



CPM-20 (2026) SCIENCE SESSION: FOSTERING PLANT HEALTH FOR SAFE PROVISION OF FOOD AND HUMANITARIAN AID

CONCEPT NOTE

Thursday, 12 March 2026

15:00–17:30 (CET, UTC+1)

FAO headquarters, Plenary Room (Rome, Italy)

Webcasted and interpretation in all FAO official languages

[Webcast link](#)

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Introduction

- [1] In an era of increasing crises, safeguarding plant health is essential to ensuring that humanitarian assistance supports, rather than undermines, food security and livelihoods. Humanitarian relief efforts, while critical in saving lives, can unintentionally introduce plant pests which can cause long-term impacts on the economy, livelihoods, environment and communities.
- [2] During conflict-related and natural disaster situations, conditions at borders can be highly irregular, hindering national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) from carrying out their normal functions. Treatment and processing infrastructure may be damaged or inaccessible, while water, electricity, personnel and essential services are often disrupted. Roads and ports become inaccessible, preventing the use of dedicated facilities and requiring activities to occur outside of declared ports of entry. The volume of commodities arriving as humanitarian aid may also be overwhelming to NPPOs. At the same time, the rapid movement of people – including first responders, military personnel internally displaced persons and refugees – adds further pressure. Staff may be unable to reach their workplaces or may be reassigned to emergency duties, even as authorities call for the swift clearance of relief goods. If such aid is not prepared in accordance with the phytosanitary import requirements of the recipient country prior to export, it may inadvertently introduce plant pests, causing lasting harm to livelihoods, food security and the environment.
- [3] The [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\)](#) recognizes the necessity for international cooperation to prevent the global spread of plant pests. In emergency situations, affected countries can be temporarily constrained in their ability to implement their phytosanitary responsibilities. On the other hand, contracting parties to the IPPC that are donors, countries of origin, or exporters and transit countries of aid, often have capacity during emergencies, making their commitment to comply with Article IV of the IPPC particularly critical.

[4] With the increasing frequency of natural and human-induced disasters, ensuring that food and humanitarian aid are provided safely has become critical to prevent the introduction of plant pests. In response, the IPPC has adopted [CPM Recommendation R-09 “Safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid to prevent the introduction of plant pests during an emergency situation”](#). The IPPC is also coordinating the drafting of an international standard to guide the safe movement of aid under the logistical challenges of emergencies. Building on this work, the Twentieth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures ([CPM-20, 2026](#)), will feature a Science Session led by the IPPC Secretariat and the [CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Humanitarian Aid](#). The session will bring together international experts and organizations to tackle challenges, build capacity and foster collaboration for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid that protects plant health and supports resilient agricultural systems.

Objectives

[5] The Science Session will follow a seminar approach and outline the importance of addressing plant health and phytosanitary risks as described by the IPPC, balanced with the need to preserve human life when providing humanitarian aid during emergency situations, highlighting key challenges, opportunities and strategies for action.

[6] The session will include examples of plant pest introductions associated with humanitarian aid and examine their potential medium- and long-term impacts on the economies and livelihoods of affected countries. Such pest introductions pose a direct threat to plant health, which is essential for food security and nutrition. Protecting plants is therefore critical not only for maintaining crop yields, quality and diversity, but also for safeguarding economic prosperity.

[7] [REV]: No Q&A is planned for the session due to time constraints.

Audience

[8] The Science Session is designed for:

- national and regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs);
- relevant United Nations agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) civil society, regional economic communities and the research and development sectors as well as other entities involved in humanitarian aid supply; and
- national and regional multidisciplinary teams, including policymakers and stakeholders from government agencies responsible for agriculture, environment, aid, emergency and disaster management and human health.

Key Concepts

[9] The following key concepts will guide interventions in the Science Session, reflecting the priorities for safeguarding plant health and enhancing the delivery of humanitarian assistance:

[10] **1. Challenges and Opportunities:** The Science Session perspectives will explore key challenges in protecting plant health during humanitarian crisis, such as:

- limited ability of the recipient country NPPO to fulfil the normal phytosanitary actions;
- limited knowledge of existing import conditions of the transit and recipient country;
- the inability to certify due to the uncertainty of the final destination of consignments; and

- pressure on NPPOs to clear humanitarian aid at points of entry with reduced time and resources (e.g. infrastructure, personnel and capacity).

