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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)
TO THE SPS COMMITTEE MEETING ON 20-22 MARCH 2024
FOR THE PERIOD: NOVEMBER 2023 – FEBRUARY 2024**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE IPPC SECRETARIAT

The following communication, received on 19 February 2024, 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 185 contracting parties (as of October 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)¹

1.1. The next session of the CPM (CPM-18, 2024) is confirmed for 15 to 19 April 2024, at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy.

1.2. Several topics are to be discussed and agreed by the CPM-18, including:

- **Adoption of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures**
 - o Draft 2022 Amendments to ISPM 5 (Glossary of phytosanitary terms) (1994-001);
 - o Draft Annex: Criteria for evaluation of available information for determining host status of fruit to fruit flies to ISPM 37 (Determination of host status of fruit to fruit flies (*Tephritidae*)) (2018-011);
 - o Revision of ISPM 4 (Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas) (2009-002);
 - o Draft annex to ISPM 28 (Cold treatment for *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* on *Citrus sinensis*) (2017-029).
- **Adjustments to the IPPC Standard Setting Procedure:** expediting the development of IPPC specific commodity standards.
- **CPM Recommendations**
 - o Sea Containers² (for adoption)
- **Recommendations of new topics proposals to the IPPC work programme (from the 2023 call for topics)**

¹ CPM webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm/>.

² CPM Focus Group on Sea Containers: <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm-focus-group-reports/fg-on-sea-containers/>.

- **Implementation of IPPC Strategic Framework – Overarching report on the implementation of the eight development agenda items (DAIs)**
 - o Harmonization of electronic data exchange – ePhyto funding model and procedures (decision to be taken on a way forward for the ePhyto sustainable funding)
 - o Commodity- and Pathway-Specific ISPMs
 - o Management of e-commerce and postal and courier pathways
 - o Enabling the use of third-party entities
 - o Strengthening pest outbreak alert and response systems
 - o Assessment and management of climate change impacts on plant health
 - o Global Phytosanitary Research Coordination - Terms of reference for the CPM Focus Group for CPM approval
 - o Diagnostic Laboratory Networking - Terms of reference for the CPM Focus Group for CPM approval
- **Update from other CPM Focus Groups**
 - o Safe Provisions of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid³
- **Implementation issues**
 - o IPPC Guides and Training Materials
 - o Update on projects managed by the IPPC secretariat
 - o IPPC Observatory
 - o Update on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation
 - o Update on coordination of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *ubense* TR4 action
- **Collaboration with Regional Plant Protection Organizations**
- **Other emerging topics**
 - o Update on One Health and antimicrobial resistance
 - o Update on Africa Phytosanitary Programme⁴
 - o Dispute Settlement Oversight Body (terms of reference and rules of procedure)
- **Participating in CPM: Orientation session**
- **E-commerce side session**
- **Banana Fusarium TR4 side session**
- **(Tentative) Science Session**
- **Successes and challenges in implementing the IPPC**
- **Financial Report and Budget**
- **Update on Communication Activities**
- **External cooperation**

2 COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CPM) BUREAU⁵ AND THE IPPC STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP (SPG)⁶

2.1. The CPM Bureau, which guides the CPM on the strategic direction, financial and operational management of its activities, also discussed with the IPPC secretariat, plans for holding the next or eighteenth CPM (CPM-18) session in 2024. The purpose of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG), which meets at least once a year, is to provide a strategic perspective to the work of the IPPC community and support improvement through the provision of recommendations and advice to the CPM on any issues referred to it or related to its functions.

2.2. Since November 2023, the CPM Bureau convened one virtual meeting in December 2023. The IPPC SPG took place in October and highlights were presented in the June-October report. The main highlights of the December CPM Bureau meeting were:

- During the meeting the IPPC Secretary provided an update on the secretariat's core work of standard setting, implementation and facilitation, integration and support, and the secretariat's internal management initiatives as well as the new initiative, the global phytosanitary programme, with the pilot phase being in Africa (Africa Phytosanitary Programme-APP). A key topic discussed during the meeting is the essential role and contribution of plant health in the One Health initiative. The IPPC Secretary was encouraged

³ CPM Safe Provisions of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/cpm-focus-group-reports/fq-safe-provision-of-food-and-other-humanitarian-aid/>.

