



منظمة الأغذية
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Organización
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Unidas
para la
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y la
Alimentación

COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Second Session

Rome, 26 – 30 March 2007

Report by the Chairperson of the Standards Committee

Agenda Item 9.1 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The Standards Committee (SC) met in both May and November 2006.
2. In both sessions an impressive volume of work was imposed on the SC. Moreover, two new elements had to be considered in the management of the work due to decisions at the first meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM). First, a report of the sessions of the SC must be produced and distributed immediately after the SC meetings, so as a result some time had to be put aside at the end of the meetings for adoption of the report. Secondly, the SC meetings need to have interpretation into any specific FAO language if a request of a SC member to the IPPC Secretariat is expressed. The November meeting of the SC had therefore interpretation into four FAO languages, this helped many SC members to express themselves more easily and was welcomed by the SC members.
3. In the light of the above, this report will therefore mainly highlight the most important activities of the SC. The full reports can be consulted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP).

I. Meeting of the SC on 8-12 May 2006

4. The SC focused its work mainly on draft ISPMs proposed for submission for country consultation, draft specifications for approval and review of country comments, reports of technical panels (TPs), the Glossary working group and expert working groups (EWG) and proposals to improve the standard setting process.
5. In regard to the draft ISPMs, the SC considered significant issues in each draft ISPM on a case by case basis and agreed that other issues, where they existed, could be identified and addressed through the country consultation process. This has also allowed more time to address the substantial amount of work on the meeting agenda.

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6. The SC considered 10 draft ISPMs of which the following were approved with modified drafts being submitted for countries in the country consultation process:
 - Pest risk analysis (Revision of ISPM No. 2);
 - Recognition of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence;
 - Phytosanitary treatments for regulated pests;
 - Establishment of areas of low pest prevalence for fruit flies (Tephritidae);
 - Amendments to ISPM No. 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*);
 - Debarked and bark-free wood.
7. However, no final decision was made for the remaining 4 draft ISPMs as further work on the content was considered necessary or further scrutiny by the SC members was required due to a late posting of these documents on the IPP. The SC members were therefore requested to submit their comments to the appropriate steward no later than 1 July 2006, enabling them to produce a new version of these draft ISPMs, which will then be put on the agenda of the May 2007 SC meeting. This is the case for the following draft ISPMs:
 - Production and maintenance of pest free potato micro-propagation material and minitubers in international trade;
 - Sampling of consignments;
 - Classification of commodities into phytosanitary risk categories;
 - The structure and operation of post-entry quarantine facilities.
8. The SC further agreed to apply a cut-off date for posting draft ISPMs for the May SC meeting and agreed to 1 March 2007. Those working on revising draft ISPMs were reminded to ensure that the proposed draft is submitted to the IPPC Secretariat at least 2 weeks prior to this date.
9. As regards the draft specifications for approval and review of country comments, the SC discussed, amended and approved 7 draft specifications and agreed to send 2 new specifications for country consultation. Due to lack of time, another 8 draft specifications were not addressed and it was agreed to put them on the agenda of the November 2006 meeting. SC members were invited to submit comments to the appropriate steward no later than 1 July 2006.
10. The SC discussed the reports of the TPs (TP on diagnostic protocols, TP on forestry quarantine, TP on fruit flies and TP on phytosanitary treatments) and of the Glossary working group (now Technical Panel for the Glossary); it further reviewed many recommendations from the TPs and agreed to many of them enabling the respective TPs to continue their work. It was re-stated that the SC had agreed that proposals for new treatments would have to be added to the IPPC standard setting work programme before they could be developed.
11. The SC also selected the SC-7 as follows, with one expert by FAO region:
 - Africa: Michael Holtzhausen;
 - Asia: Fuxiang Wang;
 - Europe: Jens-Georg Unger;
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: Odilson Riberiro e Silva;
 - Near East: Mohammad Katbeh Bader;
 - North America: Greg Wolff;
 - Southwest Pacific: John Hedley.
12. The SC noted that if a member was unable to attend a meeting of the SC-7, he/she could be replaced by another SC member from the same region. The original SC-7 member would consult the other SC members in the region, choose the replacement and inform the Secretariat, which would in turn inform the SC.

II. Meeting of the SC on 13-17 November 2006

13. The SC focussed its work mainly on draft ISPMs for approval and submission to CPM, draft specifications for review of country comments and approval, documents for submission to CPM-2 in March 2007, update of the standard setting work programme, proposals to improve the standard setting process and discussion on documents differed since some time.