[11] **2. Awareness raising and capacity building:** The Science Session will highlight the importance of awareness raising among policy and decision makers. More specifically, it will stress the importance of capacity building to equip aid workers, logisticians and government personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement and comply with phytosanitary measures in an emergency context. Strengthening such capacities is critical to ensure that humanitarian aid provides urgent relief but does not inadvertently introduce pests that harm recovery of recipient communities or their agricultural and ecological systems in the long term.

[12] **3. Collaboration and partnerships:** Strengthening humanitarian aid delivery while managing plant pest risks requires effective coordination among governments, NPPOs, RPPOs, NGOs, consignment owners and other stakeholders. By working together and building strong partnerships, these actors can align their efforts, share expertise and respond more efficiently to emerging threats. Incorporating gender-responsive approaches further enhances these collaborations, fostering resilient plant health systems and ensuring that humanitarian aid programs are both effective and inclusive.

Expected outcomes for the audience:

[13] This Science Session aims to enable participants to:

- understand the link between humanitarian aid and the spread of plant pests and its impacts on food security, livelihoods, the environment and economies;
- recognize challenges in managing plant health risks during disasters, including border controls and disrupted environments;
- apply the “Do No Harm” humanitarian aid principle and adopt a One Health approach to integrate plant health across all phases of humanitarian aid;
- understand the IPPC framework, especially CPM [Recommendation R-09](#) and the role of NPPOs in managing pest risks in aid movements; and
- recognize the importance of collaboration among government agencies and humanitarian actors, including integrating gender perspectives to strengthen resilient plant health systems.

Proposed agenda

Time	Title	Presenter
High-level segment		
Moderated by DDG Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General		
10'	Opening Remarks	FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol
5-10'	Strengthening Resilience: Why Safe Aid is Critical for Jamaica's Food Security	Video Message from the Honourable Minister Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining of Jamaica - TBC
10'	Strengthening Resilience: Integrating Plant Health into the Humanitarian Response - The Australian Perspective	Remarks from H.E. Julianne Cowley, Ambassador, Permanent Representation of Australia to FAO
5'	Closing remarks	FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol
Launch of FAO-IPPC Video on “Safe Aid in Times of Crisis: Protecting Plant Health to Protect People”		
5'	Video on “Safe Aid in Times of Crisis: Protecting Plant Health to Protect People”	Adriana Moreira, Programme Officer and Officer-in-Charge of the IPPC Integration and Support Team
Technical segment		
Moderated by Enrico Perotti, IPPC Secretary		
5'	Opening remarks	Enrico Perotti, IPPC Secretary
10'	Lessons learned and strategic directions from the IPPC and CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid	Sophie Peterson, Director, Pacific Engagement and International Plant Health at Australian Chief Plant Protection Office Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
10'	The perspective from FAO Office of Emergency	Elisabetta Tagliati, Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer at FAO's Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)
10'	The perspective from FAO Seed Security	Shawn Mcguire, Agricultural Officer at FAO Plant Genetic Resources and Seeds Team (NSP)
10'	The perspective and experience from Codex Alimentarius	Sarah Cahill, Codex Alimentarius Secretary

10'	Insights from Focus Group Member from the European Region	Marco Traa, Chief Plant Health Officer for Policy Affairs at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Netherlands
10'	Insights from the Africa Region	Luiza Mbura Munyua, Senior Scientific Officer (Phytopathology) at Inter-African Phytosanitary Council AU- IAPSC
10'	Insights from the Southwest Pacific Region	Nitesh Datt, Chief Plant Protection Officer at the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji
10'	Insights from the Caribbean Region	Juliet Goldsmith, Plant Health Specialist at Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Agency (CAHFSA)
5'	Closing remarks	Adriana Moreira, Programme Officer and Officer-in-Charge of the IPPC Integration and Support Team

Speakers

Speaker	Bio
<p style="text-align: center;">Enrico Perotti Secretary International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)</p> 	<p>Dr. Enrico Perotti is the newly appointed Secretary of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). He brings over 30 years of experience in scientific research and biosecurity, spanning government, academia, and the private sector. A passionate advocate for food security and sustainable agricultural productivity, Enrico has held senior roles including leadership of the biosecurity risk assessment team at New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries and key positions within the Australian Public Service focused on biosecurity policy and emergency response. He also advanced Australia's trade and market access as Australia's first Agriculture Counsellor to Malaysia and Brunei. Since January 2023, Enrico has served as General Manager of the Invasive Species Program at Biosecurity Queensland, leading efforts to prevent, manage, and mitigate the impacts of invasive plants and animals across the state. Coming from a multicultural background, he champions collaborative approaches that harness diverse strengths and perspectives to tackle biosecurity challenges. Enrico supports scientific innovation and the development of novel tools to enhance biosecurity and agricultural outcomes. His broad expertise includes managing operational and research programs, driving industry-wide initiatives, and building strategic partnerships across primary industries. He has worked with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) in Mexico and Australia, and previously lectured in plant biology, biochemistry, genetics and epigenetics at the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich in Switzerland. Dr. Perotti's enduring passion and professional focus remain centered on improving food security and combating hunger worldwide through science-based biosecurity and international collaboration.</p>

