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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Ninth Session

Rome, 31 March - 4 April 2014

Report of the Activities of the Standards Committee

Agenda item 9.1

Prepared by Standards Committee Chairperson:
Ms Jane Chard

I. Introduction

1. 2013 was another busy year for the Standards Committee (SC). Reports of all meetings are available on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP)¹. As always the SC is grateful for the comprehensive support from the IPPC Secretariat. I would also like to formally acknowledge the input by SC members and the many technical experts involved in panels and expert groups. The IPPC relies on such input at all stages of the standard setting process and the support from contracting parties in allowing staff to devote time to our work is highly appreciated.

2. SC members provide input not only during meetings, but also by active participation between meetings in discussions and electronic decision making, developing discussion papers, acting as SC-7 members, participating in member consultation (MC) activities in their countries and regions, and representing the standard setting process in many different ways. In particular, the stewards of draft international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) play a crucial role at all stages of development, including guiding discussions on concepts during drafting by expert working groups (EWGs) or technical panels (TPs), responding to comments from MC and the substantial concerns commenting period (SCCP) and leading discussions in SC and SC-7 meetings, including evening sessions!

3. We rely on the expertise of TP members to ensure that ISPMs are technically sound. Many of them manage the development of several drafts; they take part in virtual meetings and develop concepts in their specialist area. We would also not be able to adopt diagnostic protocols (DPs)

¹ SC reports available at: <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee>

without the effort and expertise of the drafting groups and, from 2013, the experts that review early draft DPs in the newly created expert consultation process.

4. The CPM requested the SC to deal with some challenging topics this year. Progress was made with the topic of *Minimizing pest movement by sea containers* (2008-001). In conjunction with three strategic experts and taking into account comments from contracting parties, a revised specification for the *International movement of grain* (topic number 2008-007; CPM 2014/06) was approved. SC members also participated in the task force meeting to agree a framework for standards in Ottawa, Canada in September 2013 (see CPM 2014/05).

5. The SC made further progress on implementing the new standard setting process adopted by CPM-7 in 2012. This included assigning assistant stewards and producing guidelines for them, agreeing dates for the start of the DP notification period (1 July and 15 December) and notifying the first two DPs (*Tilletia indica* and *Phyllosticta citricarpa*). The SC also produced a document for consideration by drafting groups on possible environmental impacts of draft ISPMs and agreed to the development of training materials for SC members. A subgroup of the SC was set up to start the review of the process, which will be reported in 2016.

6. As always, the SC strived to produce scientifically sound ISPMs and took into account the diverse views of contracting parties. Comments made in response to questionnaires and workshops developed by the implementation review and support system (IRSS) were also taken into account.

II. May meeting

7. Six draft ISPMs were considered and after discussion and some adjustment, the SC agreed that four should be sent for full MC in July 2013². The SC also approved two DPs and one phytosanitary treatment (PT) for MC by e-decision.

8. The SC strongly encouraged countries to organize their comments to avoid duplication with other countries' comments and to use the sharing feature on the online commenting system. This would help reduce the workload of stewards, discipline leads and the SC-7.

9. For the draft ISPM on Minimizing pest movement by sea containers, the SC took into account the CPM's views and generally supported the importance of regulating the movement of pests associated with sea containers. Some significant concerns were also identified with the draft, but the SC recognised that the only way to obtain the views of contracting parties was, exceptionally, to send the preliminary draft for MC. Only general conceptual comments were permitted at this stage and a full consultation will occur when the draft is approved for MC. A small group of SC members agreed to work on a survey for sea containers as requested by CPM (see CPM 2014/11) and the SC agreed that the CPM request to "develop a description of options for possible systems for sea containers examination including audit and verification mechanisms for NPPOs to discuss with relevant stakeholders at the national level" would be discussed after the consultation period. All the comments and the possible need for an EWG meeting to consider certification and verification issues will be discussed in May 2014.

10. The draft ISPM on *Phytosanitary pre-import clearance* (2005-003) had been revised and improved but more focus on requirements for harmonization rather than on bilateral arrangements was needed. The concept of pre-clearance also needed clarification, so the term was added to the *List of topics for IPPC standards* as a subject for the TP for the Glossary (TPG). An SC forum discussion took place in January 2014 to aid the TPG discussion.

11. The SC noted that the date of a standard is not changed when an annex or appendix is adjusted (for example changes to annex 1 of ISPM 15:2009 adopted in 2013) and that this had caused some confusion. The IPPC Secretariat was requested to investigate this further.

² 2013 MC page: <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/standards-setting/member-consultation-draft-ispms>

12. The flow charts outlining the process for determining whether a formal objection is technically justified were adjusted (as requested by CPM-8 (2013)³) and are incorporated in the Procedure Manual for Standard Setting⁴.

13. The SC agreed that explanatory documents should continue to be produced. The Annotated Glossary was agreed to be useful and will be revised every three years. The SC noted that production of these documents involves a lot of Secretariat effort, which should be minimised, and agreed that SC members and stewards should identify authors and follow the development.

