

**DECISIONS FROM THE SEVENTH INTERIM COMMISSION  
ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

Communication from the International Plant Protection Convention Secretariat (IPPC)

The following communication, dated 16 June 2005, is being circulated at the request of the IPPC.

1. The 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM-7) took place in Rome, 4-7 April 2005, with 231 delegates from 117 Members, and 26 participants from 18 Observer Organizations. The following are decisions from ICPM-7 that may be of interest to WTO Members.

**I. THE DEVELOPMENT, ADOPTION AND MONITORING OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PHYTOSANITARY  
MEASURES (ISPMS) (STANDARD SETTING)**

**A. PLANT HEALTH RISK ANALYSIS WORKSHOP**

2. An international workshop on Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is being planned for October 2005 in Niagara Falls (Canada) to address issues and find solutions to problems faced by people involved in PRA around the world. The workshop will provide an opportunity to:

- explore methods and procedures for applying the IPPC's PRA standards in a harmonized manner;
- build international PRA expertise and enhance communication;
- present experiences on how to use PRA as a decision making tool;
- share tools for completing PRAs;
- continue to strengthen collaboration internationally through the International Plant Health Risk Analysis Network.

**B. PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF ISPM No.15 METHYL BROMIDE TREATMENT SCHEDULE**

3. An information document was presented to the ICPM outlining a proposal to modify the methyl bromide treatment schedule in Annex I of ISPM No. 15 (*Guidelines for regulating wood packaging material in international trade*). Research had been done on the subject and it had been found that the current treatment schedule was inadequate. The new schedule had been developed with scientific data provided by the International Forestry Quarantine Research Group (IFQRG) and had been recommended by the Technical Panel on Forest Quarantine. [Note: The meeting of the Standards Committee that followed the ICPM agreed that the document should be sent to NPPOs for country consultation under the fast track procedure.]

C. ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION

4. There was general support to develop work on electronic certification as a high priority. Now that additional information from the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) had been made available, it was clear that the work would be most appropriately developed outside the normal programme of standard setting.

5. The ICPM:

1. *Agreed* to establish a working group to formulate policy recommendations regarding electronic certification to be presented to the Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) for submission to ICPM-8.

D. ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

6. The Secretariat introduced five documents for consideration by the ICPM, which consisted of three new standards (*Requirements for the establishment of areas of low pest prevalence*, *Guidelines for inspection*, *Guidelines for the determination and recognition of equivalence of phytosanitary measures*), the revision of ISPM No. 3 (*Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms*), and amendments to ISPM No. 5 (*Glossary of phytosanitary terms*).

*Requirements for the establishment of areas of low pest prevalence*

7. This standard describes the requirements and procedures for the establishment of areas of low pest prevalence (ALPP) for regulated pests in an area and, to facilitate export, for pests regulated by an importing country only. This includes the identification, verification, maintenance and use of those ALPPs. One member expressed concern over the technical content of the standard and felt that certain issues could have been addressed more adequately.

8. The ICPM:

1. *Adopted* as an ISPM: *Requirements for the establishment of areas of low pest prevalence*

*Guidelines for inspection*

9. This standard describes procedures for the inspection of consignments of plants, plant products and other regulated articles at import and export. It is focused on the determination of compliance with phytosanitary requirements, based on visual examination, documentary checks, and identity and integrity checks.

10. The ICPM:

1. *Adopted* as an ISPM: *Guidelines for inspection*

*Guidelines for the determination and recognition of equivalence of phytosanitary measures*

11. This standard describes the principles and requirements that apply for the determination and recognition of equivalence of phytosanitary measures. It also describes a procedure for equivalence determinations in international trade.

12. The ICPM:

1. *Adopted as an ISPM: Guidelines for the determination and recognition of equivalence of phytosanitary measures*

*Revision of ISPM No. 3 (Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms)*

13. This standard provides guidelines for risk management related to the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms. It lists the related responsibilities of contracting parties to the IPPC ("contracting parties"), National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) or other responsible authorities, importers and exporters (as described in the standard). The standard addresses biological control agents capable of self-replication (including parasitoids, predators, parasites, nematodes, phytophagous organisms, and pathogens such as fungi, bacteria and viruses), as well as sterile insects and other beneficial organisms (such as mycorrhizae and pollinators), and includes those packaged or formulated as commercial products. Provisions are also included for the import for research, in quarantine facilities, of non-indigenous biological control agents and other beneficial organisms.

