



Food and Agriculture
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REPORT

**Joint Briefing of the Steering
Committee, Technical
Committee, Working Group on
Resource Mobilization on
Implementation of the FAO
Global Action
for Fall Armyworm (FAW) Control**

1 DECEMBER 2022

FAW Secretariat, Global Action for FAW Control

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1. Progress and Achievements for Implementation of FAO Global Action (GA) for FAW Control video

2. Opening of the meeting

- [1] Dr QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General, and Chair of the Steering Committee (SC), opened the meeting by welcoming the 46 participants including members of the SC of the Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control (GA), the Technical Committee (TC) of the GA, the Working Group on Resource Mobilization (WG RM), as well as observers.
- [2] He noted that the GA was launched three years earlier – in December 2019 – in response to the migration of FAW beyond its native range in the Americas. In 2016, only six African countries reported the insect pest. That figure has now increased to 78 countries in Africa, the Near East, Asia, and the Pacific that are now reporting FAW.
- [3] The GA has proven to be successful, achieving concrete results as a functional coordination mechanism across global, regional, and national levels which are linked to activities at farmers' field level. For example, several integrated pest management (IPM) tactics are being validated and disseminated, including improved crop varieties. The Director-General emphasized that much urgent work and challenges were to be addressed. In response to these continuing challenges, members of the SC, TC and WG RM earlier in 2022 supported the extension of the GA to the end of 2023. This extension will allow the GA to speed up its work, including the dissemination of IPM technologies for FAW control, provide time to explore the possibility of expanding the scope of the GA, and tackle broader invasive plant pest and disease threats, using lessons learned from the fight against FAW.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

- [4] Mr Buyung Hadi, Agricultural Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) presented the agenda, which was adopted (*Appendix 1*).

4. Progress and Achievements for Implementation of FAO GA for FAW Control

- [5] Mr Jingyuan Xia, Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) and Executive Secretary of the Fall Armyworm (FAW) Secretariat, reported on the progress, impacts, and core activities in implementation of the GA, noting that FAW is the fastest migratory insect pest, now reported in 78 countries. He also described the coordination, IPM, and prevention work since the GA was launched in 2019 across three regions and eight geographic zones with a demonstration or hub country in each geo-zone. These have all been linked with 54 pilot countries.
- [6] Progress under the GA is seen at the field level, and progress in actions for prevention and preparedness has included technical training, such as three global webinars organized on prevention and preparedness with 120 participants from over 70 countries attending these webinars.
- [7] Progress in monitoring and early warning is evident in scouting using the Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS) app, downloaded more than 5 000 times. Some 70 countries are using the app with total records of almost 67 000 FAW scouting and traps data, visualized on both the FAW and the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HiH) platforms in real time, said Mr Xia. FAMEWS datasets are used by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) to validate a model to predict spatio-temporal FAW density using climatic variables and availability of host plants.
- [8] Progress is also seen in forecasting, particularly in monitoring and early warning systems in China, where the national monitoring and early warning system involves 27 provinces and is incorporating FAW population monitoring, forecasts and management with weekly risk predictions that are actionable at field level.

- [9] Progress is seen in IPM capacity development through trainings for IPM technologies that reached over 1 700 participants through global webinars; over 600 participants through regional and subregional training events and webinars; and trained more than 200 000 individuals during training events held by and with the national governments.
- [10] Progress is also seen in success with application of IPM technologies, including host plant resistance; preservation of natural enemies; biocontrol, including mass releases of natural enemies and use of botanical/microbials; and cultural control, as intercropping is shown to improve yield in the face of FAW infestation in some demonstration countries.
- [11] Progress is also seen in production of knowledge products, including the global FAW IPM guidelines; global guidelines for FAW prevention and preparedness; the farmer field school (FFS) IPM Guide for India; the FAW IPM Guide in Arabic for the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region; the FAW Control in Action newsletter (ten editions); and webinar videos.
- [12] The impacts of the GA have included raising awareness through three regional workshops in 2022 held in Asia, NENA, and Africa with over 150 participants from more than 30 countries; raising awareness of key technologies through farmer-community based surveys and monitoring; bio-ecological-based control measures; extension work, including government-led extension; farmer field schools (FFS); and technical demonstration networks at national, provincial and community levels.
- [13] The impacts in terms of FAW damage reduction are seen in demonstration countries such as Burkina Faso and India, where the percentage of maize area seriously affected by FAW has been significantly reduced. Similarly, infestation in maize crops was significantly reduced in pilot countries Viet Nam and Ghana.
- [14] In addition, decreased yield loss and reduced mycotoxin contamination were reported in several countries.
- [15] Overall, lessons learned include the high value of strong coordination across all levels: global, regional, national, and at community level. The holistic approach is important – top-down for developing the FAW GA plan and bottom-up for implementing the GA. Inclusiveness is also essential, including broad coverage of all FAW-related countries, a large convergence of technical disciplines, and wide coverage of stakeholders. In addition, geo-zone based IPM packages were important with IPM guidelines for each of the eight demonstration countries and technical capacity building for farmers.
- [16] The way forward in 2023 includes extracting lessons learned from the GA for FAW Control to tackle multiple pests on multiple crops through phytosanitary measures, IPM and sound pesticide management (especially antimicrobial resistance [AMR] management) to contribute to the One Health Initiative.