<p>Adriana Moreira</p> <p>Lead of the CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid and Officer in Charge (OiC) of the Integration & Support Team, IPPC Secretariat</p> 	<p>Dr. Adriana G. Moreira is a leading expert in global phytosanitary policy and a Ph.D. Plant Pathologist (Virology) with over 17 years of experience. Currently serving as the Officer in Charge (OiC) of the Integration & Support Team at the IPPC Secretariat, she oversees core operations, communications, and the coordination of international governing bodies. A key figure in standard-setting, Dr. Moreira has facilitated the adoption of over 60 International Standards (ISPMs) and is a vocal advocate for SDG2 (Zero Hunger) and safe humanitarian aid. Recognized as one of Forbes' "50 Women Taking Agriculture from Brazil to the World" (2024), a 2025 FAO-NSP "Optimistic Influencer," and FAO Young-Employees in 2019, she brings a unique blend of industry, academic, and diplomatic expertise to the global plant health stage.</p>
<p>Sophie Peterson</p> <p>Director of Pacific Engagement and International Plant Health at Australian Chief Plant Protection Office Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment; IPPC Standards Committee (SC) Chairperson</p> 	<p>Sophie Peterson has a PhD in Plant Pathology from the University of Sydney and has worked in plant biosecurity policy and research in both the private and public sectors. She is the Pacific Engagement Manager for Plant Biosecurity and Director for Pacific Engagement and International Plant Health. Her team manages Australia's multilateral engagement on plant health matters through the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) and Asia Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC). The team also delivers Australia's offshore plant health surveillance and related programs, in collaboration with Australia's near neighbour countries. In her role as Pacific Engagement Manager, Sophie acts as a contact point for countries of the region into the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to solve biosecurity related issues and also supports capacity development programs in the region. Sophie is currently the Vice-Chair of the PPPO and represents the South-West Pacific on the IPPC Standards Committee, which she also Chairs.</p>

<p>Elisabetta Tagliati</p> <p>Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer at FAO's Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)</p> 	<p>Elisabetta Tagliati is a plant pathologist trained at the University of Bologna, with over 27 years of experience in development and emergency contexts. Her work has consistently focused on the social and environmental dimensions of pest and pesticide management, promoting sustainable and risk-informed approaches. Throughout her career, she has contributed to wildlife and rangeland restoration initiatives, worked with the Global IPM Facility, supported the Rotterdam Convention Technical Assistance Programme, and coordinated both the GEF Chemicals portfolio and the global programme on Fall Armyworm, leading multidisciplinary and international teams. She currently serves as Senior Emergencies and Resilience Officer within the Technical Division and the Divisional Partnerships Unit of the Office of Emergencies and Resilience, advancing integrated, sustainable strategies for crisis response and long-term resilience building.</p>
<p>Shawn McGuire</p> <p>Agricultural Officer at FAO Plant Genetic Resources and Seeds Team (NSP)</p> 	<p>Shawn McGuire is an Agricultural Officer in FAO Headquarters, Rome. He leads FAO's work on seed security, providing technical support for humanitarian responses involving seeds and planting materials, responding to over 1000 requests a year from 50 countries. He also promotes seed system assessments, global humanitarian standards for crop-related support in emergencies, and the development of longer-term strategies for seed sector development. He has a BSc in biology, MSc in Agriculture and Development, and PhD in Technology and Agrarian Development. He has provided informal technical inputs to the IPPC's Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid (FGSA).</p>
<p>Sarah Cahill</p> <p>Codex Alimentarius Secretary</p>	<p>Dr Sarah Cahill is the Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission since June 2024, having previously worked for five years in the Codex Secretariat as a Senior Food Standards Officer. Prior to that she led the FAO Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA), responsible for overseeing the provision of scientific advice to Codex and Member countries on microbiological hazards in a wide range of foods. Her wide experience also comprises working on providing scientific advice to other UN agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the safety of specific foods destined for food insecure and vulnerable populations and supporting training on risk assessment and microbiological food safety. Dr Cahill holds a bachelor's degree in science and worked in the dairy and beverage sectors before going on to receive her Ph.D. in food microbiology from University College Dublin, Ireland in 1999.</p>

