

WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)

Statement by the Secretariat of the IPPC at the Meeting of 17-18 March 2004

This report outlines the main developments which have taken place since the last SPS Committee in October 2003.

Standard Setting

Draft standards

1. Work is currently continuing on 14 draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs).
2. Since the last SPS Committee in October 2003, seven Expert Working Groups have met to develop or revise the following ISPMs:
 - Revision of ISPM No. 1 (*Principles of Plant Quarantine as Related to International Trade*). This standard was originally approved in 1993. The revision was undertaken to align it with the IPPC which was adopted in 1997, and also to take account of the SPS Agreement which came into force two years after the standard was originally approved;
 - Revision of ISPM No. 2 (*Guidelines for Pest Risk Analysis*). The first version of this standard was approved in 1995, before the adoption of the IPPC and before many National Plant Protection Organizations had experience with pest risk analysis. It is now revised to provide general guidelines for pest risk analysis for all phytosanitary purposes;
 - Revision of ISPM No. 3 (*Code of Conduct for the Import and Release of Exotic Biological Control Agents*);
 - Revision of ISPM No. 5 (*Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms*);
 - Draft standard on requirements for the establishment, maintenance and verification of areas of low pest prevalence;
 - Draft standard on inspection methodology;
 - Draft standard on phytosanitary guidelines for transit.
3. Most of these drafts will be presented to the Standards Committee at the end of April, with the aim of sending them for country consultation this year.
4. E-mail discussions have also been held on some new and existing drafts: *Equivalence, Efficacy of Measures, Use of Integrated Measures in a Systems Approach for Pest Risk Management of Citrus Fruit for Citrus Canker* and *Guidelines for Formatting Specific Diagnostic Protocols for Regulated Pests*.
5. In November 2003, the Standards Committee reviewed comments received during country consultation on three draft ISPMs: *Guidelines for a Phytosanitary Import Regulatory System*; *Pest*

Risk Analysis for Regulated Non-quarantine Pests; and Supplement to ISPM No. 11 (*Pest Risk Analysis for Quarantine Pests*) on *Pest Risk Analysis for Living Modified Organisms*. Over 300 separate comments were received on each draft standard, from 24 individual countries, the European Communities and its members States, and one Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO). Comments arising from four IPPC Regional Workshops on draft ISPMs were also considered (attended by 62 countries from Asia/Pacific, Near East, Latin America/Caribbean and French-speaking Africa, some of them having sent individual national comments after the workshops). The Standards Committee modified the drafts, which will be presented to the Interim Commission for Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) for approval at the end of this month.

Other issues

6. In February, the International Forestry Quarantine Research Group met in Rome. It is currently developing a process to review and accept treatment methods in relation with ISPM No. 15 on *Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade*. A proposal will be made to the ICPM when a proposal has been finalized.

7. All FAO languages of the following standards are now available in green book form or on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP - www.ippc.int):

- ISPM No. 11 Rev. 1: Pest Risk Analysis for Quarantine Pests including Analysis of Environmental Risks
- ISPM No. 15: Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade
- ISPM No. 18: Guidelines for the Use of Irradiation as a Phytosanitary Measure
- ISPM No. 19: Guidelines on Lists of Regulated Pests

8. In addition, Spanish versions of ISPMs No. 14 to 19 have been published on the IPP and are being printed.

9. The Standards Committee also started discussing the possible publication of all ISPMs in a book format and further analysis will be made in the coming months.

Information Exchange

10. The development of the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) is continuing in order to provide the structure for countries to fulfil their reporting obligations under the IPPC. The IPPC is also taking an active part in the International Portal on Food Safety Animal and Plant Health (IPFSAPH), which is a joint undertaking among standard-setting organizations and WTO. In January, a Support Group met in Rome to review the IPP and take decisions with regard to the improvement of its structure and content. The IPP will be greatly modified and improved in the coming months, mostly in relation to data entry by National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs). A capacity-building programme will later be implemented in the form of regional workshops to ensure that members have the capability and training to exchange official information through the IPP in order to meet their obligations under the IPPC.

Technical Assistance

11. Capacity-building projects are continuing in many countries and regions through the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, and the IPPC Secretariat has currently two staff members working in this area. There are over 20 projects running, at national or regional scale, involving more than 40 countries, and new requests are regularly received.

12. During 2003, regional workshops were conducted to promote understanding and application of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool (PCE), and the PCE has been applied in a supervised manner in over 30 countries. The revised PCE has been produced as a CD-Rom and can also be downloaded from the IPP. It will assist countries in undertaking an assessment of the phytosanitary system of the National Plant Protection Organization, and will serve as a diagnostic tool for the NPPO to gauge the capacity gap between the current situation and what is needed to meet the requirements of international standards.

13. In the area of information exchange, it is envisaged that the programme should include capacity-building actions in the form of regional workshops, in order to ensure that members can fulfill their IPPC reporting obligations using the International Phytosanitary Portal.

14. Regarding standard setting, the ICPM will propose that Regional Workshops on draft ISPMs, which allow countries to take part in the standard-setting process by commenting on draft standards, should be pursued.

ICPM

15. The ICPM will be meeting in two weeks time, from the 29 March to 2 April in Rome. It will discuss the annual IPPC activities, including issues such as improvement of the standard-setting process, and future programmes on standard-setting, technical assistance and information exchange. The documents for that meeting are now available on the IPP (www.ippc.int) in all FAO languages.

Special trust fund

16. A special trust fund has been put in place for the exclusive use to the direct benefit of developing countries. It will be used to facilitate their participation and involvement in all IPPC activities, including in the ICPM, in Regional Workshops on draft ISPMs, in Expert Working Groups, and also in phytosanitary capacity-building and information exchange. Contributions have been received from New Zealand and from the Canadian International Development Agency. The ICPM will make decisions on expenditures from the trust fund. The special trust fund will be an essential element to support and improve the participation of developing countries.