5. Progress and Achievements for Technical Support to FAO GA for FAW Control

- [17] The Chair of the Global Action Technical Committee and Chief Scientist in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, Mr Robert Bertram, reviewed the IPM options for FAW control, starting with host plant resistance. He reminded the participants that these IPM options were designed to work together, and no single option was “a silver bullet”. He reported that the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) has developed elite maize hybrids with tolerance against FAW, ready for testing and releases.
- [18] Bt maize is available in a limited number of countries in the invaded range. In South Africa, reduced damage was reported on Bt maize even as a significant number of FAW were able to survive on the plants. However, the rapidly evolved practical resistance among FAW populations is a challenge in the use of Bt maize. Sustainable use of Bt maize requires using it in conjunction with other tactics as a part of an IPM programme.
- [19] In terms of biological control, in Africa, 30 indigenous parasitoid species were reported from 17 countries; and in Asia, over 35 indigenous parasitoid species were reported, mainly from China and India. Both FAW eggs and larvae are sometimes struck with high rates of ambient parasitism for an alien species (up to 53 percent).

Telenomus remus, *Trichogramma chilonis* and *Cotesia icipe* show promise as augmentative biocontrol agents; however, more studies are needed to assess their cost effectiveness in African contexts. Meanwhile, in China, field releases of *T. chilonis* showed up to 86 percent egg parasitism, while *T. remus* showed up to 84 percent egg parasitism. However, scaling up can be a challenge, he said.

- [20] Mr Bertram reported that biopesticides work on entomopathogenic fungal isolates of *Metarhizium rileyi*, *M. anisopliae*, *Beauveria bassiana* and *Isaria sp.*, showed promise as control agents of FAW eggs and neonates, noting that some are available commercially. However, he added, bottlenecks in commercialization include challenges in fungal production and storage; and registration of biopesticides can present a challenge in some countries. Additionally, *spodoptera frugiperda multiple nucleopolyhedrovirus (SfMNPV)* showed good results in field tests (up to 93 percent mortality).
- [21] More than 60 plant species have potential as botanical insecticides against FAW. For example, aqueous extract of *Piper guineense* is comparable to lambda cyhalothrin and acetamiprid in controlling FAW in the field, he said.
- [22] With regard to diversification in field and landscape scales, intercropping can reduce FAW damage, but validation is needed in specific contexts. The push-pull technique reduces FAW infestation by 87 percent and increases yields by almost three-fold in dry areas of East Africa; however, pumpkin intercropping was associated with increased FAW damage in Zimbabwe. The amount of (semi-) natural habitat and diversity of land-cover types can increase the abundance and activity of natural enemies against FAW; however, potential trade-offs may exist depending on the location (e.g. increased mammalian pests). Scouting is a very important technique but requires considerable effort, he noted.
- [23] The FAW invasion spurred an increase in the use of many insecticides on maize in Africa, including lindane, chlorpyrifos, carbamates, pyrethroids, neonicotinoids, fipronil, spynosyns, and avermectins. In Asia and Australia, insecticide use against FAW is also increasing, especially with chlorpyrifos, pyrethroids, neonicotinoids, emamectin benzoate, spinetoram, and chlorantaniliprole. Surveys from China and India documented moderate to high levels of FAW resistance to some organophosphates and pyrethroids, said Mr Bertram.
- [24] The impact assessment conducted by the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) of the GA will document changes in FAW's impacts in the GA target countries India and Kenya, and describe the GA's contributions to these impacts using the following research questions: how have the FAW yield losses and farmer practices to manage FAW changed over time between 2018 (or earlier, where possible) and 2022 in Kenya and Karnataka in India? What are the socio-economic impacts of these changes? What kinds of interventions have the GA and its partners introduced in Kenya and India from 2018 to 2022? How have these interventions contributed to the observed changes in yield losses and farmers practices?
- [25] Data collection for the CABI assessment included qualitative data such as key informant interviews and Sprockler inquiry conducted from May to August 2022. Quantitative data collection from household surveys began in October 2022 and was almost completed as of the time of the Joint Briefing. Qualitative data analysis was conducted from August to November 2022 (and reporting is almost completed) and quantitative household survey analysis hadn't started but was scheduled to finish in February 2023 with a draft report and the final report scheduled for March 2023.
- [26] Initial qualitative results from Kenya show the value of testing and validation of FAW management practices through strong FFS participation and engagement. In India, strong coordination was emphasized for an extensive and multi-pronged farmer awareness and advisory campaign. Key elements in an effective FAW response in both countries include coordination and financing. Important conditions reported for a coordinated FAW response are collaboration and communication, while shared goals, formal task forces were said to be slightly less important. Both countries provided different examples of how the GA is applied in particular local

contexts.

