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Page: 1/5

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)
TO THE SPS COMMITTEE MEETING ON 25-26 MARCH 2021**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE IPPC SECRETARIAT

The following communication, received on 2 March 2021, is being circulated at the request of the International Plant Protection Convention secretariat (IPPC).

1 THE COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CPM-15, 2021)

1.1. The COVID-19 pandemic had major effects on the organization of the CPM planned for 2020 and as such, it was postponed to 2021. The fifteenth meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) will be held virtually on 16 and 18 March and 1 April 2021. CPM-15 (2021) papers are posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP).¹

1.2. Despite the challenge of pandemic in 2020, the IPPC secretariat worked with contracting parties and garnered their support to have the CPM Bureau make some decisions on behalf of the CPM. Ten virtual meetings of the CPM Bureau were held in 2020. In addition, two sessions of Strategic Planning Group and two meetings of the IPPC Financial Committee were also held, all by virtual means.

1.3. The CPM Bureau used the CPM-14 (2019) endorsed version of the IPPC Strategic Framework (SF) (2020-2030) and have integrated the implementation of the SF and its development agenda items in the IPPC secretariat Work Plan and Budget for 2021, which will be presented to the CPM. In addition to the routine work of the CPM, it will review and discuss the revision of the Strategic Planning Group's terms of reference and consider the establishment of three CPM Focus Groups on: 1) Implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework's (2020-2030) Development Agenda items; 2) Communications; and 3) the Impact of climate change on plant health. Furthermore, the Bureau recommended a proposal for the CPM to authorize them to operate on behalf of the CPM during this pandemic, at least for the remainder of 2021 (Role of the CPM Bureau and IPPC secretariat during times of emergencies or crises).

1.4. The IPPC CPM subsidiary body, the Standards Committee (SC) recommended four draft ISPMs (*Determination of pest status in an area*, *Requirements for the use of modified atmosphere treatments as phytosanitary measures*, *Requirements for NPPOs if authorizing entities to perform phytosanitary actions* and the 2018 amendments to ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*)) and seven phytosanitary treatments (PTs) to the CPM-15 (2021) for adoption.

1.5. One draft CPM recommendation (*Safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid to prevent the introduction of plant pests during an emergency situation*) for adoption and one draft CPM recommendation for approval for consultation (*Facilitating safe trade by reducing the incidence of contaminating pests associated with traded goods*) are being presented to the CPM-15 (2021).

1.6. The IPPC CPM subsidiary body, the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC), will present their accomplishments from 2020 as well as propose adjustments to the list of Implementation and Capacity Development topics for technical resources. Revised terms of

¹ CPM-15 (2021) website: <https://www.ippc.int/en/cpm-sessions/cpm-15/>.

reference for the IC will also be presented for adoption. In addition, a specific report on the activities and plans for 2021 of the IC Sub-group, the Sea Containers Task Force (SCTF) will be provided, some additional details are provided below.

2 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2.1. The 37th meeting of the Standards Committee (SC) took place virtually from 16 to 19 November 2020 to advance the work of the IPPC community on the development of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs).

2.2. The SC reviewed and approved three Specifications (<https://www.ippc.int/en/news/ippc-standards-committee-approved-three-new-specifications/>) on various topics, including system approaches for phytosanitary certification of seeds and criteria for the determination of host status for fruit flies. These two specifications lay the groundwork for the development of new Annexes to the adopted standards on *Determination of host status of fruit to fruit fly* (ISPM 37) and *International movement of seeds* (ISPM 38) in 2021. Finally, the third specification defines the scope and tasks of the new Technical Panel on Commodity Standards (TPCS).

2.3. Among other important agenda items, the SC had a productive discussion on the path forward for the reorganization of the pest risk analysis (PRA) standards into a suite of standards and decided to finalize the draft specification on *Reorganization of pest risk analysis standards* (2020-001) after the meeting. The SC also discussed their involvement in relation to activities within the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030. The report of the SC November 2020 virtual meeting is available on the IPP at:

<https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee/>.

