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International Year of Plant Health

Executive Summary

The United Nations (UN) 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 will bring technical and scientific knowledge required for the successful battle against plant pests and diseases to the different levels of stakeholder engagement. IYPH activities aim to induce policy-makers, the private sector, academia, farmers and civil society to contribute to the global battle against plant pests and to adopt sustainable plant protection practices.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Regional Conference:

The following recommendations are made to the Regional Conference:

1. To take note of the IYPH.
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 the actions that FAO has taken in the period leading up to the IYPH and the actions planned for the IYPH 2020.
4. To encourage relevant institutions in member countries to actively participate in the activities planned for IYPH.
5. To encourage countries to sustain a lasting legacy for IYPH 2020, including supporting the establishment of a World Plant Health Day.
6. To urge governments to invest more in plant health capacity development, research and outreach. Governments should also strengthen the plant health institutions including national and regional plant protection organizations, and provide them with adequate human and financial resources.
7. Governments and partners to strengthen technical capacities and improve infrastructure of plant health institutions.

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I. Background

1. In December 2018, the UN General Assembly declared 2020 the 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, 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 to:
 - 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; and
 - f) facilitate the establishment of plant health partnerships at national, regional and global levels.
4. In this context, FAO and the IPPC Secretariat will organize many events at the regional and national levels, including conferences, exhibitions, awareness campaigns, interviews and contests.

II. FAO Actions

5. 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 (TAB) (chair and vice-chair), and seven representatives from UN agencies and international organizations. Geographic and economic groups of countries, regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs), 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 participate in the IYPH ISC meetings as observers.
6. FAO and the IPPC Secretariat established the IYPH TAB to serve as a pool of knowledge and expertise, working on 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 (originally scheduled for 5 to 8 October 2020), and developing proceedings coming out of the IPHC.
7. FAO and the IPPC Secretariat have also established the IYPH Secretariat, composed of representatives of four FAO divisions and/or units, to support the activities of the IYPH ISC and TAB, as well as the implementation of the IYPH Action Plan.
8. The total budgeted resources for 2020 activities are approximately USD 1 million. All activities are funded through extrabudgetary 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.

9. FAO and the IPPC Secretariat have organized a worldwide photography contest from 2 December 2019 to 15 June 2020. The contest was open to both amateur and professional photographers worldwide. Further information on the photography contest and other awareness raising initiatives is available on the IYPH website¹.

III. Expected outcomes of the IYPH

10. Five major outcomes are expected from the observance of IYPH 2020. They include:
 - a) *Increased awareness of the importance of plant health in contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (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 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 through appropriate actions.
 - d) *Sustainable support to plant health issues.* As a legacy of the year, it is the wider IPPC community's and 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) *Advocacy for the establishment of the World Plant Health Day,* to be commemorated by the UN family every year.
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 holding open house and institutional events.

¹ Ref. IYPH website: www.fao.org/plant-health-2020.