

**REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION  
CONVENTION SECRETARIAT (IPPC)**

Meeting of 19-20 October 2011

The following communication, received on 13 October 2011, is being circulated at the request of the IPPC secretariat.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This report covers the period July- October 2011.
2. The Committee is invited to note that as of October 2011, there are 177 contracting parties to the IPPC.

**II. STANDARD-SETTING WORK PROGRAMME**

**A. FOCUS GROUP ON IMPROVING THE STANDARD SETTING PROCESS**

3. The IPPC secretariat convened a Focus Group for improving the standard setting process. The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) hosted the meeting in Paris, France from 25-29 July 2011. In addition to regional representatives, experts from both Codex Alimentarius and OIE participated in the meeting. Best practices for the International Standard Setting Bodies (ISSBs) were discussed, which benefitted all ISSBs, and the Focus Group proposed that some of these efficiencies be incorporated into the IPPC process.

4. The key recommendations from the Focus Group are: that the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) should no longer draft texts; there should be only one standards setting process, with modifications for technical standards; the CPM should delegate its authority to the Standards Committee (SC) to adopt diagnostic protocols on its behalf; and a Framework for Standards should be developed. In addition, several specific recommendations on increasing effectiveness and efficiency were made. The informal working group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) reviewed the Focus Group's recommendations at its meeting in early October 2011 and suggested further adjustments (details will be provided in the SPTA meeting report, still under development). The SC will review these recommendations and suggestions in November 2011 and a final set of recommendations will be submitted to CPM-7 (2012) in March. The full Focus Group report is posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) at <https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=207776>.

B. MEMBER CONSULTATION AND THE ONLINE COMMENT SYSTEM (OCS)

5. The 2011 member consultation for draft standards (100 days) closed on 30 September 2011. This was the first year that the secretariat used the recently developed IPPC Online Comment System (OCS). The secretariat also used the OCS to enter comments during the 2011 Regional Workshops for the review of draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), which allowed workshop participants to develop comments and share them. Members could then review the workshop comments and accept them as their own or further modify them before submitting them to the IPPC secretariat. The OCS has been well received by the phytosanitary community and over 95 per cent of the comments received were submitted using the system, which has saved the IPPC secretariat valuable resources and has allowed the comments to be instantly compiled. Minor problems were quickly resolved and user feedback has been provided to help improve the system. It is hoped that a revised version of the OCS will be released in time for members to enter their substantive comments on the draft standards going to CPM-7 (2012) in March.

6. Many members and international organizations have also expressed interest in cloning the IPPC OCS to be used for their own commenting purposes, and the IPPC secretariat has been investigating this.

C. SEA CONTAINERS STANDARD

7. Work continues on the drafting of a standard on the topic Minimizing pest movement by sea containers and conveyances in international trade (Specification 51). Experts have worked virtually to develop a first draft and those experts who have contributed substantially to this draft will be called to a small expert working group (EWG) which will be held in Rome, Italy, 15-17 November 2011.

D. A NEW LOOK FOR STANDARDS

8. The IPPC secretariat was requested by the Standards Committee to review the way it published ISPMs. For several years, ISPMs were printed individually and in a book of standards, but in an effort to save resources, the secretariat began to only publish the book and individual standards on the web. There were several requests by CPM members to reorganize the standards and align previously published standards with newly published standards. The secretariat has explored several ways to accomplish these tasks. At CPM-5 (2010) and CPM-6 (2011), ink amendments were noted which would help bring the standards in-line for consistency. In addition, the format of the standards was modernized and publication histories have been added. The secretariat is in the final stages of posting these newly formatted standards which will also incorporate recent ink amendments. ISPMs will now be published individually in PDF format with the Annexes to ISPM 27:2006 (diagnostic protocols) and ISPM 28:2007 (phytosanitary treatments) published separately. It is hoped that, in this new format, users will be able to quickly combine the ISPMs into books of standards which can be tailored to the user's needs (e.g. a book of fruit fly standards, etc.). This initial reformatting has been initiated for the English versions of the ISPMs, and, as resources become available, will be applied to versions in other official languages.

E. 2012 WORK PLAN

9. The 2012 budget and work plan for standard setting has just been approved. As a result of some extra budgetary resources (both funds and in kind contributions) coming from members, the IPPC secretariat is able to restart work on the following technical panels which had been put on hold in 2011: Technical Panel on Diagnostic Protocols, Technical Panel on the Glossary and Technical Panel on Phytosanitary Treatments.

