

August 1998



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
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Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

Agenda Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda

INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Rome, 03-06 November 1998

WORK PROGRAMME FOR HARMONIZATION

1. The Twenty-fifth FAO Conference agreed in 1989 to establish the IPPC Secretariat within FAO as a mechanism to provide the capability for setting phytosanitary standards with wide global participation and broad international acceptance. In 1997, the Twenty-ninth FAO Conference approved the New Revised Text of the IPPC including Article XII and other provisions which identify specific responsibilities of the Secretariat and the relationship of the Secretariat to the Commission.
2. The primary activities in the current work programme of the Secretariat involve the elaboration of international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs); information sharing associated with the IPPC, and the provision of technical assistance.
3. The Interim Commission is invited to review the status of the work programme and provide the Secretariat with guidance concerning direction and priorities.

I. STATUS OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

4. ISPMs endorsed and published:
 - No. 1: Principles of Plant Quarantine as Related to International Trade, 1995
 - No. 2: Guidelines for Pest Risk Analysis, 1996
 - No. 3: Code of Conduct for the Import and Release of Exotic Biological Control Agents, 1996
 - No. 4: Requirements for the Establishment of Pest Free Areas, 1996
 - No. 5: Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms, 1997
 - No. 6: Guidelines for Surveillance, 1998
 - No. 7: Export Certification System, 1997

For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable.

5. CEPM approved standards recommended for endorsement by the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in November 1998:
 - Determination of Pest Status in an Area
 - Guidelines for Pest Eradication Programmes
6. Standards in government consultation:
 - Requirements for the Establishment of Pest Free Places of Production
 - Inspection Methodology
7. Draft standards pending review and approval by the CEPM for government consultation:
 - Pest Risk Analysis for Quarantine Pests
 - Guidelines for an Import Regulatory System
 - Guidelines for Phytosanitary Certificates
 - Guidelines for Surveillance for Specific Pests: Citrus Canker
8. Published standards being updated and aligned with the New Revised Text of the IPPC:
 - Principles of Plant Quarantine as related to International Trade (*first draft prepared by the Secretariat*)
 - Guidelines for Pest Risk Analysis (*first draft prepared by the Secretariat*)
 - Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms (*routine updating*)
9. Priorities for future standards identified by the 9th Technical Consultation among RPPOs in September 1997 (*documents developed where indicated*):
 - Guidelines for the preparation of regulated pest lists
 - Technical justification for regulating non-quarantine pests (*draft discussion paper by the IPPC Secretariat; working group scheduled for October 1998*)
 - Guidelines for notification - interceptions and non-compliance
 - Systems approaches for risk management (*discussion paper by the Secretariat*)
 - Low pest prevalence
 - Quarantine nomenclature for plants and plant products
 - Dispute settlement (*draft reference standard in preparation*)
 - Procedures for the preparation of a standard (*pending discussion of the Interim Commission*)
 - Pest-specific monitoring and testing requirements
 - Training and accreditation of inspectors
 - Pest control procedures
 - Procedures for post-entry quarantine

Systems for approving phytosanitary treatments
Guidelines for research requirements for treatment efficacy
Commodity-specific standards

II. INFORMATION SHARING

10. The New Revised Text of the IPPC includes important obligations for information sharing by the Secretariat and between contracting parties. The primary obligations for the Secretariat focus on international standards as well as information received from contracting parties concerning points of entry, phytosanitary requirements, and lists of regulated pests. The responsibility for providing “official” information to the Secretariat and to other contracting parties rests primarily with the official national plant protection organization (NPPO) of the contracting party. The Secretariat assists to the extent possible by providing means to facilitate such information sharing.

11. The New Revised Text of the IPPC states that each contracting party is obliged to designate a contact point for the exchange of information related to the implementation of the Convention. All official communication between members and with the Secretariat is channelled through this contact point. The Secretariat is collecting this information and will make it available in print, electronically, and on the IPPC web site (<http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPP/PQ/>). This listing replaces the current Directory of regional plant protection organizations and national plant protection services.

12. Other than printed documents such as the ISPMs, which will be distributed by the Secretariat in the normal way, the Secretariat is now devoting significant attention to the development and maintenance of the IPPC web site to promote and facilitate information sharing. The activities of the Secretariat, regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) and NPPOs are to be highlighted and all official documentation relating to the IPPC will be available through this site. Links will also be provided to other relevant web sites.

13. The Interim Commission is advised that FAO no longer maintains the FAO Global Plant Quarantine Information System (PQ database). The PQ database is being superseded by an Internet-based system known as the Global Plant and Pest Information System (GPPIS) (<http://pppis.fao.org>) on the World Wide Web. This is a more contemporary and complete system developed by FAO to provide researchers and national plant protection organizations with a dynamic, interactive forum for reporting plant and pest information.

