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منظمة الأغذية
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para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

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Agenda Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda

INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Rome, 03-06 November 1998

OTHER BUSINESS

I. EXPERT CONSULTATION ON THE STRENGTH OF MEASURES

1. In June 1998, the IPPC Secretariat held an Expert Consultation on the Strength of Measures for Regulated Pests which have a Minor Biological Impact. Funding for this meeting was provided by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO). The aim of the meeting was to open a dialogue on the strength of phytosanitary measures in relation to pest risk.
2. "Strength of measures" is a concept evolving from the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement) under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and reflected in the IPPC. To this end, the Secretariat sought clarification and consensus on the concept of "strength of measures" in a phytosanitary context.
3. The meeting considered whether it was useful to judge the strength of measures against distinct factors such as the biological impact of pests and the economic effects (both direct and indirect). Consideration was also given to the type of analyses needed to support such judgements. Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is identified in the IPPC as the basis for deciding whether phytosanitary measures are required and the appropriate strength of measures. The meeting confirmed that this was appropriate, but did not find it useful to separate biological, economic, and other impacts of pests. Instead, it was deemed more appropriate to consider all pest impacts as being interrelated and ultimately measured in economic terms for the purposes of pest categorization and PRA.
4. Karnal bunt of wheat was used as a case study because the disease has significant contemporary importance to trade and the importance of the disease may be more strongly linked to market losses as a result of quarantine and quality concerns rather than serious impacts of the disease in the field. The meeting noted that the significance of Karnal bunt varies considerably from country to country and that the strength of measures should correspond to the risk for each country and depends on the options available.
5. The participants expressed the opinion that PRA processes need to be more explicit, and move toward quantitative methods wherever possible to draw from scientific findings and more closely link PRA with the data that can be provided through research. Likewise, the meeting was

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hopeful that scientists, regulators, industry and the general public could become better informed about the relationship of trade to plant protection and research.

6. The Interim Commission is advised of the results and recommendations of the Expert Consultation and may consider any subsequent actions.

II. APPPC REVISION

7. Revision of the Plant Protection Agreement for the Asia and Pacific Region was recommended by the Twentieth Session of the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) in September 1997. As a general objective, the Members agreed that the Agreement required updating to be consistent with the New Revised Text of the IPPC. In addition, Members identified specific problems concerning geographical coverage and the implementation of annexes on pests not present in the Region.

8. An Expert Working Group held 20-24 April 1998 in Bangkok considered the results of a questionnaire that had been sent to member governments beforehand. The experts examined the Agreement article by article in developing recommendations and options for revision based on discussion and the comments submitted by governments. A revised text, including options where different approaches were suggested, is currently under consultation among Members.

9. The Interim Commission is advised that this process is underway and will be updated concerning the current status. The Interim Commission is invited to provide guidance to the APPPC as well as other RPPOs concerning the development or revision of regional agreements.