#### F. ADOPTED ISPMs

10. Currently approved International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures can be found here: "[https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1110798&frompage=13399&tx\\_publication\\_pi1\[showUid\]=2181813&type=publication&L=0](https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1110798&frompage=13399&tx_publication_pi1[showUid]=2181813&type=publication&L=0)"

### III. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

#### A. CONTACT POINTS

11. Through 10 October 2011, over 87 per cent of IPPC contact points have updated their information at least once. This means that contracting parties communicating with other IPPC contact points should visit the IPP frequently to ensure they have the latest contact information.

#### B. UNOFFICIAL CONTACT POINTS

12. The secretariat continues to work with a small number of countries that need to nominate their IPPC contact points officially.

#### C. INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY PORTAL (IPP) - [HTTPS://WWW.IPPC.INT](https://www.ippc.int)

13. There continues to be a lot of information being made available by countries through the IPP and the IPPC secretariat. Countries are encouraged to periodically visit the site for updates.

14. The IPP now provides Russian navigation and the secretariat continue to work with China to provide the site with Chinese navigation.

15. Usage of the IPP continues to increase but it is apparent that this can be improved in certain regions and in certain countries. Internet access/reliability has a role to play in certain countries, but access in many countries is improving.

16. The site is currently being developed to substantially increase the amount of information available to support standard implementation and capacity development and the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) will come on-line in the near future with a functional Help Desk..

#### D. PEST REPORTING

17. National pest reporting continues to improve but there is still potential for further improvement. The 2011 reporting year has seen a substantial increase in the number of pest reports. The secretariat is working on this information to allow users to access this information in a more constructive and analytical manner.

#### E. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

18. The IPPC secretariat continues to develop an IPPC communications strategy that is now greatly facilitated by agreement in CPM on the IPPC Strategic Objectives. The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IPPC in 2012 will provide an opportunity to increase the visibility and profile of the IPPC, particularly in support of the IPPC Resources Mobilization Strategy.

### IV. DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

19. The phytosanitary trade dispute between South Africa and the European Union is on-going and further announcements will be made as information becomes available and when appropriate.

20. The CPM has recently referred concerns regarding ISPM implementation to the Subsidiary Body on Dispute Settlement (SBDS) for discussion and guidance. This mechanism already exists and will now be active for the first time.

21. Given a number of WTO papers on informal discussions to resolve trade disputes, the IPPC secretariat would like to note the success of such discussions through the IPPC secretariat and FAO in the past. It is believed a number of disputes have been resolved in this way that before would have become formal disputes. Such "dispute avoidance" mechanisms are encouraged and the IPPC secretariat is available to continue facilitating this process.

## **V. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **A. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND RELATED ISSUES**

22. The results of the work of the IPPC Expert Working Group on Capacity Development (EWG) tasked to review and refine the phytosanitary capacity development operational plan of the Convention, assist the secretariat with developing national phytosanitary capacity, and consider the need for a permanent CPM body that deals with capacity development, were presented to the CPM Bureau and IPPC Strategic Planning Group in October 2011.

23. The reviewed proposal of the operational plan and associated budget for capacity development and a full set of documents providing an analysis on the possible creation of a CPM Subsidiary Body on Capacity Development or an IPPC Technical Committee on Capacity development are going to be provided to the IPPC community for consideration at CPM-7 in 2012.

24. Following the recommendations of CPM-5 (2010) and the work agreed in the EWG, the secretariat is developing a phytosanitary resources page that is going to be able to make available databases on projects and activities, a roster of experts, diagnostic protocols, training materials, E-learning courses, manuals, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), photos and videos appropriate for developing the phytosanitary capacity of IPPC member countries.

25. IPPC contracting parties, Regional Plant Protection Organizations and International Organizations are contributing to this page sending links and documents to populate the page.

### **B. PROJECTS**

26. The secretariat continued its active collaboration with donor agencies and contracting parties in the delivery of technical assistance for capacity development in projects funded through various sources. In particular, the articulation and support to STDF activities has substantially increased.

27. The number of projects in which the IPPC secretariat is involved with different levels of participation has reached 35 projects of national, regional and global nature in 2011 and five requests for new projects related to the application of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool (PCE) have been received and shall be considered for 2012. The IPPC secretariat shall be directly involved in 2012 in a project to increase the phytosanitary capacity of ten Central African countries in 2012, in relation to their participation in the IPPC activities and in the protection of their food security and safe trade.