14. The ICPM:

1. *Adopted as ISPM No. 3 (2005): Guidelines for the export, shipment, import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms*

*Amendments to ISPM No. 5 (Glossary of phytosanitary terms)*

15. Revised terms and definitions included: Additional Declaration, chemical pressure impregnation, detention, ecosystem, emergency measure, heat treatment, Import Permit, phytosanitary action, phytosanitary procedure, systems approach(es) and treatment. New terms and definitions included: habitat, pest risk assessment (for regulated non-quarantine pests), pest risk management (for regulated non-quarantine pests), and phytosanitary import requirements. Definitions for ecoarea and quarantine (of a biological control agent) were deleted from the Glossary.

16. The Glossary Working Group was requested to review the terms "security (phytosanitary)" and "compliance procedure (for a consignment)" in light of comments provided at the ICPM.

17. The ICPM:

1. *Adopted the amendments to ISPM No. 5 (Glossary of phytosanitary terms) as presented.*

E. REGIONALIZATION

18. The WTO representative introduced a document outlining discussions on regionalization in the SPS Committee. The major issues discussed at the SPS Committee in relation to Article 6 included:

- procedures for the recognition of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence including the elevated costs of establishing and maintaining these;
- the lengthy administrative procedures for bilateral recognition of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence;
- the international recognition of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence for specific pests.

19. It was noted that the SPS Committee had not reached a consensus on the way forward in addressing issues of regionalization. While some SPS Committee members wished to adopt administrative guidelines that included timeframes, others had indicated that it should be the mandate of relevant international standard-setting bodies to address these issues.

20. The ICPM

2. *Decided* that a concept standard "Guidelines for the recognition of the establishment of pest free areas and area of low pest prevalence" be urgently developed. The ISPM would provide general guidance on the recognition process but would not provide timelines. The specification for the ISPM would be considered by the Standards Committee at its next session.

4. *Recognized* the need for further pest specific standards for pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence.

5. *Decided* that a feasibility study be undertaken on the international recognition of pest free areas, which would take into account legal, technical and economical factors and assess feasibility and sustainability of such system.

#### F. TOPICS AND PRIORITIES FOR STANDARDS

21. The Secretariat introduced a paper on topics and priorities for standards and presented a list of draft ISPMs and their stages of development. A framework for standards and procedures of the ICPM was also presented and it was suggested by the Secretariat that this could be used as a tool in determining topics and priorities for standards. It was noted that work had been initiated on all topics for standards in the current work programme and work on specifications would begin for topics added to the work programme during ICPM. That would allow more time for the development of the specifications.

22. With regard to prioritization, the ICPM agreed that topics already on the ICPM work programme would be given the highest priority.

23. The ICPM introduced modifications to the future submissions of topics and priorities for standards, in order to implement a two-year process. The Secretariat noted that a phase-in period would be needed.

24. The ICPM:

1. *Endorsed* the action of the Secretariat in facilitating wherever possible the completion of standards that were already in an advanced stage of development.

2. *Adopted* the topics as outlined in Appendix XIII [i.e. High priority]:

- Guidelines for pre-inspection/ pre-clearance;
- Guidelines for the recognition of the establishment of pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence;
- Import of organic fertilizers;
- Plants for planting (including movement of plants for planting, post-entry quarantine for plants for planting, certification programmes for plants for planting);
- PRA for plants as pests;
- Supplement to ISPM No. 5: Appropriate level of protection;
- Supplement to ISPM No. 5: Guidelines on the understanding of "not widely distributed".

Normal priority:

- Guidelines for regulating stored products in international trade;
- Inspection manual;
- Soil and growing media.

On hold:

- Review of ISPM No. 12 (*Guidelines for phytosanitary certificates*): Section 3.3 in relation to transit (pending completion of draft standard on consignments in transit), giving high priority to some standards, as indicated.

4. *Adopted* and *modified* the procedure regarding future submissions of topics as follows:

- calls for topics should be made biennially;
- it should be made clear that a new list would be compiled every other year;
- submissions from previous years would not be included for consideration and would need to be re-submitted;
- when a situation arises in which a standard is required urgently, a standard could be inserted into the priority list at any session of the ICPM.

5. *Invited* NPPOs, RPPOs, the SPS Committee and other organizations to submit proposed topics and priorities for standards to the IPPC Secretariat by 31 July 2005.

## II. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

### A. THE INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY PORTAL (IPP) AND THE INFORMATION EXCHANGE WORK PROGRAMME

25. The Secretariat introduced a document on the information exchange work programme. It was noted in particular that regarding contact points, whilst there was an improvement of information available, there was still much contact point information missing or out of date.

26. The work programme for the IPP for 2005, which had been reviewed and amended by the Focus Group, the SPTA and the IPP Support Group, was presented. It was noted that navigation in French and Spanish would be available in the near future, and it was anticipated that navigation in Arabic and Chinese would be available by the end of 2005. The programme of training in the use of the IPP for information exchange would continue. The ICPM was invited to recommend modifications or enhancements to the IPP.