⁴ IPPC Africa Phytosanitary Programme: <https://www.ippc.int/en/about-app/>.

⁵ CPM Bureau: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/governance/bureau/>.

⁶ IPPC Strategic Planning Group (SPG): <https://www.ippc.int/en/commission/strategic-planning-group/>.

to engage FAO and other global organizations to underscore the importance of plant health in the context of One Health, including facilitating the submission of a paper on the topic, to the Eighth One Health World Congress in September 2024 and to CPM-18;

- Discussions on the [ePhyto](#) funding model and procedures, as well as revision of the ePhyto implementation strategy;
- Discussed and finalized the revised draft prospectus for implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework development agenda items;
- Discussed and reviewed the table of activities for Banana Fusarium oxysporium TR4 global coordination;
- Discussed and finalized terms of reference for two new CPM Focus Groups on: 1) Global Research Coordination; 2) Laboratory Diagnostic Networking;
- Considered arrangements for CPM-18 scheduled for April 2024.

3 IPPC OBSERVATORY⁷

3.1. 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.

3.2. The dedicated Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC) Subgroup on IPPC Observatory held three meetings in 2023 to discuss the workplan for 2023 including four priorities agreed by the IC. The progress of these activities is as follows:

a) Monitoring implementation of the objectives of the development agenda items of the IPPC Strategic Framework (2020–2030):

The IC Subgroup recommended to conduct the monitoring of the implementation of the IPPC Strategic Framework through a mid-term evaluation in 2025 and a final evaluation in 2030. Additionally, it was agreed to work on a matrix to monitor the implementation and progress of the eight IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 DAIs, and to support the project coordinator, who will be recruited to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Framework.

b) Conducting the IPPC Third General Survey:

The survey questionnaire has been drafted and reviewed by the secretariat and the IC Subgroup and is pending the recruitment of a survey specialist expected for quarter II of 2024.

c) Launching the survey for the e-commerce study:

The secretariat drafted a survey and presented it to the IC Subgroup and to the IC Team on E-commerce for review. Finalization and launch of the survey are pending the recruitment of a survey specialist, who is expected to commence work in quarter II of 2024.

d) Launching a call of topics for surveys and studies:

It was agreed to merge the call for IPPC Observatory topics for studies and surveys with the IPPC call for Standards and Implementation, starting from 2025 and to become biannual.

3.3. The IPPC Observatory has also conducted the first phase of the survey on AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) in the phytosanitary context for which the results were presented to the CPM Bureau and Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meetings in October 2023. The second phase on fungicides use was launched from October to December 2023, and was extended to February 2024. The results of these two surveys are to be presented to CPM-18 (2024).

3.4. The IPPC Observatory is continuing the collaboration and experience sharing within the Three Sisters working group with Codex Alimentarius and WOA (World Organisation for Animal Health).

3.5. The 2024 IPPC Observatory work plan was approved by the IC during its November 2023 meeting.

⁷ 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/>.

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

4 STANDARDS COMMITTEE⁸

4.1. Since the last update from the IPPC Secretariat to the SPS Committee, the IPPC Standards Committee (SC) met from 13-17 November 2023 to revise and approve draft ISPMs for adoption by the CPM-18 (see preceding section of this document).

4.2. Other strategic topics included:

- Discussions on a way forward regarding the topic draft Annex Design and use of systems approaches for phytosanitary certification of seeds (2018-009) to ISPM 38 (*International movement of seeds*);
- Discussions on the proposals for new topics received from the 2023 IPPC call for topics;
- Adjustments to the IPPC Standard Setting Procedure, especially in light of expediting the development of IPPC specific commodity standards.

4.3. The next meeting is scheduled from 6-10 May 2024, at FAO HQ, Rome, Italy.

4.4. More information about the IPPC SC can be found at <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee/>.

5 IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (IC)⁹

5.1. The 2023 IC November meeting was held face-to-face from 6-10 November 2023 in Rome to discuss the outcomes from the October 2023 Strategic Planning Group (SPG) and Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Bureau meetings. The IC received updates from the Technical Consultations among regional plant protection organizations (TC-RPOs), the May Standards Committee and the 2023 IPPC Regional Workshops outcomes. The IC discussed the 2023 activities of the IC Subgroup and IC Teams, and approved their 2024 workplans. The IC also agreed on the revision of the [List of Implementation and Capacity Development Topics](#), reviewed and approved the Implementation and Facilitation Unit (IFU) 2024 workplan.

