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INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Seventh Session

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Role and Functions of Regional Plant Protection Organizations

Agenda Item 8.8 of the Provisional Agenda

1. In 2003, the Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) discussed the role and functions of Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPO) in respect to Article IX of the Convention which stipulates that RPPOs shall cooperate with the Secretary and the Commission in order to achieve the aims of the Convention. The SPTA recommended to ICPM-6 that during 2004 a small group should be convened in order to analyse the possible roles and functions of the RPPOs with regard to the Convention and consider which of the strategic goals and directions RPPOs could provide support for. ICPM-6 agreed to establish a group (the "working group"), including three representatives of RPPOs, that would meet in 2004 to consider the possible roles and functions of RPPOs. ICPM-6 also decided that the report of this group would be sent to the 16th Technical Consultation among RPPOs for comment and, through the SPTA, be submitted for discussion at the ICPM (report of ICPM-6, paragraph 86).
2. In July 2004 the working group met, back to back with the Focus Group. Members of the Focus Group and representatives of RPPOs from the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC), the Comité de Sanidad Vegetal del Cono Sur (COSAVE) and the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) attended the meeting. The discussions in the working group focussed on three major topics:
 - General issues
 - The role of RPPOs in regard to the strategic directions of the ICPM
 - The role and organization of the Technical Consultations among RPPOs.
3. In regard to general issues, the working group pointed out that most RPPOs are independent organizations and not under the control or supervision of FAO or the IPPC. For this reason all recommendations made in relation to RPPOs would not affect the role of RPPOs or would constitute a comprehensive list of their activities. Similarly, members of the IPPC and/or RPPOs have rights and obligations under the IPPC and, if appropriate, under their RPPOs. It was understood that none of the recommendations to be developed would affect the rights or obligations of members in regard to the IPPC and, if appropriate, their RPPOs.
4. The working group analyzed in a detailed manner the role of RPPOs in regard to the strategic directions of the ICPM. It established a list of areas of cooperation between RPPOs and the IPPC in regard to the strategic directions. In respect to the role and organization of Technical

Consultations among RPPOs concerns were raised regarding the preparation of the TCs. The working group recommended that the 16th Technical Consultations among RPPOs should discuss and develop practical details for the organization of such meetings. The working group submitted its recommendations to the 16th Technical Consultation among RPPOs.

5. The 16th Technical Consultation among RPPOs (TC) took place in Nairobi, Kenya (30 August -3 September 2004). It welcomed the excellent analysis and well-structured report of the working group and its recommendations.
6. In regard to the roles and functions of RPPOs, the TC generally agreed to the recommendations of the working group and made a small number of editorial and structural changes. The TC also believed that a reference to Article IX.3 of the New Revised Text of the IPPC should be included in the recommendations of the working group, to clarify that the collaboration between the IPPC and the RPPOs had a basis in the Convention. The amended recommendations were submitted to the SPTA (see Report of the 16th TC, Appendix II).
7. In regard to the recommendation of the working group that the TC should discuss and develop practical details for the organization of technical consultations, the TC considered the practical arrangements involved with organizing a technical consultation and listed them in table form (see Report of the 16th TC, Appendix III). The TC recommended that the arrangements be forwarded to the ICPM for consideration and adoption.
8. At its meeting in October 2004 the SPTA reviewed the recommendations made by the working group on the roles and functions of RPPOs, and subsequently amended by the TC in September. The SPTA welcomed these recommendations. It recommended that they should be adopted by ICPM-7. It suggested however that the ICPM should consider making some amendments (see Report of SPTA, paragraph 10.2).
9. The SPTA also reviewed the paper proposed by the TC on the organization of TCs. It welcomed this proposal which would improve the contribution of TCs to the work of the ICPM, and acknowledged the need for such procedures. It considered, however, that the development and adoption of such procedures was a matter between the IPPC Secretariat and RPPOs and not a subject to be adopted by the ICPM.
10. The ICPM is invited to:
 1. *Consider* the recommendations made on the roles and functions of RPPOs in their relationships with the ICPM
 2. *Adopt* the recommendations made on the roles and functions of RPPOs in their relationships with the ICPM as laid down in Annex I.

Annex I**RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS
OF RPPOS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ICPM**

I. This list is presented recognizing the following points:

- None of the following recommendations limit the rights or obligations of members or affect the role of RPPOs.
- This list is not a comprehensive list of the activities that RPPOs may undertake.
- Collaboration or information exchange between RPPOs and the IPPC does not substitute for the obligations of contracting parties under the IPPC.

Areas of cooperation between RPPOs and the IPPC, in accordance with article IX.3 of the New Revised Text of the IPPC, include the following:

Standard setting process

- participation in the development of standards (such as providing comments in the consultation phase, identifying topics for standards, etc.)
- identification of regional standards that could be proposed as ISPMs
- nomination of experts for IPPC expert working groups and technical panels
- action as collaborators/hosts for standard setting meetings
- preparation of draft explanatory documents on ISPMs according to paragraph 111 of the Report of the Sixth Session of the ICPM, under the auspices of the IPPC Secretariat
- as appropriate, provision of technical and administrative support to Standards Committee members.

Information exchange

- operation of an effective International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP)
- assistance to member countries in meeting IPPC obligations in relation to information exchange
- provision of information on regional IPPC-related activities (such as pest interceptions, pest status, pest reports, regional standards, regulations, etc.)
- provision of translations of IPPC documents in languages other than the five official FAO languages.

Technical assistance

- involvement in regional workshops on draft ISPMs in their region (such as participation and logistical and technical support)*
- facilitation of the implementation of ISPMs and identification of implementation difficulties*
- report on implementation difficulties and successes to the Technical Consultation among RPPOs and the IPPC*
- as appropriate, cooperation with the IPPC Secretariat in the delivery of technical assistance.

Dispute settlement

- assistance in obtaining nominations for expert rosters
- assistance, as appropriate, in the settlement of disputes (according to the report of ICPM-3, Appendix 11.L).

Funding issues

- assistance to the IPPC in obtaining funding to support its work plan.

** Items marked with an asterisk may also be considered under the standard setting process.*

II. Depending on the availability of funds, the IPPC Secretariat should fund the participation of the Secretaries from RPPOs that are FAO commissions for their participation in the annual TC among RPPOs.