27. The ICPM:

1. *Urged* members to provide official contact points or to ensure that information provided on contact points was checked and updated (including e-mail addresses) regularly.

2. *Recalled* the information exchange obligations of members under the IPPC.

### B. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITHIN THE IPPC

28. The Secretariat introduced a document on the information exchange within the IPPC. In relation to the flow charts on exchange of information (document ICPM 2005/24), it was noted that the RPPOs should also receive a copy of the invitation to ICPM, and that it should be reflected in the relevant flow chart.

29. The ICPM:

3. *Urged* members to provide official contact points or to ensure that information provided on contact points was checked and updated (including e-mail addresses) regularly.

4. *Agreed* that information relating to the organization and administration of the IPPC should continue to be provided from the Secretariat to contact points.

### **III. THE PROVISION OF DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISMS**

#### **A. REPORT OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON DISPUTE SETTLEMENT (SBDS)**

30. No request to utilize the dispute settlement mechanism had arisen during 2004-2005. The dispute settlement manual and advocacy document would be finalized and printed in 2005. Following a request by the SPTA, the SBDS agreed that clarifications on ISPMs could be dealt with within the existing framework of the SBDS, and the dispute settlement manual would be adjusted accordingly.

31. The ICPM:

2. *Requested* that specific guidance be developed by the SBDS for the submission of requests for clarifications of ISPMs for inclusion in the dispute settlement manual.

#### **B. DOCUMENTS PRODUCED BY THE SBDS**

32. The Secretariat presented the proposed nomination form for the roster of experts for dispute settlement and invited members to provide suggested improvements to the Secretariat.

33. The ICPM:

1. *Noted* the nomination form for the roster of experts for dispute settlement.

### **IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHYTOSANITARY CAPACITY OF MEMBERS BY PROMOTING THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

#### **A. REPORT ON THE PHYTOSANITARY CAPACITY EVALUATION (PCE) TOOL**

34. The Secretariat reported on actions taken with respect to the PCE tool. A multilingual version of the PCE now included English, French, Spanish and Arabic. It was currently being reprogrammed to facilitate storage and retrieval of information so that progress could be tracked over time.

35. It was reported that the IPPC Secretariat had signed an agreement with CAB International (Africa) to develop an instrument which could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the phytosanitary capacity evaluation process. It was anticipated that the result of this evaluation would be ready for submission to the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICPM.

36. The ICPM:

2. *Acknowledged* the value of the tool in the technical assistance programme and supported its further development and application.

**B. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORK PROGRAMME**

37. The Secretariat summarized the technical assistance activities projected for the year 2005-2006. It listed regional and sub-regional workshops for phytosanitary capacity building in Asia, the Caribbean and the CIS countries. Regional workshops on draft international standards were anticipated in several regions subject to the availability of funding for these workshops.

38. National and regional capacity building projects funded under the TCP were listed for implementation. The Secretariat anticipated continued collaboration with the WTO to participate in SPS workshops, and with the World Bank to assist in project formulation and supervision of the phytosanitary component of agricultural strengthening programmes.

39. The ICPM:

1. *Noted* the reports.

2. *Noted* the need for workshops in regions other than those listed.

**V. PROMOTION OF IPPC AND COOPERATION WITH RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS****A. COOPERATION WITH THE CBD**

40. The Secretariat introduced a document reviewing the collaboration between the IPPC and CBD, and which included a draft decision on "threats to biodiversity posed by alien species: actions within the framework of the IPPC". It suggested possible further activities on the matter, building upon the outcome of the Workshop on Invasive Alien Species in 2003 in Braunschweig (Germany).

41. The Commission expressed its support for the collaboration between the IPPC and the CBD, and welcomed the paper and its focus. It believed that collaboration helped to prevent duplication or conflicting principles and frameworks where international phytosanitary issues were concerned, and lent support to the achievement of goals of mutual interest and importance to ICPM members. A Friends of the Chair group was convened to consider comments to the draft decision, including to focus more fully its text in light of the scope of the IPPC. The working group developed a revised text which was presented to plenary.