5.2. Three ad hoc IC Teams meetings (e-Commerce, Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation, and Regional Workshops guidelines) were organized as part of the November IC meeting and an interactive session was the occasion for the IC members to brainstorm on how to improve communication on IPPC guides and training materials.

5.3. The [meeting report](#) and a [news article](#) has been posted on the IPP.

5.4. The next meeting is scheduled from 13-17 May 2024, at FAO HQ, Rome, Italy.

6 IPPC GUIDES AND TRAINING MATERIALS

6.1. One of the key activities of the IC is to oversee the development of IPPC guides and training materials that support implementation of the IPPC and ISPMs.

6.2. Four new guides were published in 2023 and posted on the International Phytosanitary Portal¹⁰ (IPP):

- [Emergency Preparedness: A guide for developing contingency plans for outbreaks of quarantine pests](#);
- [Prevention, preparedness and response guidelines for Fusarium Tropical Race 4 \(TR4\) of banana](#);

⁸ Standards Committee: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/standards-committee/>.

⁹ IC: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/capacity-development-committee/>.

¹⁰ IPPC Guides and training materials: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/guides-and-training-materials/>.

- [Guide to regulation of wood packaging material: Understanding the phytosanitary requirements for the movement of wood packaging material in international trade](#); and
- [E-commerce – A guide to managing the pest risk posed by goods ordered online and distributed through postal and courier pathways](#).

6.3. The following IPPC Guides are under development and are expected to be published in 2024¹¹:

- *Participating in CPM meetings, Revision of existing manual and supporting materials* (2023-001)
- *Fusarium TR4 training courses and simulation exercises* (2023-002)
- *Risk-based inspection of imported consignments* (2018-022)
- *Wood Packaging Material Heat Treatment Manual* (2017-043a)
- *Wood Packaging Material Fumigation Treatment Manual* (2017-043b)

7 IPPC EPHYTO

7.1. An increasing number of countries are progressively transitioning from paper-based to digitalized phytosanitary certification system by using the IPPC ePhyto Solution that went live in early 2019. It has accelerated rapidly over the past years with 130 countries on board in February 2024 (116 in December 2022) including 86 countries actively exchanging approximately 160,000 ePhytos monthly and 35 countries currently testing the system. Countries that have recently (i.e. November 2023 - February 2024) registered to the ePhyto hub are Azerbaijan, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Nicaragua. As of February 2024, about 5.5 million ePhytos had been exchanged successfully since the inception of the IPPC ePhyto Hub.

7.2. A large part of the success can be attributed to the collaborative efforts between the secretariat and the many partners. These partners include first and foremost the ePhyto Steering Group and the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) who developed and continue to lead in developing the technical aspects and enhancements of the IPPC ePhyto Solution. Implementation has also been supported in some countries by Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), the Industry Advisory Group (IAG) and the World Bank.

7.3. As regards ePhyto promotion and implementation, support in 2023 from regional plant protection organizations or regional programmes (COSAVE¹², [AU-IAPSC](#)¹³, [OIRSA](#)¹⁴ and [CAREC](#)¹⁵) was also instrumental in enabling new countries to join or implement the IPPC ePhyto Solution.

7.4. The main challenge is to ensure the sustainable funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution as it has so far been funded through projects from the [Standards and Trade Development Facility \(STDF\)](#), or through donations from countries. The current funding will run out in 2024, and without secure funding for 2025, the ePhyto Solution operation will not be able to continue. At CPM-17 (2023), the Focus Group (FG) on sustainable funding of the IPPC ePhyto Solution presented recommendations for a sustainable funding mechanism.

7.5. Since CPM-17, the FG has held seven virtual meetings and has explored multiple options to develop a funding model that reflects the feedback provided by CPM. By 2026, the estimated annual cost will reach USD 1,263,000 to support, maintain, and enhance the core elements (IPPC ePhyto hub, the Generic ePhyto National System, programme management and support from the IPPC Secretariat). The funding model proposed for CPM-18 (15-19 April 2024) adoption has three components: (i) funding from FAO or other donors; (ii) a base fee for participation in the ePhyto Solution; and (iii) a usage fee (See CPM-18 paper on "Funding of the IPPC ePhyto [Solution](#)").