14. GPPIS provides free access to a range of plant protection information, including pest information (i.e. pathogens, arthropod pests, weeds), host information, a glossary, an extensive bibliography, routine methodologies, a significant number of publications and a picture databank. All material in GPPIS is in the public domain and can be accessed via the Internet or as a stand-alone CD-ROM version. It is envisioned that copies of the CD will be distributed by FAO on a regular basis.

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

15. One form of technical assistance provided by the Secretariat involves advice and technical support to FAO’s programmes concerned with capacity building and strengthening plant protection institutions in Member countries. FAO has a long history of technical assistance in plant protection and plant quarantine with programs that can be specially designed to meet specific needs.

16. This type of assistance has new urgency and greater significance as countries become increasingly aware of their trade obligations and weaknesses in their phytosanitary systems. Through FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), areas such as training, programme development, the improvement of physical facilities and systems, the development and expansion of information and data management systems, and the acquisition of needed equipment are accommodated and facilitated. Technical cooperation programmes are applied at the national, sub-regional or regional level, provided that the nature of the assistance required meets the desired criteria.

17. Capacity building is also facilitated through FAO's active support to economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (E/TCDC) as well as countries in transition (TCCT). These programmes provide a structured mechanism for countries to cooperate among themselves with FAO playing a supportive and catalytic role. The programmes provide for the engagement of experts from these countries in projects designed to strengthen institutional arrangements, as well as promote cooperation in reducing the risk of introduction and spread of regulated pests and to promote measures for their control.

18. Projects involving technical assistance in plant protection are underway in East Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda), West Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Gambia), the Pacific Islands, the Bahamas, and the Near and Middle East (Tunisia, Algeria, Iran, Cyprus). In addition, regional projects are being developed for the Andean countries and the Caribbean.

19. In the case of the Andean countries, the project involves a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to technical and trade policy issues across the SPS disciplines of plant, animal, and human health. In the Caribbean region, FAO has proposed to work with CARICOM toward the primary objective of updating plant protection legislation in the region.

20. In both regional initiatives, there is an urgent need for countries to be able to understand and meet their obligations under the IPPC and the World Trade Organization's Agreement in the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), assert their rights under these agreements and fully benefit from the liberalization of trade. FAO and the Secretariat recognize that less advanced countries in other regions and sub-regions are not dissimilar in their needs. Developed countries and countries in transition may also require assistance or guidance with trade-related phytosanitary issues.

21. Many countries operate on outdated or inadequate plant protection legislation that translates into difficulties in trade at both the import and export level. Increasingly, technical assistance is directed towards modernization and the redrafting of legislation consistent with international standards and the obligations of governments under the IPPC and the SPS Agreement.

22. FAO's Developmental Law Office has significant experience and expertise assisting such initiatives in Secretariat technical assistance programmes. Programmes are designed to combine FAO's technical expertise in plant protection with FAO's legal expertise to provide tailored assistance to countries or regions wishing to make appropriate adjustments in their policies, legislation, regulations and related administration. The Secretariat is currently working with the Developmental Law Office to elaborate up-to-date reference materials that are consistent with the New Revised Text of the IPPC, ISPMs, and the SPS Agreement, and may be used by all countries for modernizing their legislation and regulatory systems for plant protection.

23. Technical support for the above programmes is coordinated through the FAO's Plant Protection Service and normally uses the Plant Quarantine Officer attached to the Secretariat as the focus.

24. Another form of technical assistance under the IPPC involves direct assistance from the Secretariat in various activities related to understanding and implementing international standards

for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) and the provisions of the IPPC related to the SPS Agreement. This form of assistance involves the participation of the Secretariat in workshops, seminars and meetings that range from general information sharing to more complex and controversial trade-related issues in impasse. In most cases, this form of technical assistance is organized and funded by national or regional plant protection organizations or other organizations such as the WTO.

25. In the past year, the Secretariat has participated in regional SPS seminars and workshops in India, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. The Secretariat has also recently participated in workshops on PRA (South Africa), Inspection Methodology (Lebanon), Irradiation as a Phytosanitary Treatment (Brazil), Area Wide Pest Management (Malaysia), and Plant Diseases as Barriers to Trade (UK). There is a strong demand for additional and more substantial support in this area.

26. The office and work of the IPPC Secretariat is funded by FAO through its budget for regular program activities which is experiencing severe limitations. This restricts the ability of the Secretariat to support many activities beyond its primary obligation to elaborate standards. However, it is important to also note that while many kinds of technical assistance fall within the mandate of FAO, the obligation to provide technical assistance under the IPPC rests with the Contracting parties (Art VIII - International Cooperation, in the New Revised Text).

27. The Secretariat invites the Interim Commission to reflect on the critical need to provide technical assistance for the implementation of the New Revised Text and to help countries with their phytosanitary obligations under the IPPC and the SPS Agreement. In this regard, the Secretariat is well placed to accept and guide the direction and application of funds from donor countries and institutions towards the advancement of international harmonization and the development of competency in contemporary phytosanitary practices.