42. The ICPM (*inter alia*):

7. *Recommended* that contracting parties and NPPOs, as appropriate:

- (a) Enhance plant protection laws and policies, where needed, to include the protection of wild flora and biodiversity from pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species);
- (b) Promote the IPPC and participate in broader national strategies to address threats to biodiversity posed by invasive alien species, so that maximum advantage can be taken of existing structures and capacities under the IPPC;
- (c) Reinforce efforts to apply and utilize relevant ISPMs and related phytosanitary measures to address threats to biodiversity posed by invasive alien species that are pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species);
- (d) Give particular attention, when carrying out pest risk analysis, to the possibility that introduced plants could act as invasive alien species, taking into consideration available information on the types of plants for which this has already occurred;
- (e) Enhance linkages between environmental, plant protection and agricultural authorities and related ministries, in order to articulate and achieve common goals in work involving the protection of plants and biodiversity from, invasive alien species;

- (f) Improve communication between national CBD focal points and IPPC contact points;
- (g) Collect, where appropriate, information on the alien invasions of pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species), and forward this to the CBD national focal points, to assist in monitoring progress towards the 2010 biodiversity targets outlined in the COP-7 Decision VII/30;
- (h) Establish or adapt existing pest alert systems to include all pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species) that threaten the environment and biological diversity, including those affecting uncultivated/unmanaged plants, wild flora, habitats and ecosystems, and ensure that relevant agencies and officials have access to lists of plants, plant products, other regulated articles and trade pathways that may carry such pests;
- (i) Report to the IPPC Secretariat on actions and progress on the above recommendations.

8. *Supported*, within the framework of the IPPC, actions to:

- (a) Further clarify opportunities to address issues of invasive alien species that are pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species) within the context of the IPPC, and the benefits of doing so;
- (b) Address concerns relating to threats to biodiversity and the environment from pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species) and their pathways in the development of new or revised ISPMs and related phytosanitary measures;
- (c) Include potential pathways of invasive alien species that are pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species) as a criterion for the selection of topics and priorities for future standards;
- (d) In the context of technical assistance initiatives under the IPPC, enhance the capacity of developing countries to address pests of plants (including plants that are invasive alien species) that threaten the environment and biological diversity.

11. *Welcomed* the collaboration between the IPPC and the CBD in developing mechanisms to address the threats posed by invasive alien species, and requests the Secretariat to develop a joint work programme with the Secretariat of the CBD in support of these efforts.

12. *Invited* the CBD, in addressing the threats posed by invasive alien species, to continue to take into account work under the IPPC for the protection of plants and its contribution to the conservation of biodiversity.

## B. COLLABORATION BETWEEN OIE, CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND THE IPPC

43. The Chairperson noted that, at ICPM-6, he had proposed a closer cooperation between OIE, the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the IPPC. The SPTA had discussed the strategically important issue and recommended a process for initiating contacts with the two organizations and had proposed a three-step procedure.

44. The ICPM:

2. *Adjusted and adopted* the following three steps for initiating contacts with the OIE and Codex Alimentarius:

- (a) ICPM Bureau initiates contacts with the OIE and Codex Alimentarius;
- (b) Meetings as necessary between IPPC, Codex Alimentarius and OIE to identify potential topics and priorities and develop draft procedures for cooperation.
- (c) Adoption by ICPM of the potential topics, priorities and draft procedures.



C. COORDINATION AMONG UNITED NATIONS BODIES ON QUARANTINE AND PRE-SHIPMENT USES OF METHYL BROMIDE

45. Several members stressed the importance of cooperation between the Montreal Protocol and the IPPC, as among other things this could reduce the possibility of duplication and /or overlap in research into alternatives to methyl bromide (MeBr) use for quarantine purposes.

46. Several members requested that the work in the development of alternatives to MeBr be accelerated. It was stressed that it would be the responsibility of members to encourage the intensification of research and participate in the work of the International Forest Quarantine Research Group (IFQRG). The Secretariat informed the ICPM that alternatives to MeBr was already on the work programme and that the Technical Panel on Phytosanitary Treatments had allocated one day at the end of their next meeting to discuss the topic.

47. Several questions were raised about the implementation of ISPM No. 15. One member noted that most of these questions had already been addressed at the IPPC workshop on the practical application of ISPM No. 15 held in Vancouver earlier in the year. The Secretariat noted that the presentations and workbook were posted on the IPP ([www.ippc.int](http://www.ippc.int)) and that questions and answers were posted on the IFQRG website ([www.forestry-quarantine.org](http://www.forestry-quarantine.org)) which was also linked to the IPP.

48. The ICPM:

1. *Noted* the decision of the meeting of parties to the Montreal Protocol attached as Annex 1 of ICPM 2005/21.

2. *Agreed* that the IPPC Secretariat should cooperate with the Secretariat to the Montreal Protocol, as appropriate, to coordinate work on the issue.

3. *Encouraged* countries to liaise with their appropriate research organizations and stress the importance and urgency in developing alternatives to MeBr for use for quarantine purposes.

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