific Recommendations described above for the interpretation and application of information exchange provisions of the Convention.
4. *Consider* the recommendations for a technical assistance programme in its consideration of technical assistance initiatives of the ICPM.

**Table 1. IPPC information exchange requirements already implemented**

The following information exchange procedures have already been implemented by the IPPC Secretariat and are ongoing in nature.

Article	Responsible party	Function	Receiving parties	Medium / Languages	Status
VIII.2	Contracting party	Contact point for the exchange of information	Not specified	On paper in 5 languages On the Web in 3 languages	Implemented, ongoing Implemented, ongoing
XII.4(a)	Secretary	International standards	All contracting parties within sixty days of adoption	On paper and electronically in 5 languages On the Web in 3 languages	Implemented, ongoing Implemented, ongoing
XII.5	Secretary	Translations of international standards	Commission	On paper and electronically in 5 languages	Implemented, ongoing
XVII	Director-General of FAO	Adherence to IPPC	Contracting parties	On paper in one FAO language FAO Legal Office database	Implemented, ongoing

**Table 2. IPPC information exchange requirements under development**

The following information exchange procedures have already been initiated. Once implemented they shall all be ongoing in nature.

Article	Responsible party	Function	Receiving parties	Status / Possible Mechanism
IV.2(b) & VIII.1(a)	NPPO Contracting party	Pest reporting* Exchange of information on plant pests, particularly the reporting of the occurrence, outbreak or spread of pests that may be of immediate or potential danger	Not specified by the Convention, but should follow Commission procedures	Development of an ISPM on pest reporting, scheduled for possible adoption at ICPM 4 <i>Bilateral, regional or global mechanism need to be discussed and developed</i>
IV.4	NPPO	Description of NPPO and changes (as described in Art IV.2 (a-g))	Secretary	Secretariat to draft letter to NPPOs <i>Mechanism initiated</i>
VII.2 (f)	Importing contracting party	Significant instances of non-compliance with phytosanitary certification	Exporting or re-exporting contracting party	Development of an ISPM on non-compliance
	Exporting contracting party	Result of its investigation	Importing country on request	Scheduled for possible adoption at ICPM 3 <i>Bilateral communication only</i>
VII.2(i)	Contracting party	Lists of regulated pests	Secretary, RPPOs of which they are members, other contracting parties on request	Development of an ISPM
VII.6	Contracting party	Emergency action	Contracting parties concerned, Secretary, RPPOs of which the contracting party is a member.	Covered by the ISPM on non-compliance
XII.4(c)	Secretary	Lists of regulated pests	All contracting parties and RPPOs	Scheduled for possible adoption at ICPM 4 Recommended as an interim action in its present format (electronically)
XIII.3	Director-General of FAO	Report of Dispute Resolution Committee	Contracting parties concerned	Rules of procedure for dispute resolution Scheduled for possible adoption at ICPM 3 <i>Director-General of FAO to implement</i>

\* Art. IV 2(b) & VIII 1(a) were identified by Resolution 12/97 of the 29<sup>th</sup> FAO Conference and the meeting participants as requiring a high priority status for reporting to the Secretary.

**Table 3. IPPC information exchange requirements that need no ICPM action**

Article	Responsible party	Function	Receiving parties	Status
VIII.1(c)	Contracting party, to the extent practicable	Technical and biological information necessary for PRA	Other contracting parties	This deals with bilateral cooperation and no action is required by the ICPM. However, the proposed IPP may give access to any information which countries choose to provide

**Table 4. IPPC information exchange requirements that need further consideration and possible discussion by the ICPM**

The following information exchange obligations generated considerable discussion. The working group made the following recommendations for the text in the NRT of the IPPC that needed interpretation.

Article	Responsible party	Function	Receiving parties according to the Convention	Recommendations
IV.4	NPPO	Organizational arrangements for plant protection	Other contracting parties upon request	This requirement does not relate to the general structure of an NPPO (mentioned in the first sentence), but to organizational arrangements described in Article IV.2 & 3
VII.2(b)	Contracting party	Publish and transmit phytosanitary requirements, restrictions and prohibitions	Any contracting party or parties that they believe may be directly affected by such measures	The Working Group <u>recommends</u> the to make phytosanitary requirements more widely available than in the past through inclusion in the IPP (available to all countries whether affected or not)
VII.2(c)	Contracting party	Rationale for phytosanitary requirements, restrictions and prohibitions	On request, to any contracting party	'Rationale' is understood to refer to compliance with the requirements stated in Article VI.1(a) and (b)
VII.2(d)	Contracting party	Consignments of particular plants or plant products to be imported only through specified points of entry	Secretary, RPPOs of which the contracting party is a member, all contracting parties which the contracting party believes to be directly affected, other contracting parties upon request	<u>Recommend</u> to the ICPM that this point is already covered by Art. VII.2(b) and this information should be reported as part of the information reported under VII.2(b)
VII.2(j)	Contracting party, to best of ability	Adequate information on pest status in order to support categorization of pests, and for the development of appropriate phytosanitary measures	Contracting parties, on request	<u>Recommends</u> the term 'pest status' is understood to be the same meaning as 'pest status' in ISPM #8. 'Categorization' is understood to refer to the differentiation of regulated and non-regulated pests. ISPM #6 provides guidance on what is meant by 'adequate' information

VII.6	Contracting party	Emergency action	Contracting parties concerned, Secretary, RPPOs of which the contracting party is a member	Clarification being provided in the ISPM on non-compliance. Additional clarification may be provided through the Glossary
VIII.2	Contracting party	Contact point for the exchange of information	Not specified	<u>Recommends</u> that designation is understood to be the official notification of the contact point to the IPPC Secretariat
XII.4(d)	Secretary	Phytosanitary requirements, restrictions and prohibitions	Not specified	<u>Recommends</u> that this paragraph be understood to refer to the phytosanitary requirements, restrictions and prohibitions of those countries wishing to use the IPPC website for making available to other members. Other Members would use their own websites (or their RPPOs) making their phytosanitary requirements, restrictions and prohibitions available