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Alimentación y la Agricultura

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# COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

## **Ninth Session**

**Rome, 31 March - 4 April 2014**

**Coordinator's Report on activities of the Interamerican Coordinating  
Group in Plant Protection, April 2012-April 2014**

**Agenda Item 14.3**

**Prepared by GICSV**

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## Coordinator's Report on activities of the Interamerican Coordinating Group in Plant Protection April 2012-April 2014

### **Background:**

The Interamerican Coordinating Group in Plant Protection (known by its Spanish acronym GICSV) is a forum for coordination of plant protection activities in the Americas. Following the informal initiative of prominent leaders in plant protection in the late 1980's to coordinate plant protection efforts in the hemisphere, the GICSV was formally created in 1998. A formal Memorandum of Understanding among Regional Plant Protection Organizations of the Americas was signed and operating rules established in the form of a Constitution and Bylaws.

The GICSV brings together phytosanitary experts from Regional and National Plant Protection Organizations of the hemisphere to exchange information and experience in plant protection matters of strategic importance to the Americas. The primary objective of the GICSV is to secure common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products.

The coordination role for the GICSV rotates every two years among the member regions. The active regional organizations over the past two years have been the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO- current Coordinator); OIRSA representing countries of Central America and COSAVE representing countries of the Southern Cone. The Technical Secretariat for the GICSV resides in the Interamerican Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture - IICA whose role is specified in a formal agreement with the GICSV.

### **MAJOR ACTIVITIES 2012-14**

The GICSV work plan for the past two years included collaboration on a number of high priority pests and phytosanitary issues. In order to establish priorities the group agreed on criteria to use for pests and other activities for consideration in the GICSV work plan.

The high priority pests include Huanglongbing (HLB), *Tuta absoluta* (tomato leaf miner) and *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical race 4 .

### **HLB**

The status of this pest in the GICSV region and the risk it presents to member countries, confirms the inclusion of this pest in the work plan of the Group. The RPPOs presented and distributed the planned and actual activities and programs in place for the prevention and control of this pest.

The GICSV formed a Group of experts who were leading regional programs on HLB with the objective of keeping up to date on new programs for its management.

NAPPO organized a workshop in 2013 on citrus pests which included presentations by several international experts on HLB and participation of GICSV members. Total attendance at the workshop was in excess of 680 persons from more than 17 countries.

**Conclusion:** HLB is an extremely destructive pest of citrus whose control is critical to the economy of numerous countries in the Americas. The GICSV will perform an important service to its members through technical exchanges on control, monitoring and early warning of spread of this pest and its vector. The Group agreed that the pest would remain on the work plan.

### **Tuta absoluta**

The RPPOs presented the status of this pest in their regions and the risk it presented to their member countries.

In the COSAVE region the pest has been present for many years and therefore a lot of information and knowledge regarding surveillance and control has been gathered. The pest is absent in NAPPO countries but remains a major concern so NAPPO developed and shared with the Group, its regional protocol on surveillance for this pest. This standard was prepared in collaboration with experts from OIRSA, who had previous experience with the pest. The standard includes surveillance in the field as well as in greenhouses, description of target hosts, biology of the pest and distribution.

**Conclusion:** The Group agreed that based on the current situation in the hemisphere this pest should remain on the work plan. The website under development will be used to share information among countries and regions.

### **Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. cubense Raza 4 Tropical**

The RPPOs agree that the pest does not occur in the region although it represents a potential risk. OIRSA has developed and shared a contingency plan which can be obtained at [www.oirsa.org](http://www.oirsa.org). It presents the available information on susceptible varieties that are usually exported and the situation in those countries in Asia where the pest is present and control has been unsuccessful. OIRSA also advised of its intent to develop a regional standard to prevent the entry of this pest.

COSAVE is reviewing the importance of this pest and current prevention activities in their member countries which produce bananas.

**Conclusion:** The Group agreed that the pest would remain on the work plan with the objective of bringing together information on the potential risk and threat posed to member countries, identify the needs in different regions as well as available tools

## Other issues

The GICSV Coordinating Group will continue to promote, monitor and update actions required to fulfil its workplan and participate in global phytosanitary activities.

- The GICSV organized conference calls/videoconferencias in advance of the CPM to exchange positions on important agenda items. In recent years the approval process for ISPMs no longer allows for debate and discussion at the CPM itself. As a result, the focus of GICSV discussions related to the CPM has also changed and the GICSV now addresses more strategic issues
- A global cross-cutting issue of extreme importance to phytosanitary officials and the private sector is that of electronic phytosanitary certification. Projects are underway at national, regional and global fora demonstrating the need for coordination at a number of levels.

The Group agreed that there are certain aspects of implementation of concern to its countries. With the objective of simplifying the process, participants agreed that within the Group, guidelines are prepared regarding the minimum conditions that countries need in order to implement electronic transmission of phytosanitary certificates. The Group agreed to nominate contact points and form a group of experts to keep up to date with advances, share experiences with implementation and to encourage cooperation among countries

The GICSV organized a workshop on ePhyto which was held in IICA headquarters in Costa Rica from June 10-13, 2013. With this in mind, prior to the workshop a survey was conducted to identify the current state of implementation and level of knowledge at the national level. These results were used to design the workshop to participants' needs.

The concept and principles of ePhyto were presented and numerous other aspects such as exchange mechanisms for sending and receiving ePhytos, security of transmission, common terminology, re-export situations and industry expectations were discussed. Various case studies were presented to show the advances by member countries and regions.

The GICSV ePhyto group will continue to share information on developments and continue to follow the evolution of ePhyto at the IPPC.

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- IICA in its role as Technical Secretariat is preparing a section on its website dedicated to the activities of the GICSV. This will be an important communications and information sharing mechanism for the Group.