14. The SC noted the excellent work done by the SC-7 and in particular the huge preparatory work by the relevant stewards who attended the meeting for their respective draft and went through the country comments, identifying the important or contentious issues within these comments and recommending suggestions for the draft standard. The SC noted that the SC-7 had reviewed and modified the amendments to the Glossary and four of the draft ISPMs (Revision of ISPM No 2: Framework for PRA, Phytosanitary treatments for regulated pests, Recognition of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence and debarked and bark-free wood). It had started the review of the draft ISPM on establishment of areas of low pest prevalence for fruit flies (Tephritidae) but had not completed it.

15. After discussion, the SC recommended that the draft be considered by the CPM but agreed that if the number of comments received on the draft prior to the CPM was too large to be considered during the meeting, then the draft would be withdrawn and sent to the TPF for further consideration and another round of country consultation.

16. The SC approved afterwards the above modified draft ISPMs for submission to CPM-2.

17. The SC discussed, amended and approved 5 draft specifications and agreed to use e-mail to consider and, if appropriate, approve 2 additional specifications for country consultation; there was not enough time to review all the specifications so 4 others were again put on the agenda of the next SC meeting.

18. The SC considered that specifications should be balanced with sufficient guidance for experts on tasks to be undertaken and flexibility so that the experts can develop the concepts and tasks under consideration. The SC stressed further that submission of discussion papers is encouraged from interested parties (such as contracting parties, NPPOs, RPPOs and international organizations) and from participants in the expert drafting groups. A statement will therefore be added to all new specifications approved by the SC, following the section References.

19. The SC discussed and approved the following documents for submission to CPM-2:

- Terms of reference and rules of procedure for TPs;
- Annex 1 of the rules of procedure of the CPM;
- Procedures and criteria for identification of topics for the work programme;
- Amendments to Rule VII of the Rules of procedure of the CPM on observers;
- Statement of commitment for participation in IPPC meetings;
- Declaration of interest for experts participating in IPPC meetings;
- Adjustments to the IPPC standard setting work programme.

20. The approved documents will be submitted to CPM during this session for either adoption, agreement or information.

21. The SC further agreed on decisions made by the TPs in relation to their work programme. It is important to note that the SC agreed that diagnostic protocols be submitted through the fast-track process, reversing its earlier decision to send the first ones through the regular standard setting process.

22. The SC continued its discussion on various options for improving the standard setting process, based on a document prepared by the Secretariat with the assistance of Mr Hedley pursuant to a decision made at the fifth meeting of the SC. It was recognized that the main goal of such improvements should be to produce high quality drafts. The current system has some

problems, in particular the short time scale for scrutiny of country comments by stewards and the back-to-back meetings of the SC-7 and SC which does not allow the SC to reflect fully on changes made to the draft ISPMs by the SC-7 in the previous week.

23. Several important suggestions were made which are summarized in the report of the session. Nevertheless, I would like to highlight in particular some of the points made:
- the importance of regional workshops in particular for capacity building;
 - supported the use of a professional editor in the development of draft ISPMs;
 - full support by SC for the work of stewards and SC-7; without their work it would currently be virtually impossible to approve draft ISPMs;
 - most members were in favour of an extension of the standard setting process by one year, in order to separate the process of review of country comments by the SC-7 and the full consideration of the revised drafts by the SC.
24. Finally the SC asked the IPPC Secretariat, with Mr Hedley, to redraft the document based on the comments made in both the May and the November meeting. The document should provide guidance on how the changes would be addressed by the CPM. This document would be discussed at the next SC meeting.
25. Regarding the dates of the next meeting, it was noted that due to limited finances, the Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) had recommended that the SC only meet in November 2007 back to back to the SC-7 meeting and that the May meeting only be a SC-7 meeting. A lot of concern about this was raised by some members of the SC. In December 2006, the IPPC Secretariat received an increase in the FAO allocation of resources. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, decided to reconvene the meeting of the SC in May 2007 and offer full travel assistance to members from countries with low-income economies and lower-middle-income economies and partial travel assistance to members from upper-middle-income economies.
26. Finally, I would like to mention that during 2006, the SC has again performed very well in a constructive and friendly atmosphere, although the working conditions were not always appropriate to the large workload that was imposed on the SC. I would also like to underline the excellent co-operation with the IPPC Secretariat. Its contribution before and during the meetings has largely facilitated the work of all those involved in the standard-setting process, and in particular the work of the SC.