2.4. The next meeting of the SC is planned for May 2021. However, focused meeting may take place in April 2021.

3 IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3.1. In 2020, the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) has conducted most of its work virtually. Since November 2020 the IC has held three virtual meetings, summarized below:

- a. IC VM08 (November): the IC elected a new Chairperson (Dominique PELLETIER, Canada) and a new Vice -Chairperson (Christopher DALE, Australia). The committee reviewed the list of Implementation and Capacity Development (ICD) subjects with a focus on setting priorities.
- b. IC VM09 (December): During this meeting the IC discussed the activities of the IC Sub-group: Sea Containers Task Force and related Programme on sea containers. The IC reviewed and approved for consultation a draft terms of reference for the IC sub-group on National Reporting Obligations (NROs) and considered the IC's involvement with explanatory documents for ISPMs and the IC's future role. In addition, the IPPC secretariat presented the 2021 work plan for the Implementation Facilitation Unit (IFU).
- c. IC VM10 (January): The IC reviewed a summary of their e-Decisions made in 2020 and were presented the results of a pilot Design Thinking study on "How to leverage digital methods to efficiently deliver implementation and capacity development (ICD) phytosanitary activities at global, regional and national levels". The purpose of this study was to get user input from National Plant Protection Organization staff in developing countries on how to compensate for the lack of face-to-face workshops during COVID-19 and how best to develop phytosanitary capacity.

3.2. For full details, please consult the IC reports of these meetings on the IPP.²

² IC meeting reports: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/>.

4 EMERGING PESTS

4.1. While the new programme on Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems is being guided by the dedicated CPM Focus Group, concrete pilot activities are being developed on *Spodoptera frugiperda* (Fall Armyworm). Prevention, preparedness and response guidelines for countries where *Spodoptera frugiperda* is absent or of limited distribution have been developed and are open for comments until 15 March 2021 via the IPPC secretariat's Online Commenting System.

5 PROMOTING TRADE FACILITATION

5.1. e-Commerce: The IPPC secretariat is continuing to work to strengthen collaboration with national plant protection organizations and key international organizations, such as the World Customs Organization, Universal Postal Union and World Trade Organization to address the phytosanitary risks associated with e-Commerce and continues to support an informal network of e-Commerce experts. A working group of e-Commerce experts has been established and tasked with developing an IPPC e-Commerce Guide for plants, plant products and other regulated articles (2017-039).

5.2. Ephyto: The IPPC ePhyto Solution continues to grow and improve. 92 Countries are now connected to the IPPC ePhyto Solution, and additional countries have sent registration requests or are in the process of doing registration. There is now a Business Process Analysis framework available to assist countries in the process of not only implementing the ePhyto Solution, but how to prepare for implementation as well. For the coming year, the IPPC intends to continue improving the system by introducing additional features to the GeNS such as SPS Messaging (UNCEFACT term - certification status, inspection reports, etc.), setting up appointments for export and import inspections (via a "channel" connection, adding harmonized system (HS) codes to the system) as well as conducting several workshops on ePhyto in collaboration with the Industry Advisory Group and the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation. The Secretariat also continues to work with the World Bank on implementing ePhyto in Zambia and investigating opportunities elsewhere. Finally, the EU TRACES system will soon begin to issue ePhytos for export through the ePhyto Hub in addition to receiving ePhytos as is already the case since last year. Visit the ephyto website³ for additional information.

5.3. Sea Containers: The Sea Containers Task Force (SCTF) met virtually in December 2020 and January 2021 and their 2021 work plan has been approved by the IC. The two main objectives of the SCTF are: 1) Measuring the impact of the Container Transport Units (CTU) code; and 2) Increase in awareness of the risks of pest contamination of sea containers.

5.4. Highlights of their 2021 work plan are to explore the use of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) and the WCO Data Models (DM) for sea container cleanliness purposes, to participation in the revision of the CTU Code as well as to enhance Industry Surveys and to contribute to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Inspection Programmes to include provisions to help ensure CTUs are clean and free of contaminating pest.