7.6. The GeNS is currently available in English, French and Arabic, and translation in Spanish and Russian are underway.

¹¹ List of Implementation and Capacity Development Topics: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ippc-implementation/list>.

¹² *Comite de Sanidad Vegetal del Cono Sur*.

¹³ African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council.

¹⁴ International Regional Organization for Animal and Plant Health (*Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria*).

¹⁵ Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation.

7.7. Upon its leadership, the IPPC secretariat will continue to further promote and implement the IPPC ePhyto Solution among countries.

7.8. More information can be found on the [ePhyto webpage](#) on the IPP.¹⁶

8 IPPC COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

8.1. The IPPC secretariat continued to produce communication and advocacy materials including the IPPC newsletter. Click here to know how to subscribe to it: <https://www.ippc.int/es/news/subscribe-to-the-ippc-newsletter/>.

8.2. In 2023, the CPM-17 adopted the global [IPPC Communications Strategy 2023-2030](#). The 2024 IPPC secretariat Communications Plan, developed in January 2024, which is an operationalization of the strategy, is now a more robust action plan aligned with the target milestones identified in the global IPPC Communications Strategy. The IPPC secretariat's communication plan has achieved some core milestones, including a revamp and development of new content on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP). New content was developed and posted on the IPP and on social media to raise awareness and jumpstart conversation on phytosanitary topics and IPPC's work programme, such as [blogs on standard setting](#) and [implementation and capacity development](#).

8.3. In December, preparations for the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) 2024 began with the development of the concept note, key messages around the theme of Plant Health and IT-supported trade, and also exhibits at the FAO Atrium. The secretariat coordinated with the office of the FAO Deputy Director-General for guidance on the planned activities and the digital communication campaign on IDPH.

8.4. The IPPC secretariat coordinated communications and recorded media coverage for some of the activities at the secretariat, including the train-the-trainer workshop of the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP) in Cairo, Egypt in September, and the international workshop on pest risk mitigation of sea containers and their cargoes, in Australia. Social media cards were developed on common pests and news articles were recorded from at least 15 news outlets for the three activities. In addition, survey protocol guides were developed for publication, with technical content contributed by USDA-APHIS.

8.5. The IPPC secretariat continued the groundwork to set up a Community of Practice (COP) in communication. Following further internal discussions, the secretariat decided to set up Regional Communication Networks (RCNs) instead to have a more focused approach to address the communication and information needs of each region, and for a more strategic coordination with the IPPC secretariat. The secretariat proposed to establish the RCNs and a Steering Group that was proposed in the CPM-18 paper on communication updates. A concept note had been prepared that will be shared with RPPOs once CPM-18 approves establishing the RCNs. A Terms of Reference will then be developed and a process to establish the Steering Group will commence thereafter.

9 IPPC CALL FOR TOPICS: STANDARDS AND IMPLEMENTATION MATERIAL

9.1. During the 2023 Call for Topics, the IPPC secretariat received 28 complete topic submissions from nine IPPC contracting parties and three regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs):

- Fourteen standards, including eight topics for specific commodity standards;
- Three implementation resources; and
- Eleven diagnostic protocols (DPs).

9.2. Following the conclusion of the 2023 Call for Topic submissions, the Task Force on Topics (TFT) thoroughly discussed and recommended these submitted topics. These recommendations are currently being presented to CPM-18 for adoption in April 2024.

9.3. More information can be found at: <https://www.ippc.int/en/calls/call-for-topics-standards-and-implementation/>.

¹⁶ ePhyto webpage: <https://www.ephytoexchange.org/landing/>.

9.4. NOTE: Proposals for Phytosanitary Treatments (as annexes to ISPM 28: Phytosanitary treatments for regulated pests) are solicited separately in an [ongoing call for treatments](#).

10 UPCOMING IPPC EVENTS

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

11 IPPC VIDEOS AND OTHER TOOLS

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

- New infographic video - Managing the pest risk posed by e-commerce: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDEaNfAZ2sM&list=PLzp5NgJ2-dK4T7GE2fsGujftlxSX1rCTC&t=4s>
- 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 COLEAD): <https://training.colead.link/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=3tsuqqTpdAQ>
- IPPC Observatory webpage: <https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/list-topics-ippc-irss/list>

11.2. 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.
