COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

CPM-20 (2026) SIDE SESSION ON THE AFRICA PHYTOSANITARY PROGRAMME (APP)

Tuesday 10 March 2026

13.00 - 14.45 (CET), Venue: Red Room (A 121**), FAO Headquarters or online**

With interpretation in AR/EN/FR

1. Background

The Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP) is an initiative led by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat, to transform the technical capacity of Africa's phytosanitary personnel in national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) and their national stakeholders and cooperators, using scientific evidence and advanced technology and tools. APP was conceptualized as part of a global phytosanitary programme to empower phytosanitary officers to proactively monitor, efficiently and effectively detect, and ultimately respond and recover from plant pests of economic, regulatory and environmental significance. APP therefore positions Africa as a proactive contributor to global plant health.

- Launched in Cairo, Egypt in 2023, the implementation of APP is ongoing in 20 African countries but started with a pilot phase in 11- Cameroon, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Phase two started in June 2025, adding nine more countries, namely: Algeria, Cabo Verde, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia. Through APP, the IPPC Secretariat provides training, digital tools, field resources and collaboration opportunities to enhance and strengthen the resilience of Africa's phytosanitary systems against plant pests. With these tools and training, APP empowers countries to enhance their compliance with international standards for phytosanitary measures and to facilitate safe trade.

- The APP, the first-ever continent-wide phytosanitary programme, is envisioned to support all 54 African countries and implementation is one of the key mechanisms for execution of Africa-wide strategies on plant health, as indicated in the Plant Health Strategy for Africa.

- APP is implemented in collaboration with FAO and the African Union (AU) Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, supported by the two regional plant protection organizations in Africa- the African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) and the Near East and North Africa Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO).

Financial and technical support for APP's pilot phase was from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Currently, the European Commission, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, through the International Biosecurity Programme and FAO, through its regular programme are funding the programme. A special trust fund was also established at the IPPC Secretariat, to receive voluntary contributions from contracting parties and other organizations.

This session at CPM-20 will serve as an opportunity for delegates from contracting parties in Africa and beyond, to deliberate on the progress of implementation of APP and prospects for scaling out the programme to other regions. Delegates will receive an update on the key APP milestones and the programme's tangible contribution to building stronger phytosanitary capacity and plant health systems.

The side session will also provide an opportunity for representatives in countries implementing APP, to share their achievements/benefits, experiences and lessons from their implementation, demonstrating impact and

ownership at the national level. It will enhance awareness among contracting parties and IPPC observer and partner organizations, providing an opportunity to address salient questions, while also mobilizing support and partnerships. Since it was first presented to CPM in 2023 and the programme's subsequent launch in September 2023, APP has received outstanding support from CPM. This side session will also serve as an opportunity for accountability and reporting to CPM.

Objectives

1. Showcase progress, lessons and successes from APP implementation. Representatives from selected countries will make presentations highlighting the impact of APP on their national phytosanitary capacity and pest surveillance systems, aimed at inspiring replication and support.
2. Raise awareness about and enhance visibility for APP, its strategic importance for Africa and global plant health, and advocate for countries to take ownership at the national level.
3. Foster dialogue on regional and international collaboration among IPPC contracting parties in Africa and other regions, to strengthen APP and explore possibilities of scaling it out.
4. Mobilise technical and financial support for APP implementation across Africa and beyond if expanded to other regions.

Expected outcomes

1. Increased awareness of APP within the global plant health community
2. New and/or strengthened partnerships and donor interest in the programme
3. Enhanced understanding of APP, its implementation modalities, functioning and funding
4. Enhanced understanding of Africa's phytosanitary capacity needs, contributions and aspirations
5. Recommendations and actions for implementing APP sustainably and scaling the programme

Target audience

1. National and regional plant protection organizations (NPPOs and RPPOs) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
2. IPPC contracting parties
3. Donors and development partners
4. International organizations (FAO, CGIAR)
5. Private sector

Agenda (Duration: 105 minutes)

