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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 22-24 MARCH 2023
FOR THE PERIOD: NOVEMBER 2022 – FEBRUARY 2023**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE IPPC SECRETARIAT

The following communication, received on 1 March 2023, is being circulated at the request of the International Plant Protection Convention secretariat (IPPC).

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an intergovernmental treaty signed by 184 contracting parties (as of February 2023), aiming to protect the world's plant resources from the spread and introduction of pests, and facilitate safe trade. The Convention introduced the development and implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) as its main tool to achieve its goals, making it the sole global standard setting organization for plant health.

The IPPC is one of the "Three Sisters" recognized by the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Agreement, along with the Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety standards and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) for animal health standards.

1 COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CPM) BUREAU¹

1.1. Since November 2022, the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau convened one meeting in December 2022 (virtually) and another one is scheduled for 22-24 March 2023 in FAO Headquarters, Rome. The CPM Bureau during this meeting will engage in reviewing the documents and finalizing the arrangements for the upcoming seventeenth session of the CPM (CPM-17), which will be held in person in FAO Headquarters on 27-31 March 2023. The CPM-17 will be live-streamed and conducted in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The CPM-17 meeting papers are posted [here](#).

2 IPPC OBSERVATORY²

2.1. As reported previously, the IPPC Observatory is a system that monitors the implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations, identifies challenges and best practices and provides recommendations to the IPPC governing and subsidiary bodies for follow-up actions. This evaluation system gathers the best practices and identifies common challenges faced by IPPC contracting parties through surveys and studies and provides an overview to the IPPC community on the state of implementation of the IPPC, ISPMs and CPM Recommendations at a global level.

2.2. To improve collaboration and experience sharing, the IPPC secretariat is fully involved in the work of an informal working group with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) on observatories. As a result, a side event is planned to happen at the margins of the SPS Committee, on the 23 March 2023 at 14:00h (GMT+1, Geneva

¹ CPM Bureau: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/governance/bureau/>.

² See news item on the IPP: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/cpm-approves-transition-of-implementation-review-and-support-system-to-the-ippc-observatory/>.

time) organized by the WOA, the Codex and the IPPC secretariat, where it will present the Observatory programmes of these Organisations (more information are available in the WTO-SPS Committee documents).

2.3. For more information on the IPPC Observatory you can visit the [dedicated webpage](#), watch the [IPPC Observatory video](#) or consult the IPPC Observatory [Factsheet](#).

3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE³

3.1. Since the last update of from the IPPC secretariat to the SPS Committee, the IPPC Standards Committee (SC) met in November 2022 and main the focus was to revise and approved draft ISPM for recommendation for adoption by the CPM. Also, the SC discussed and propose some adjustments to the IPPC standard setting process regarding the length of consultation period for draft specifications and consultation comments, to be more inclusive. More information at the SC November 2022 meeting report [here](#). The IPPC SC also provided a report to the upcoming CPM-17 in documents [CPM 2023/07](#), [CPM 2023/08](#) and [CPM 2023/09](#).

3.2. Four draft ISPMs (including Annexes) are being recommended for adoption by CPM-17 (2023):

1. Draft 2021 amendments to ISPM 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*) (1994-001);
2. Draft annex to ISPM 20 (*Guidelines for a phytosanitary import regulatory system*): Use of specific import authorizations (2008-006);
3. Draft revision of ISPM 18 (*Requirements for the use of irradiation as a phytosanitary measure*) (2014-007);
4. Draft annex to ISPM 28 (Irradiation treatment for *Pseudococcus jackbeardsleyi*) (2017-027).

3.3. It is to highlight that the adoption of ISPMs follows the IPPC standard setting procedure, and that contracting parties may submit objections on draft ISPMs along with the technical justification and suggestions for improvement to the IPPC secretariat no later than three weeks before the CPM session (for this year, by 6 March 2023). Concerned contracting parties should make every effort to seek agreement before the CPM session. If no objection is received, the CPM will adopt the ISPMs without discussion. If objection is received, it will be added to the CPM-17 (2023) agenda, and the CPM-17 (2023) will decide on a way forward. More information is provided in the document [CPM 2023/11](#) and its attachments.

