

Highlight

TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC PLANT PROTECTION COMMISSION

23-27 September, 2013, Jeju Island, Republic of Korea

The twenty-eighth session of the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) was held on Cheju Island (Jeju), Republic of Korea, from 23 to 27 September 2013. The meeting was attended by delegates from 22 contracting governments as well as observers from Japan, Singapore, IPPC, Rotterdam Convention, CABI and the regional IPM Programme. With more than 100 participants, this was the biggest Session in the history of APPPC with the most member countries attending.

The FAO welcome address by Mr Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and Pacific, was delivered by Mr Villi A. Fuavao, Deputy Regional Representative. The inaugural address was given by Mr In-Hong Yeo, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), Republic of Korea.

The meeting reviewed the activities and progress made since the last Session in 2011, adopted two new Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPM), namely the RSPMs on *Approval of Irradiation Facilities* and *Approval of Fumigation Facilities*, and agreed to the work plan and budget for the coming biennium 2014-2015.

Since 2011, Timor-Leste has joined the Commission, bringing its membership to 25 countries. Bhutan, Singapore and Japan have expressed interest in joining the organization. The 1983 amendment (regarding financial contributions) to the Agreement has now been endorsed by 18 countries, and 3 countries have endorsed the amendments of 1999 (regarding the South American leaf blight [SALB]).

Over the past two years, the activities of APPPC have focussed on the implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM), the development of new RSPMs, strengthening information management, building capacities for the management of new pests (SALB, apple snail, cassava pink mealy bug), reducing pesticide risks and harmonizing pesticide regulatory management. At the same time, the member countries have made significant progress with improving their own plant protection programmes and made organisational changes, issued new laws and regulations, started up new facilities and equipment, established pest free areas, and strengthened their pesticide management.

In the area of plant quarantine, emphasis was placed on the implementation of ISPM 6 (pest surveillance) and ISPM 15 (wood packaging materials). Three regional and two pre-Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) meetings were held to review draft ISPMs. Proposed new RSPMs were reviewed during a workshop and subsequently sent to all member countries. With the adoption of the two new RSPMs by the 28th Session, there are now a total of ten APPPC RSPMs.

It was decided that the work relating to implementation of ISPMs would be main context of the work program of the Standing Committee on Plant Quarantine. It was recommended that

ISPM15, ISPM31, ISPM6 and ISPM14 would be main focus of selected ISPMs to enhance the implementation of ISPMs. The Standing Committee on Plant Quarantine recommended to organize workshops on ISPM 6 pest surveillance data collection and management, development of training materials for ISPM 14, joint workshop on implementation of ISPM 15 with NAPPO, and conduct a survey on the use of ISPM 31 on sampling grain for pests. It was proposed to conduct an ePhyto workshop that would ensure that members have a common understanding of the use of ePhyto certification. This could be followed by a further workshop on the practical aspects of an ePhyto system. It was suggested that NPPOs should promote the capacity in active participation in development of ISPMs especially regional consultation on review of draft ISPMs as well as implementation of reporting obligation.

To overcome confusion about the registration of the IPPC symbol for ISPM 15 certification, it was recommended that the IPPC Secretariat provide the latest information about the symbol registration to the NPPOs with easy explanations about the purpose of the registration, its benefits and world status. The NPPO may also contact the FAO Legal Office for help with the registration of the symbol in their respective country.

With regard to new RSPMs, it was agreed to delay work on alternatives to methyl bromide fumigation and the pest management of seed production.

It was decided that the working group on SALB will continue. It was recommended to take actions of follow-up to the diagnostic training visit in Brazil with in-country training programmes and manual development (with translation), including a diagnostic protocol for SALB. Data from the region would be collected and exchanged with a specific database being developed by the SALB working group. The SALB working group recommended that after the training in Brazil, any gaps should be identified to allow the rubber growing parties to determine the next steps. It was suggested to continue cooperation with Brazil and relevant international organizations on the issue of South American Leaf Blight (SALB) on Rubber.

It was agreed to expand areas of the APPPC working group on information exchange by covering PRA, surveillance, SALB and other pests and capacity development projects for sharing with countries. To enhance information exchange among the APPPC members, the IPP and APPPC websites were increasingly used during the past two years. Most countries have posted general plant protection information and half the countries have provided specific information on plant quarantine, pest surveillance, pest and pesticide management. In total, there are more than 700 information items available on the APPPC website. Philippines and Thailand have organized national training courses on the use of the websites for regular information exchange. The APPPC Secretariat maintains the website and regularly monitors the exchange activities.

To encourage a more active information exchange, particularly by those countries that have not yet actively participated, it was recommended to establish country-level mechanisms of information collection, review and clearance before uploading to the APPPC website and/or the IPP. A committee with representatives from different agencies may meet from time to time to decide on what information to be uploaded to the two websites, or it may decide beforehand what information should be regularly uploaded by the country editor(s) without having to seek prior consent from the committee. The working group recommended that the information exchange on PRA, surveillance, SALB and other pests should be intensified.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plays an important role in all Asia-Pacific countries. With APPPC seed money and the country's own resources, good progress has been made with developing surveillance and forecasting systems for brown plant hopper (BPH) in rice; formulating policies for the promotion of IPM, pesticide risk reduction and biological control, and preventing the spread of invasive pests, including fruit flies, golden apple snails and various diseases in cassava, sugarcane and coconut.

It is suggested to promote pesticide risk reduction through enhancement of IPM and pesticide regulatory management. The Standing Committee on IPM recommended organizing a *Regional Workshop on IPM for Fruit Flies* back-to-back with the *International Symposium of Fruit Flies of Economic Importance* in May 2014. Furthermore, it was proposed to prepare case studies on IPM as part of sustainable intensification of crop production on various commodities. The results should be presented in a regional workshop and circulated through the APPPC website and other FAO channels.

To reduce pesticides related risks and remove highly hazardous products, most countries in the region have ratified the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Conventions. An FAO TCP project on pesticide regulatory harmonization has produced five guidelines and country work plans for integrating them into the national pesticide management systems. Thailand, Laos and Malaysia have already amended or are in the process of amending their pesticide legislation. The countries have also made further progress in other pesticide management-related activities which include licensing and monitoring of pesticide sales, registering pesticides, combating illegal pesticides, recycling of pesticides containers and reducing pesticide risks.

It was decided that a workshop on awareness of the revised Code of conduct on pesticide management as well as on the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention (notification, national action plan, etc.) be held in 2015 to familiarize the countries with the updated Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. and the Rotterdam Convention on the reporting of pesticide poisoning incidences as well as for monitoring the ongoing harmonization of regulatory management.

To exchange pesticide related information, the committee recommended updating the lists of banned and restricted pesticides that were developed in 2012 and posting the information on the APPPC website together with linkages to national websites that contain information on registered pesticides.

The new work programme and the budget for the next biennium 2014-2015 was adopted. The financial report and the recommendation on the scale and level of assessed contributions by contracting countries (18) was adopted.

In April 2014, the chair of the *Commission on Phytosanitary Measures* will move to Asia. All APPPC countries supported the candidacy of the Republic of Korea for this position. This period of Asian leadership was seen as a good opportunity to show the world APPPC's achievements. It was proposed that Asia should try to hold a global event during this period, possibly on the implementation of ePhyto.

The Commission called on member countries to accept the revised Plant Protection Agreement(s) as soon as possible and make financial contributions for supporting activities

of APPPC.

The Commission called on non-member countries to join APPPC.

It is decided to accept the offer of Indonesia for hosting the 29th Session of the APPPC in October 2015..