### **C. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON DRAFT ISPMs**

28. In 2011, the draft ISPMs were reviewed in the following regions:

Region	Date (2010 Tentative)	Venue	Organized by	Other Funding Source
Africa	13-16 September	Libreville, Gabon	IAPSC	PANSPSO/EU/AU
Asia	6-10 September	Busan City, Rep. of Korea	FAO	Rep. of Korea/Japan
Caribbean	26 July	Bridgetown, Barbados	IDB/SPS	IDB/SPS
CIS countries and Central Asia	11-15 July	Bykovo, Moscow Region	FAO-EPPPO	FAO
Latin America	19-23 September	San Jose, Costa Rica	IICA COSAVE OIRSA IPPC	
Near East	10-14 September	Cairo, Egypt	FAO	
Pacific	7-14 September	Nadi, Fiji	SPC	Australia

29. After the deadline of 30 September 2011, comments were presented to the secretariat through the OCS. The secretariat is still analyzing the results of a survey to workshop attendees to address the association between workshop attendance and participation in the standards development process.

## VI. IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (IRSS)

30. The first year of the IRSS programme has been initiated, with funding support for the first year of operation being provided with the generous support of the European Union. The secretariat has initiated the following steps toward implementation of the "Help Desk":

31. The following tools will be available to contracting parties by March 2011:

- A searchable database of phytosanitary projects and activities;
- a roster of phytosanitary experts;
- availability of a limited number of phytosanitary technical resources such as manuals, SOPs and training kits;
- a table of donors and criteria for funding

32. An IRSS page is also under development which will house the help desk. An additional webpage is being created to house a number of resources such as the tools indicated above plus media library and advocacy tools. The IPPC secretariat welcomes the expression of interest of the European Commission to fund an additional two years of the IRSS programme beyond 2011.

## VII. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

33. The secretariat would like to thank all those contracting parties that have contributed to the 2011 budget of the IPPC. Although the IPPC work programme has been significantly reduced due to resource constraints, support from some member countries has been encouraging to ensure the core work programme could be delivered. To this end we wish to thank Australia, European Union, Denmark, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America for their financial contributions in 2011, that were well supported by many in-kind contributions from a number of other countries. A full list of in-kind support is made available to CPM each year.

34. The sustainability of IPPC secretariat, and hence the work programme of the IPPC, is being addressed as a matter of urgency. The current resource allocation (financial and human resources) is simply not sustainable. Therefore, the Secretary is giving this his highest priority and has begun discussions with the governing body and some partners to improve the situation in the foreseeable future.

35. The draft IPPC Resource Mobilization Strategy, which will be one of the four strategies on primary focus areas, was discussed in the annual meeting of the CPM Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) in October 2011. The draft will be revised and presented to the CPM7 in March 2012.

36. The discussions in the SPTA meeting mentioned above also highlighted that the budget for 2012 would need similar or significant additional extra-budgetary resources as 2011. This includes any extra FAO contributions that may be anticipated. It is essential the IPPC receive regular and predictable contributions to allow appropriate planning and delivery of the core IPPC work programme i.e. to provide sustainability to the programme.

37. As the year 2012 will be the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IPPC, the IPPC secretariat has started planning the celebration activities but within the very limited resources currently available. This will be announced soon for any offers from countries, organizations and other stakeholders to support such activities.

38. The secretariat would welcome any discussions with contracting parties or partner organizations that could provide solutions to the current challenges, particularly in the medium to long term.

#### **VIII. IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION IN THE IPPC (EPHYTO)**

39. An Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Electronic Certification was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 7 to 10 June 2011. The meeting was attended by participants from 27 countries and two regional plant protection organizations.

40. An increasing number of countries are converting from paper systems to electronic certification systems. A global ePhyto standard will greatly facilitate the inter-governmental exchange of phytosanitary certificates with improved security and often large gains in efficiencies. Some background information can be found on the IPPC website ([https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1110892&no\\_cache=1](https://www.ippc.int/index.php?id=1110892&no_cache=1)).

41. For most countries this plant health initiative will be integrated into their animal health and food safety electronic certifications systems. Participants agreed to work together to ultimately agree on a global standard for electronic phytosanitary certification based on ISPM 12, probably to be called ePhyto. Three working groups have been established to progress this work with the objectives of having a draft available by the end of 2011 for field testing.

---