3.4. The SC has also been engaged in various other works, including a notable collaboration with the WTO-SPS Secretariat in the [Thematic Session related to IPPC pest risk analysis related standards](#) in November 2022.

3.5. The next IPPC SC meeting is scheduled to be from 8 to 12 May 2023 at FAO Headquarter, in Rome, Italy. Besides the revision of draft ISPMs for recommendation to first consultation, the SC will also discuss other strategic issues from its work programme, including the report back of all IPPC technical panels with the aim to develop international standards. The SC working group (SC-7) will meet the week after from 15 to 19 May 2023 at FAO Headquarter, in Rome, Italy to revise the draft ISPMs from the first consultation with and to make an in-depth discussion and recommendations on the standard setting procedure, to better align with the evolved needs from the IPPC contracting parties. The IPPC Standard Setting Unit secretariat 2023 tentative work plan is available [here](#).

4 IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (IC)⁴

4.1. The November 2022 IC meeting was held face-to-face from 21 to 25 November in Rome. It was the first time that IC members met in-person since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2. Successful activities conducted throughout 2022, which were highlighted, included improving the bi-monthly updates from the IPPC Implementation Facilitation Unit, publishing of new guides, development of e-learning courses, assisting multiple countries in completing Phytosanitary Capacity

³ Standards Committee: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee/>.

⁴ <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/>.

Evaluations (PCEs) as well as the new projects and collaboration with other FAO units funded by the European Union, that feed into the One Health initiative.

4.3. The IC endorsed the [2023 IFU proposed workplan](#), with the secretariat and the IC jointly agreeing that one of the focus areas for 2023 is the successful implementation of the [new IPPC guides and e-learning courses](#) developed in 2022. With new implementation materials spanning across a range of phytosanitary topics – from pest risk analysis, surveillance, pest status, pest reporting, contingency planning, inspection and export certification to managing the phytosanitary risks associated with wood packaging material and e-Commerce – the IC confirmed that the priority remains to increase awareness and use of these materials within the phytosanitary community.

4.4. According to the Implementation and Capacity Development committee (IC) Terms of reference and rules of procedure (IC TOR and ROP)⁵, the IPPC launched the 2022 Call for IC members. The new IC members will be confirmed by CPM-17 this year.

5 EPHYTO

5.1. Once again, it is a pleasure to report the continued progress being made with the IPPC ePhyto Solution. The ePhyto Solution continues to provide user countries with the opportunity to exchange digital phytosanitary certificates with any country using the system. As of end of February 2023, there were 115 countries registered (Pakistan and Sao Tome and Principe being the latest to register), with 72 countries in full production. In addition, the ePhyto Solution has exceeded 3.2 million certificates exchanged. Additional features have been added to the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS – the web-based application for countries without their own national systems) including eSignature, French and Arabic language versions as well as an ePayment feature. The Arabic language version of the GeNS was developed with the support of the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation.

5.2. With more and more countries coming on board there are always requests to add additional features. As a reminder, when considering these requests, the IPPC secretariat always strives to ensure that any new features added to the system will have applicability across the system for any country wishing to make use of the feature. In an additional development, the FAO Economics section, with funding from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, has been working on a review of available statistics with regard to ePhyto and have discovered that the share of plant exports from ePhyto participants in the global value of exports of plant products has seen an increase of approximately 9 percent points between 2018 and 2021 (from 0.73 percent in 2018 to 9.59 percent in 2021). However, as of the end of 2021, this still only represents 10.6 percent of the value of plant exports requiring phytosanitary certifications was covered by the ePhyto solution (79 billion USD out of 825 billion USD), meaning there is a potential scope for significantly expanding country participation in the use of ePhyto.

5.3. At the seventeenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-17, to be held from 27 to 31 March 2023), the IPPC governing body, a proposal from the CPM Focus Group on Sustainable Funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution will be provided. It is anticipated that when CPM adopts a sustainable funding mechanism selected from the set of options to be presented, it will take at least two years to implement.