Session moderator: Avetik Nersisyan

Duration	Topic	Proposed speakers
5 minutes	Welcome and opening remarks	Enrico Perotti | IPPC Secretary
5 minutes	Welcome and opening remarks	Saliou Niassy, Coordinator, African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC
10 minutes	APP video APP Overview: Enhancing capacities for plant pest surveillance	Descartes Koumba | Agricultural Officer, Standards Setting, IPPC Secretariat
10 minutes	Country case study: Mali. Global deployment of APP at national level Mali has demonstrated tremendous progress in implementing APP, from integrating APP into its national programmes and aligning it with state priorities to establishing an autonomous Plant Protection Service and securing funding from the government and partners. APP tools have also helped to elevate Mali's pest alert system and coordination of field inspectors.	Halidou Mohomodou | Directeur Général de l'Office de Protection des Végétaux, Mali
10 minutes	Country case study: Egypt: Active pest surveillance and data collection boosting agricultural market access Through the APP tools, Egypt has enhanced pest surveillance of some of its key agricultural exports as well as adoption of Egyptian quarantine systems. This has facilitated access to new markets, with ongoing further negotiations. Egypt has also strengthened its tracking system with the surveillance tools such as traps provided through APP, resulting in more regular pest monitoring.	Islam Farahat Aboelela, Supervisor, Phytosanitary Unit, Central Administration of Plant Quarantine, Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation
10 minutes	Country case study: Uganda. Data and digital pest surveillance for increased export trade Uganda has integrated APP into its national surveillance system, using APP tools to conduct its annual *Xylella fastidiosa* national survey, a major step in the country's transition to digital pest surveillance and using real-time data to protect crops and sustaining open markets for agriculture trade. Maintaining a pest-free status for *Xylella fastidiosa* is vital for Uganda's USD 30million floriculture industry as it is a requirement under European Union regulations, ensuring market access and sustainable export trade. Enhanced data collection and regular monitoring of pests such as Red palm weevil are boosting Uganda's collaboration with the private sector, such as oil palm growers.	Joab Tugume Katarimpika, Senior Agricultural Inspector Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda
10 minutes	Country case study: South Africa. South Africa's agricultural exports in 2024 accounted for about USD 13.7 billion, with key commodities including fruit (citrus, apples, pears, apricots, grapes) and nuts. To	Yolanda Mthembu, Scientist, Department of Agriculture

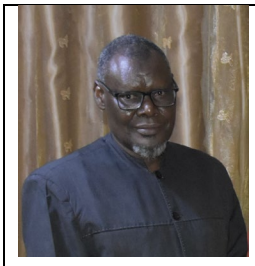
	safeguard this momentum, South Africa is leveraging APP tools to modernize and reinforce its early warning systems to prevent outbreaks of plant pests such as *Xylella fastidiosa,* a destructive pest that threatens several high-value crops, as well as ensuring reliable production and sustained fruit exports. South Africa is also using APP to strengthen its technical collaboration with other African countries, enabling shared learning, harmonized approaches and coordinated action against common plant pest threats, for greater regional resilience.	(National plant protection organization of South Africa)
10 minutes	Partnership for biosecurity and plant health Plant pests destroy roughly 40 percent of global crop yields annually, causing about USD 220 billion in economic losses. These threats are intensifying and pest invasions put pressure on food production systems and impact biosecurity and livelihoods, especially in regions vulnerable to food insecurity. As plant pests have no borders, regional and international cooperation are essential. Strengthening collaboration, investing in early warning systems and building resilient pest surveillance capacity can help safeguard agriculture and global economies.	Donor representative (To be confirmed)
15 minutes	**Moderated Question and Answer session**	Avetik Nersisyan | Coordinator, APP and Unit Leader, Standards Setting, IPPC Secretariat
5 minutes	**Closing remarks** - Summary of key take-home messages - Call to action for continued collaboration and support to APP implementation - Next steps in APP implementation	Mohamed Habib Ben Jamâa | Executive Director, Near East and North Africa Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO)

Speaker profiles

 **Enrico Perotti** **IPPC Secretary**	Enrico has over 30 years of experience in scientific research and biosecurity, spanning government, academia, and the private sector. 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 been the 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. His expertise includes managing operational and research programmes, managing 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.
 **Avetik Nersisyan** **Standard Setting Unit Leader**	Avetik leads the Standard Setting Unit and oversees functions such as staffing, budgeting and resource mobilization. He coordinates standard-setting activities of the IPPC Standards Committee, technical panels and expert working groups. As the Unit Lead, he makes a substantial input to preparations for sessions of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), the Strategic Planning Group, the CPM Bureau, and other ad-hoc meetings. Avetik is also a liaison between the IPPC Secretariat and some key organizations and stakeholders. Before joining the secretariat, he managed the implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Strategic Programme Two (SP2) in the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. SP2 focuses on making agriculture, forestry, and fisheries more productive and sustainable. He has previously served as alternative FAO Representative for Moldova, FAO Technical Officer for Plant Production and Protection in the region and Assistant FAO Representative in Armenia. Avetik is an agronomist with a PhD in plant production and about three decades of experience in management of agriculture, plant production and protection programmes at local, regional, and global levels. Avetik has authored and co-authored several scientific publications, book chapters and training materials.
 **Descartes Koumba** **Standard Setting Officer**	Descartes supports the development of international phytosanitary standards; supports key technical bodies such as the Technical Panel on Phytosanitary Treatments and the CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers. He also provides technical assistance in the implementation of APP and coordinates the IPPC Regional Workshop for Africa. Previously, he coordinated the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC), managed IPPC Observatory surveys and supported dispute avoidance, development of implementation materials and collaboration among units at the secretariat. Descartes has a master's degree in environmental management and an Engineer's degree in Plant Protection and Production.