<p>Marco Traa</p> <p>Chief Plant Health Officer for Policy Affairs at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Netherlands</p> 	<p>Marco Traa is graduated from the Wageningen Agricultural University (now known as Wageningen University & Research) and holds a master degree in Animal husbandry, specialized in aquaculture. He has worked for 25 years at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature in the Netherlands in many different policy areas. He also gained extensive international experience in that work. He currently serves as Chief Plant Health Officer for Policy Affairs and has been active in plant health policy since 2017, including on several IPPC dossiers (first replacement member for the CPM Bureau for the European region, the Focus Group on ePhyto Funding and the Focus group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid). He is passionate about connecting people and cultures, in the spirit of the United Nations.</p>
<p>Luiza Mbura Munyua</p> <p>Senior Scientific Officer at Inter-African Phytosanitary Council AU- IAPSC</p> 	<p>Luiza currently serves as the Senior Scientific Officer (Phytopathology) at the Africa Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) - one of (the) five Specialized Technical Offices within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of the African Union Commission. Her role entails ensuring that Africa's 55 Member States, are positioned to practice agriculture in an environment free from harmful pests and disease-causing organisms, including ensuring that Africa is strategically positioned to produce her own food and feed her people efficiently, safely and sustainably. Additionally, ensuring that Africa's trade in plants and plant products both within and beyond Africa, meets market requirements and standards, including access of new markets. This calls for continued collaboration with various stakeholders, agencies and partners at national, regional and continental levels. Luiza is passionate about all matters plant health, with a vision to contribute towards plant health and food systems with solutions that are practical, creative and sustainable. Her 27 years experience in plant pest and disease management, border control, project coordination and management, combined with knowledge gleaned from the very dynamic agricultural and horticultural sectors has seen her serve in senior management positions, both in the public and private sectors. Luiza has a MSc. in Crop Protection from the University of Nairobi, Kenya and is finalizing on her doctoral thesis in Crop Protection (Nematology).</p>
<p>Nitesh Datt</p> <p>Chief Plant Protection Officer at the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji</p> 	<p>Nitesh Datt is the Chief Plant Protection Officer at the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (NPPO Fiji) and a Southwest Pacific representative on the Implementation Committee. He was also a member of the Focus group on the POARS. He leads Fiji's national plant biosecurity functions across surveillance, diagnostics coordination, quarantine, pest risk analysis, and emergency preparedness and response, working closely with government, industry, and international partners. Nitesh holds a Master's degree in Plant Pathology, has completed his PhD graduation defense, and brings a practical Pacific perspective on enabling rapid humanitarian assistance while safeguarding agriculture, biodiversity, and trade.</p>

<p>Juliet Goldsmith</p> <p>Plant Health Specialist at Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Agency (CAHFSA)</p> 	<p>Juliet Goldsmith is a Plant Health Specialist at the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), the Regional Plant Protection Organization for the Caribbean. She has over 25 years of experience in plant protection, phytosanitary regulation, and agricultural trade. In her role at CAHFSA, she supports Member Countries in strengthening plant health systems, advancing regional coordination, and maintaining market access through effective implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs). Previously, she managed Jamaica's Pest Risk Analysis Unit, leading pest risk assessments and market access initiatives. She has contributed to the development of international phytosanitary standards through the IPPC Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols and Expert Working Groups and has served as a developing-country expert with the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). Juliet holds an MSc in Biology (Biotechnology) and a BSc in Entomology and Marine Sciences. She is a Jamaican national based in Paramaribo, Suriname.</p>
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Support to the organization of the Science Session

<p>Marina Martino</p> <p>Phytosanitary Standard Setting Specialist, IPPC Standard Setting Unit</p> 	<p>Marina Martino is a phytosanitary standard setting specialist at the International Plant Protection Organization (IPPC) where she is supporting the work of the CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid, the Expert Working Group on Safe provision of humanitarian aid in the phytosanitary context, the Technical Panel on Commodity Standards (TPCS), the Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols (TPDP) and other tasks related to the Standard Setting Unit. She previously worked at the CNR Institute for Sustainable Plant Protection on research to reduce the impact of <i>Xylella fastidiosa</i> on agricultural and natural ecosystems, and at the European Food Safety Authority, strengthening plant pest surveillance and monitoring frameworks across Europe. She holds a Master's degree in Plant Sciences from Wageningen University & Research, specializing in entomology, natural resource management, and sustainable cropping systems.</p>
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