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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

SECOND SESSION

Rome, 26 – 30 March 2007

Summary Report of the Eighteenth Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations

Agenda Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The Eighteenth Technical Consultation (TC) among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) was held at FAO Headquarters, Rome, on 11-14 September 2006, and was attended by representatives from six of the nine RPPOs recognized by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM). A range of issues of regional and international importance was discussed. The full report is available on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP). Opportunity was also taken by the RPPOs to meet with the IPPC evaluation team.

I. Participation by all RPPOs at the Technical Consultation

2. Concern was expressed in that there were still RPPOs (namely the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council, Comunidad Andina and Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria) not represented at the TC. RPPOs had a recognized role in the CPM structure and attendance at the TC was an important means of ensuring that any IPPC activities involving RPPOs could be coordinated.

3. The representative from the North American Plant Protection Organization reminded the TC of the document on the recognition of RPPOs and suggested that at its next meeting the TC may wish to discuss the criteria required in order that an RPPO could continue to be recognised under the IPPC.

4. The RPPOs represented at the TC were: Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC), Comité de Sanidad Vegetal del Cono Sur (COSAVE), Caribbean Plant Protection Commission (CPPC), European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) and Pacific Plant Protection Organization (PPPO).

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II. Legal interpretation of Article V.2a of the IPPC

5. One of the RPPOs had expressed concern relating to the issuance of phytosanitary certificates, namely what was meant by “public officers”. The FAO Legal Office explained that the person who could sign the export compliance certificate would be any person who had been given the legal authority to sign on behalf of the Government. A “public officer” would be a government member, i.e. a person paid by the government, who had the mandate to act on behalf of the government and would be responsible legally, technically and administratively for the issuance of the certificate.
6. The TC agreed to develop a document on the criteria required to enable a person to be authorized as a signing official.

III. Review of RPPO activities

7. Each RPPO presented a review of their year’s activities. Collectively, this included *inter alia*, updates on the regional workshops on draft ISPMs, development of regional standards (e.g. transgenic plants - NAPPO), regional workshops (e.g. ISPM No.15, pest risk analysis (PRA), pest free areas), development/harmonisation of legislation, working groups (e.g. fruit flies, diagnostics), databases, pest lists, structures of the organizations, dispute settlement, technical assistance to other RPPOs, and pest surveys.

IV. Secretariat update

8. Staff members from the IPPC Secretariat discussed their work areas with the RPPOs. With the standard setting programme, the importance of collaboration with RPPOs in relation to expert drafting groups was stressed, especially for nominations and participation of experts in meetings, organization of meetings and submission of discussion documents.
9. In the area of information exchange, the Secretariat believed that RPPOs could play a central role in promoting the use of the IPP by encouraging their members to increase their use of it and to maintain the data already loaded. The Secretariat wished to work more closely with RPPOs to ensure synergy between the IPP and current and future RPPO information systems, particularly in the areas of pest reporting. The meeting agreed that a more in-depth discussion on the IPP and information exchange needed to take place during the 19th TC.
10. The Secretariat reported on the technical assistance programme and presented the Technical Cooperation Unilateral Trust Fund and Government Cooperative Programme projects being managed by the Secretariat. The Informal Working Group on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) was scheduled to meet in Nairobi (4-8 December 2006) to consider in particular CAB-International’s report on the assessment of the PCE as a technical assistance tool. The RPPOs were requested to encourage their members to complete and respond to the questionnaires that had been sent by CAB-International. A short questionnaire had also been given to the RPPOs to solicit their views on aspects of the PCE tool.

V. Databases managed by RPPOs

11. One of the RPPOs expressed concern about making available information received from National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) relating to interceptions or pest alerts. An example of an erroneous publication of a pest that was absent from the export region was quoted and the negative effect that that had had on trade. The RPPOs agreed to remind their members that before publishing any notifications of non-compliance they should ensure that the requirements of ISPM No. 13 (*Guidelines for the notification of non-compliance and emergency action*) were met.

12. The RPPOs described their current databases. Information collectively included inspectors authorized to sign phytosanitary certificates, lists of completed PRAs, interceptions for non-compliances related to wood packaging material, pest alert lists, lists of organisms important in agriculture and crop protection, regulated pest lists, recorded pest occurrences within a country, lists of all pests found on a crop and lists of recorded and reported interceptions at ports. The TC acknowledged the very useful information (official and otherwise) available in the RPPO databases and agreed that consideration of linking various databases to the IPP would be part of the in-depth information exchange discussion at the next TC.

VI. Presentations on reference laboratories

13. A discussion was held relating to the roles of reference laboratories. The representative from New Zealand described the possible functional roles, based on the OIE criteria, that could define a plant health reference laboratory and the challenges facing the establishment of such.

14. The need for national reference laboratories was recognized by some RPPOs but it was also stressed that it should not be an obligation for NPPOs to establish reference laboratories. The TC agreed that it would be useful to have further investigations on national reference laboratories but before initiating any activity on the topic it should liaise with the IPPC Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols in order to discuss possible roles and to identify areas where the TC could be of assistance.

VII. Workshop on pest free areas

15. A series of case studies had been prepared by some RPPOs in order to share their experiences with pest free areas (PFAs). The PPPO presented their experience in determining PFAs for fruit flies in the Pacific from a regional standpoint (covering over 20 countries and a major part of the Pacific). Surveillance, trade facilitation and public awareness activities were described. As the movement and introduction of fruit flies across the Pacific was mainly through human activities and the Pacific was still free from many harmful species found in other parts of the world, concern and care was taken with the import of host material.

16. The NAPPO representative presented an example of a PFA in Mexico which described the measures taken for the establishment and maintenance of fruit fly free areas. The presentation highlighted the cooperation required among producers, exporters and government to ensure success. In addition, a series of phytosanitary measures were described that could be included in a work plan, such as appropriate legislation, controls, surveillance, trapping density, emergency actions etc.

17. The presentation given by the COSAVE representative covered Argentina and Chile. The detection systems (trapping and fruit sampling), control systems (chemical, cultural and sterile insect technique) and internal quarantine systems were described. Public awareness was also recognized as an important component in the system to maintain fruit fly free areas.

VIII. Work programme for 2006-07

18. The TC developed a work programme for 2006-07 (see Appendix II of the full report of the TC) which included the following areas:

- Legal interpretation of Article V.2a of the IPPC
- Discussions on mechanisms to improve non-compliance information provided by RPPOs, including alert systems
- Discussions on mechanisms to improve information provided in databases managed by RPPOs
- RPPO databases - consideration of linking various databases to the IPP

- Reference laboratories - EPPO to contact the steward of the Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols to discuss the possible role of the TC and identify areas where it could assist the panel.

IX. Venue for the 19th TC

19. The 19th TC will be hosted by NAPPO in North America, on 10-14 September 2007. An informal meeting will be held during CPM-2 (2007) in Rome to discuss agenda items and other arrangements.