 **Saliou Niassy, Coordinator, African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC)**	Saliou is a plant health scientist and entomologist with extensive experience in agricultural research, pest management, and phytosanitary systems in Africa. At AU-IAPSC, he leads efforts to strengthen plant health regulations, phytosanitary capacity, and safe trade across the continent. His work focuses on integrated pest and plant health management, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity conservation. Before joining the African Union, he held leadership roles in research and technology transfer at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe) and has contributed to over 200 scientific publications on topics including integrated pest management, climate change impacts on agriculture, and sustainable crop protection. His expertise bridges scientific research and policy implementation to enhance food security, reduce reliance on harmful pesticides, and promote eco-friendly agricultural practices across Africa.
 **Mohamed Habib Ben Jamâa Executive Director of the Near East and North Africa Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO)**	Ben Jamâa has more than 30 years of experience in plant protection and has been heading the NEPPO since 2023. Prior to that, he led the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of Tunisia (DGSVCIA) for six years. He is a full Professor and researcher in plant protection (Entomology) at the National Institute for Research in Rural Engineering, Water and Forests (INRGREF).
 **Islam Farahat Aboelela Supervisor, Phytosanitary Unit, Central Administration of Plant Quarantine (national plant protection organization), Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Egypt**	An international expert in plant health and regulatory affairs, Islam is the Supervisor of the Plant Health Unit at the Egyptian Plant Quarantine and a lecturer at Cairo University. He combines over 17 years of experience in agricultural work, plant health, and food safety across the field, laboratory and executive office settings. He holds postgraduate diplomas, Master's and Doctoral degrees. Specializing in sanitary and phytosanitary issues, pest risk analysis and market access negotiations, he has supported both the public and private sectors globally. Recognized as an international expert by institutions such as the World Bank and FAO, he actively contributes to the work of the IPPC through key technical groups including the ePhyto steering group and ePhyto sustainable funding group and was recently selected as a member of IPPC's Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC). Ultimately, his work facilitates international trade by establishing appropriate risk levels and promoting market access procedures worldwide.

 **Halidou Mohomodou** **Director General, Plant Protection Office (National plant protection organization), Mali**	Halidou is an Agronomist Engineer with a Master's in Sustainable Crop and Environmental Protection. A seasoned expert, he has over 20 years of experience in rural development and plant protection in Mali. Since October 2023, he has served as Director General of the Plant Protection Office (OPV), following progressive leadership roles including Deputy Director General, Head of Surveillance and Intervention and Head of Documentation and Communication, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Section as well as National coordinator for fruit fly control. He is a specialist in integrated pest management as well as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, with extensive experience leading internationally funded projects. As the official IPPC contact point, he also has strong expertise in legislation and regulatory compliance, supported by professional certifications and academic training from reputed institutions.
 **Yolanda Mthembu** **Scientist, Department of Agriculture (National plant protection organization of South Africa)**	Yolanda is a Professional Natural Scientist with over 19 years of experience in biosecurity and plant health. At the Department of Agriculture, she leads the management of national plant pest surveillance networks and the development of early warning systems for invasive agricultural pests. Yolanda is a specialist in risk assessment and plant pest surveillance, with a particular focus on integrating technological innovations into biosecurity. She is adept at leveraging ArcGIS and ArcView software to manage surveillance data and plan risk-based sites, ensuring data-driven precision in detecting invasive agricultural pests. She has a Bachelor of Science in Plant Pathology and Microbiology from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and advanced training in Pest Risk Analysis from the National Institute of Plant Health Management in India. She is passionate about using her extensive expertise in plant pest surveillance to safeguard agricultural integrity and benefit humanity.
 **Joab Tugume Katarimpika, Senior Agricultural Inspector, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda**	Joab is an agricultural professional with over 15 years of experience working in the agricultural sector, particularly in the phytosanitary space. At the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, he heads the Plant Quarantine Unit, which coordinates national pest surveillance, pest risk analysis and plant import regulation. He has a PhD in Agriculture (Plant Pathology) and a Master of Science in Crop Science (Crop Protection) and is finalizing a Master of Business Administration. Joab is a Member of the East African Community (EAC)'s Technical Working Group on Pest Risk Analysis and is the APP focal point for Uganda.