6 PHYTOSANITARY CAPACITY EVALUATIONS

6.1. Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations (PCE) are proceeding virtually in the Caribbean (Bahamas, Dominica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago) and in Sri Lanka. A PCE is about to start in Nepal, with the financial support of the World Bank.

7 STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

7.1. The IPPC website or International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) went through a major revision last month from the software and infrastructure point of view. The IPPC secretariat in collaboration with the FAO IT division migrated the IPPC website to a new Cloud Server (AWS). The new AWS Cloud server is continually monitored, it secures and hardens the infrastructure of the website. The infrastructure is constantly upgraded to minimize security vulnerabilities. The processes and procedures to deploy system updates have been standardized to reduce to minimum human errors.

³ ePhyto website: <http://www.ephytoexchange.org>.

7.2. The IPPC secretariat is taking the opportunity of this migration to revise the IPPC website architecture and upgrade the system using the latest version of the software and application environment.

7.3. In addition, an IPP assessment is being carried out by an external company in view of seeking better solutions for organizing the contents, resulting more user friendly and more efficient in the retrieval of data, with the overall objective to communicate better the IPPC mandate and improve user experience.

7.4. A Phytosanitary Systems landing page⁴ was released last year in collaboration with the IC members. The landing page is composed of several component pages. Each component page brings together ISPMs, CPM Recommendations, Guides and training materials and contributed resources on a given subject. A few new component pages have been added. SPS members are encouraged to visit these webpages and provide comments to support continual improvements to these pages (ippc@fao.org).

7.5. An animated infographic developed in collaboration with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat and the Joint FAO/IAEA Programme of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. This short video on '*Fruit Fly International Standards Can Help Gain Market Access*'⁵ was published in six languages (English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish).

7.6. All Announcements⁶, News⁷ and Calls⁸ are posted on the IPP. WTO Members are encouraged to subscribe to each to help ensure you get timely notifications related to our activities.

8 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANT HEALTH

8.1. In light of the first International Plant Health Conference (IPHC) being postponed due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the IYPH International Steering Committee (ISC) recommended at their 14th meeting that the first International Plant Health Conference should take place in the week of 12 May 2022 instead, which may also coincide with celebrations of the first International Day of Plant Health.

8.2. The IYPH ISC decided to hold a series of events prior to the IYPH closing ceremony on 1 July 2021 and to establish a path leading towards the first IPHC next year. A virtual launch of the study report on the impacts of climate change on plant health on 1 June 2021 opens the series. The launch will be followed by a two-day webinar on 29-30 June 2021 focusing on food systems and climate change, and their connection with plant health. Two more webinars are planned for October and December, the latter focusing on synergies between plant health and fruit and vegetables, at the occasion of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021.

8.3. The IPPC secretariat is planning on hosting a side event during the week of this SPS Committee meeting (23 March 2021, 13:30-14:30), please check for updated information.

9 HIGHLIGHTS ON ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT FOUR MONTHS (UNTIL JULY)

9.1. The main meeting of the IPPC secretariat for the remaining of 2021 are being planned to be held virtually including the CPM-15, the SC and IC as well as other working groups. All events organized by the IPPC secretariat are posted on the calendar on the IPP.⁹

⁴ Phytosanitary System landing page is available at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/phytosanitary-system/>.

⁵ FF ISPMs can help gain market access: <http://www-naweb.iaea.org/nafa/resources-nafa/multimedia.html>.

⁶ IPPC Announcements: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/category/announcements/>.

⁷ IPPC News: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/category/ippcnews/>.

⁸ IPPC Calls: <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/>.

⁹ IPPC secretariat calendar: <https://www.ippc.int/en/year/calendar/?year=2021&month=1&day=1&hour=0&minute=0&second=0>.

9.2. The IPPC secretariat has been following some of the informal work the WTO is doing on e-Commerce and have approached the WTO to consider holding a lunch time session on phytosanitary considerations related to e-Commerce.

9.3. The IPPC secretariat is planning to publish a bi-monthly IPPC newsletter, stay tuned.

9.4. During its final year of work, the SCTF has planned a number of virtual sessions and intersessional work to complete tasks outlined.
