

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE WORK
OF OBSERVER ORGANIZATIONS

Statement by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
at the meeting of 15-16 October 1997

Update on the revision of the IPPC and the adoption of new ISPMs

The FAO Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) is considering legal issues associated with the new text of the International Plant Protection Convention and will be advising FAO Council and Conference on its positions when these bodies consider approving the revised text in November, 1997. The CCLM will be required to provide advice on four areas: conformity of the revised text with FAO Basic Texts and Rules; legal formatting; new obligations; and the legal implications of an additional Article referring to obligations under other agreements. Provisions of the new text pertaining to the formation of a Commission, adherence to standards, regulated non-quarantine pests, risk analysis, and technical assistance are being examined with respect to new obligations

Following acceptance of the revised text by Conference, the new Convention will come into force after two-thirds of the contracting parties have accepted the amendments. Amendments to the text that are deemed to involve new obligations only come into force for each contracting party on acceptance by it.

In addition to considering the text of the revised Convention and the opinions of the CCLM, the FAO Conference is to consider the adoption of four interim measures proposed by the Secretariat:

- (a) work on standards for regulated non-quarantine pests
- (b) establishment of an Interim Commission on phytosanitary measures
- (c) implementation of the amended phytosanitary certificates
- (d) the designation of official contact points by contracting parties.

FAO Conference will also be asked to approve two new International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs):

- (a) Export Certification System
- (b) Guidelines for Surveillance.

Both standards cover vital areas of responsibility for National Plant Protection Organizations and provide important guidance in activities associated with phytosanitary measures. The approval of these new standards will increase to six the number of ISPMs adopted under the IPPC.

The acceptance of the revised Convention and the adoption of interim measures by FAO Conference, particularly the formation of a Commission, have the potential to greatly facilitate the formulation and adoption of additional ISPMs.

The Secretariat encourages governments to support the adoption of interim measures and to move as rapidly and deliberately as possible for the acceptance of the amendments to the IPPC in their respective countries. Bringing the revised text into force will ensure that the IPPC is able to fill the complementary role envisioned for it under the SPS Agreement.

9th Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs)

The 9th Technical Consultation of RPPOs was held 8-12 September in Brasilia. Organized by the IPPC Secretariat and graciously hosted by COSAVE and the Government of Brazil, the meeting had as its primary focus the future role of RPPOs under the new IPPC. It was noted that RPPOs can play a significant role in promoting the understanding and adoption of the new Convention. Discussions also covered the opportunities for RPPOs in standard setting and identified priorities for standard setting activities in the Secretariat. In addition, sources of relevant information for beginning to draft standards were identified.

The meeting agreed that the 10th Technical Consultation would be held in Rome and could be adjacent to the first meeting of an interim Commission.

Technical Assistance

The IPPC Secretariat participated in a WTO Regional SPS Workshop in New Delhi, India.