5.4. As a reminder for our colleagues the system was built to handle up to one hundred thousand certificates per day, but at present it is averaging about one hundred and twenty thousand certificates per month. The IPPC again invites our SPS sisters and any other international organization wishing to exchange digital certificates to contact the secretariat to discuss ways to facilitate those exchanges through the system.

5.5. More information can be found on the [ePhyto webpage](#) on the IPP.⁶

⁵ https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2022/04/IC_2022_IC_ToR_and_RoP.pdf.

⁶ ePhyto webpage: <https://www.ephytoexchange.org/landing/>.

6 IPPC COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

6.1. The IPPC secretariat continued to produce communication and advocacy materials including four issues of the IPPC newsletter sent to around 5,000 recipients, 19 headline news and 13 announcements) in 2022 as well as social media content that reached an audience of around 169,000 users, with a steady increase in percentages and double the engagement rate compared to the same period in 2021. Content posted by IPPC on social media was substantially amplified by FAO accounts and other international/EU institutions (UNDCC, EU DG for Environment, UN Biodiversity, etc.) via the Biodiversity Communications Flotilla group on Twitter.

6.2. The IPPC secretariat and the CPM Focus Group on Communications has finalized the draft IPPC Communication Strategy 2023-2030 which will be presented at the CPM-17 for adoption. The IPPC secretariat has also developed and has been implementing a new communications plan for 2023 that is anchored in the global IPPC Communications Strategy.

7 IPPC CALL FOR EXPERTS AND OTHER MATERIAL

7.1. **Call for experts for IPPC expert working groups (EWGs) and Technical Panel for the Glossary (TPG) Spanish language expert – deadline 13 March 2023:** The IPPC secretariat is soliciting nominations for appropriately qualified experts:

- for the Spanish language for the Technical Panel for the Glossary (TPG);
- for expert working group on Field inspection Annex to ISPM 23;
- for revision of ISPM 26 (Establishment of pest free areas for fruit flies (Tephritidae)).

7.2. More information at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/calls-experts/>.

7.3. **Call for Implementation and Capacity Development projects – deadline 31 March 2023:** The IPPC Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) is reaching out to the plant health community to collect, consolidate and share phytosanitary implementation and capacity development (ICD) project information. This initiative intends to promote global 'best practice' principles, maximize research and development investment, promote project synergies, minimize duplication and facilitate networking opportunities amongst plant health professionals. More information at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-implementation-and-capacity-development-projects-2/>.

7.4. For more information on upcoming calls for various IPPC groups, please check the website: <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/category/deadline/>.

8 UPCOMING IPPC EVENTS

8.1. For more information on upcoming meetings, please check the website: <https://www.ippc.int/en/year/calendar/>.

- **22-24 March 2023:** CPM Bureau, FAO HQ;
- **27-31 March 2023:** 17th Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-17), FAO HQ. More information [here](#);
- **8-12 May 2023:** IPPC Standards Committee (SC) meeting, FAO HQ;
- **15-19 May 2023:** IPPC Standards Committee (SC) working group (SC-7) meeting, FAO HQ;
- **15-19 May 2023:** IPPC Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) May meeting, FAO HQ;
- **12-16 June 2023:** CPM Bureau, FAO HQ.

9 IPPC VIDEOS AND OTHER TOOLS

9.1. The IPPC secretariat wishes to share with you some tools available.

- Video on the IPPC standard setting procedure: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8zciLFG--8>

- Video on Pest risk analysis: Why we do it and why it is important?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXtQ9zVUqI0&t=212s>
- e-learning course on Surveillance and reporting obligations: <http://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=824>
- e-learning course on Pest Risk Analysis (developed in collaboration with COLEACP): <http://training.coleacp.org/course/index.php?categoryid=208>
- IPPC Observatory Factsheet: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc1022en>
- IPPC Observatory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tsuqgTpdAQ>
- IPPC Observatory webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ippc-irss/list>

9.2. The IPPC secretariat would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere gratitude to the WTO-SPS Secretariat for the strong support and close cooperation.
