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منظمة  
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# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

## Thirty-fifth Session

1-4 September 2020<sup>1</sup>

**International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020**

### Executive summary

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2020 the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The IYPH is a unique opportunity to draw attention to the serious threat of plant pests and diseases to global food and nutrition security and economic development, and to promote plant protection activities and highlight the importance of international collaborative work on preventing the spread of pests and diseases. The IYPH is contributing to acquire and share technical and scientific knowledge required for the successful battle against plant pests to the different levels of stakeholder engagement. IYPH activities aim to induce policymakers, the private sector, academia and civil society to contribute to the global battle against plant pests and to adopt globally recognized standards and sustainable plant protection practices.

### Suggested actions by the Regional Conference

The following recommendations are made to the Regional Conference:

1. To take note of the progress made since the proclamation and launch of the International Year of Plant Health.
2. To recognize the importance of plant health and the key role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in protecting plant health.
3. To take note of additional actions planned for the IYPH 2020 and related adjustments made to the IYPH programme due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
4. To encourage relevant institutions in member countries to actively participate in the activities planned in the IYPH.
5. To encourage countries to sustain a lasting legacy for IYPH 2020, including supporting the establishment of an International Day of Plant Health.

<sup>1</sup> Rescheduled from 17-20 February 2020, Thimphu, Bhutan

6. To urge governments and partners to pledge additional funding aimed at magnifying the impact of activities planned for IYPH 2020, and invest more in plant health capacity development, research and outreach.
7. To urge governments to dedicate more resources to plant health institutions including national and regional plant protection organizations in view of strengthening national plant health systems, their technical capacities and infrastructure.

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## I. Background

1. In December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2020 the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The year is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment and boost economic development. Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimated that up to 40 percent of food crops are lost annually due to plant pests and diseases. This seriously damages agriculture and leaves millions of people suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition.
2. The IYPH aims at emphasizing the importance of plant protection and of preventing the spread of plant pests and diseases. The IYPH will highlight the role played by national plant protection organizations (NPPOs), scientific and research institutions, private sector firms, national, regional and international non-profit organizations to protect agricultural production from losses caused by pests and diseases. In addition, the IYPH wishes to acknowledge the importance of applying innovative, environmentally friendly approaches in combating plant pests and diseases.
3. The IYPH specific objectives are as follows:
  - a) Raise the awareness of the public and political decision makers at the global, regional and national levels about plant health.
  - b) Promote and strengthen national, regional and global plant health efforts and their resources in light of increasing trade and new pest risks caused through climate change.
  - c) Educate the public and improve their knowledge of plant health.
  - d) Enhance dialogue and stakeholder involvement in plant health.
  - e) Increase information about the state of plant protection in the world.
  - f) Facilitate the establishment of plant health partnerships on national, regional and global levels.
4. In this context, FAO and the IPPC Secretariat are organizing and coordinating a large number of initiatives at the regional and national levels, including conferences, exhibitions, awareness campaigns, interviews and contests.
5. Due to the current COVID-19 global outbreak, some of the key IYPH activities are being delayed. This includes the possibility to postponement of key global activities inclusive of the 15th session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-15), with its ministerial segment, and the International Plant Health Conference in Helsinki, currently planned for June and October 2020, respectively.

## II. FAO actions

6. FAO and the IPPC Secretariat established the IYPH International Steering Committee (ISC) to guide the development and implementation of the IYPH action plan, to stimulate dialogue with partners, and to help mobilize political and financial support for the IYPH. The IYPH ISC has up to 18 members, including seven representatives from the seven FAO regional groups, plus seven alternates, two members of the IYPH Technical Advisory Board (chair and vice-chair), and seven representatives from United Nations (UN) agencies and international organizations. Geographic and economic groups of countries, regional plant protection organizations, academia, international agricultural research organizations, civil society organizations, global farmer organizations, the private sector, and resource partners also have representatives on the ISC. In addition, FAO regional offices are invited to attend the IYPH ISC meetings as observers. The IYPH ISC held its first meeting on 14 June 2019 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, and since then it is meeting regularly to oversee the implementation of the IYPH Action Plan.
7. FAO and the IPPC Secretariat established the IYPH Technical Advisory Board (TAB) to serve as a pool of knowledge and expertise, reviewing technical publications, assisting in the

development of communication materials, serving as programme committee for the International Plant Health Conference (IPHC) to be hosted by Finland, and developing proceedings coming out of the IPHC.

8. FAO and the IPPC Secretariat have also established the IYPH Secretariat, composed of representatives of four FAO divisions/units, to support the activities of the IYPH ISC and TAB, as well as the implementation of the IYPH Action Plan.
9. The total budgeted resources for 2020 activities are approximately USD 1 000 000. All activities are funded via extra-budgetary contributions received via the IPPC Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) and the IPPC allocation for China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. Additional funding is being sought to cover all proposed activities in 2020.
10. FAO and the IPPC Secretariat have organised a worldwide photography contest from 2 December 2019 to 15 June 2020. The contest is open to both amateur and professional photographers worldwide. A drawing competition for children is also planned to be launched, along with a social media campaign "A day in the life of a plant health professional", and an IYPH children's activity book, which will nurture the current IYPH communications toolkit. Further information on the IYPH awareness raising initiatives is available on the IYPH website<sup>2</sup>.
11. Major activities and events at the global level may be replicated regionally and nationally, including by organizing side events at FAO Regional Conferences, investing in educational activities, issuing promotional materials, and carrying out open house and institutional events.

### **III. Expected outcomes of the IYPH**

12. Five major outcomes are expected from the observance of IYPH:
  - a) Increased awareness of the importance of plant health in contributing to UN SDGs. The IYPH will bring about increased awareness of the importance of plant health towards achieving the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Agenda. Plant health directly contributes to seven SDGs, especially SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
  - b) Promotion of knowledge, research and partnerships on plant health at national, regional and global levels. It is expected that national and regional plant protection organizations (NPPOs and RPPOs) and other relevant institutions in the field of plant health will continue to play their essential roles to ensure recognition of the IPPC's role and the successful implementation of the IPPC strategic framework for 2020-2030.
  - c) Recognition of the importance of plant health by people. Citizens have the most important role to play in achieving the objectives of the IYPH and protecting plant health. Throughout 2020, citizens should become aware of plant health risks, and contribute to minimizing them with their virtuous behaviour.
  - d) Sustainable support to plant health issues. As a legacy to the year, it is the IPPC community's and wider FAO's hope that the importance of plant health is raised and recognized, that those involved in protecting plant health have the tools and capacity to carry out their roles and that global, regional and national plant protection organizations are given sustainable support to operate successfully.
  - e) Advocate for the establishment of the International Day of Plant Health to be commemorated by the UN family every year.

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<sup>2</sup> Ref. IYPH website: [www.fao.org/plant-health-2020](http://www.fao.org/plant-health-2020).