14. Guidance on the use of *should*, *shall*, *must* and *may* has been included in the IPPC Style Guide⁵ and will be used by EWGs and TPs when drafting ISPMs.

15. The SC reviewed the considerable work of the TPs and agreed the membership of the panels. The subjects in the *List of topics for IPPC standards* were adjusted based on recommendations from the TPs.

III. SC-7 meeting (May)

16. The SC-7 considered the member comments on three draft ISPMs that had been for MC in 2012. All the comments were discussed and the drafts were adjusted. The revised drafts were submitted to the SCCP⁶.

IV. November meeting

17. The SC considered the three draft ISPMs from the SCCP and adjusted them based on comments and suggestions from the stewards. All three drafts are recommended for adoption (CPM 2014/03 and attachments). For the draft on electronic certification, the SC noted that some substantial concerns had been raised on the harmonization and use of codes and the procedures for management of electronic certification. The SC considered that these issues did not affect content of the draft ISPM and therefore should not affect its adoption by CPM, but the SC urged the e-Phyto Steering Group to develop guidance on the procedures so that contracting parties could be informed on how the system would operate in advance of CPM-9 (2014).

18. In discussing possible adjustments to the standard setting process, the SC noted that the end of MC (30 November) is after the SC November meeting and, therefore, comments cannot be considered until the following SC meeting. This means that uncontroversial ISPMs, such as amendments to ISPM 5 (the Glossary), cannot be recommended for adoption at the CPM following MC. Legal advice had also confirmed that the term “IPPC members” was used incorrectly. The SC acknowledged that this should be changed, but there was no urgency as the current footnote explaining this term was clear and reflected the SC intent on who should be allowed to comment. A proposal will be made in 2016 when the SC reports back to the CPM on the implementation of the IPPC standard setting process. The possibility of voting was also raised, but the SC strongly supported continuing to work by consensus.

19. In response to a proposal from Australia and also in light of interest by international organizations, the SC discussed whether to amend the wording on observers in Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure for the SC. The FAO legal office confirmed that observers are only permitted from contracting parties and regional plant protection organizations and noted the CPM had recently changed its rules for observers but no change had been considered necessary for the SC. The SC decided not to propose a change and, with reference to international organizations, the SC

³ CPM-8 (2013) report, section 8.1.7: <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/governance/cpm>

⁴ <https://www.ippc.int/publications/ippc-procedure-manual-standard-setting-2013>

⁵ IPPC Style Guide available at: <https://www.ippc.int/publications/ippc-style-guide>

⁶ 2013 SCCP: <https://www.ippc.int/core-activities/standards-setting/substantial-concerns-commenting-period-sccp-draft-ispms>

acknowledged the value of obtaining their input, but thought they should contribute their views through direct participation at MC and the SCCP and, where appropriate, by nominating experts for EWGs. National members should engage via their national plant protection organization.

20. The SC discussed the output from the Framework for standards task force meeting (CPM 2014/05) and a subgroup was formed to consider the recommendations and any gaps in the proposed framework. As a result of discussions on the framework and on draft ISPMs, the SC recognised the need to ensure that ISPMs focus on requirements for international harmonization. The SC is therefore working on a document on the concept of a standard and will also consider the need for supporting documentation for draft ISPMs.

21. The SC discussed and finally agreed that three PTs (which had received formal objections prior to CPM-7 (2012)) should be recommended for adoption by the CPM together with five other PTs that had been approved by e-decision. The SC noted that while some treatments may not be feasible for use by some countries, this was not felt to be a hindrance for adoption because in such cases those countries would not use the treatment.

22. The SC considered all the submissions in response to the call for topics for standards and made recommendations (see CPM 2014/04).

23. Three specifications were approved (*International movement of wood products and handicrafts made of wood*, Revision to ISPM 4 *Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas* and Revision to ISPM 8 *Determination of pest status in an area*). Based on the findings of the IRSS general questionnaire, which showed that trade-related standards were well implemented but underpinning standards were less well implemented, the SC recommended increasing the priority for the revision of ISPM 8.

24. In addition to the draft specification on International movement of grain, the specification on Revision of ISPM 6 Surveillance was approved for MC. This had been adjusted based on the extensive work on surveillance done under the IRSS programme, including a questionnaire, regional workshops and a symposium in Korea. In discussions on the topic of Use of permits as import authorization, the SC noted that there were different approaches to the use of permits and licences and that these should be reflected in the draft ISPM. A draft specification on this topic will be considered in 2014.

25. The SC was informed of progress with and supported the expert consultation on cold treatments held in Argentina in December 2013, and welcomed the next expert consultation on treatments for *Bactrocera dorsalis* complex to be hosted by Japan in 2014. By bringing together relevant experts these meetings should help provide the foundation for future submissions, aid the development of harmonized phytosanitary treatments, increase confidence in the underpinning science and prevent duplication of effort.

26. In order to improve the process and maximise time for consideration of draft ISPMs and specifications, the SC decided to change the SC agenda and, hopefully, spend less time on updates and administrative and procedural issues in the future.