- [27] The way forward for 2023 includes a global mapping of plant health initiatives, raising questions of where research is being conducted and by what organizations, said Mr Bertram. Geographical coverage includes Southeast Asia (11 countries), Latin America and the Caribbean (20 countries), West Africa (16 countries), Near East and North Africa (18 countries).
- [28] Key messages from the Global Mapping of Plant Health initiatives includes the need to fortify the IPM research focus on vegetables, legumes, (tropical) fruits, forages, and maintain an emphasis on cereal grains. With pests, there is a need to balance the emphasis on recent invaders with long-term endemic threats; incentivize holistic crop protection science i.e., covering pest/pathogen/weed constraints, and strengthen existing consortia e.g., on priority threats.
- [29] Furthermore, there is a need to consolidate basic capacity in Africa while mobilizing national expertise in Latin America and the Caribbean, NENA, and Southeast Asia. Thematically, there is a need to further develop and trial result-based schemes using bio-indicators on pesticidal pollution and One Health metrics; to move from prototyping solutions to large-scale field trials and to investigate bottlenecks to adoption.
- [30] Mr Bertram invited participants to consider how best to extract and apply lessons learned through understanding what has worked well in the GA. Then, consider how to leverage the best technical expertise to assess threats (to food security, livelihoods, environment) as well as management options; develop strategic capacities at the country level to foster and shape an appropriate response; and to generate metrics and timely reviews to measure progress. Following that, consider applying lessons learned to threats in 2023, for example, the emerging banana bunchy top virus (BBTV), which is devastating and is currently spreading in Eastern Africa.

6. Core Activities for Implementation of FAO GA for FAW Control in 2023

- [31] Mr Hadi described the GA activities planned for 2023 across three categories. First, coordination and communication plans that will include: a geo-zone information exchange; a biocontrol forum planned in Africa in the first semester; an annual meeting planned for demonstration countries; and a planned global conference on FAW/invasive pest management in Asia in the second semester. Research priorities will include a global IPM trial organized using shared protocol/mobile app with World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and the finalization of the impact assessment with CABI. Training priorities include more FFS and large-scale demonstrations in countries; training on biopesticide registration; and training on mass production of natural enemies/biopesticides.
- [32] Lessons learned from the GA for FAW Control that are applicable to tackling other invasive pests include the GA's ability to mobilize global technical expertise (on all approaches – prevention, monitoring, management, and all types of stakeholders) through an ad hoc technical working group (TWG) that could quickly provide recommended options to national partners. Some countries will have the necessary research/extension/policy/regulatory infrastructure, and some will need stronger direct support. Other lessons include the key role of global, regional, and sub-regional fora for information exchange; fostering national-level and farmer-level capacity development in research, extension and policy/regulatory aspects where needed. Data collection and analysis on efficacies of interventions as well as the pest impacts are important for continuous learning on best practices.
- [33] In 2023, the core activities of the GA for FAW Control will include: 1) monitoring progress on all initiated activities in the GA on FAW Control (e.g. field work, impact assessment); 2) adding a pest/pathogen/crop system (e.g. on BBTV) to test a model of an ad hoc TWG; 3) preparing a concept note for a Global Action (GA) on Plant Health to be presented in mid-2023 to the SC, TC, and WG RM at the proposed biocontrol forum. Bilateral discussions will be held to ascertain the sustainability of the proposed new Global Action with partners; 4) in the final half of 2023, reports will be finalized on the GA for FAW Control activities, global trials of IPM tactics, global mapping

of plant health initiatives, and impact assessments; and 5) a Global Conference on Sustainable Management of FAW/Invasive Pests Management will be organized in the third or fourth quarter of 2023 with a view to reaching a decision on the sustainability of and transition to a GA on Plant Health.

[34] As a starting point for the concept note on the GA on Plant Health, it is proposed the initiative would extend over five years with four target regions, adding Latin America to the current list of three regions under the GA for FAW Control. The priority invasive pests and pathogens/crops would be identified for each region in collaboration with countries and FAO Regional Offices. Discussions would be held with a view to ongoing global initiatives on plant health, to create synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. Four work components were preliminarily identified (prevention and preparedness, monitoring and early warning, IPM, dissemination and adoption) and various ongoing global plant health initiatives could take a leading role for different components. Field efforts would be concentrated in select hub countries with regular regional and global information-sharing fora. It's expected that the initiative would promote plant health as an inherent element of the One Health approach and initiatives. The budgetary needs are estimated to be in the range of USD 25 million. These preliminary ideas will be expanded in the concept note for the GA on Plant Health to be shared with SC, TC and WG RM in mid-2023.

7. General Discussion: the Way Forward

[35] Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee, led the discussion and underscored the opportunity to share suggestions for a methodical approach to transitioning the Global Action for FAW Control to a broader set of plant health related priorities in 2023.

[36] Mr Paul Jepson, Director of Technical Operations, Oregon State University, United States of America, and TC member, said farmers in the field must have access to basic information about the dangers of chemical pesticides to plant and human health, and to the natural enemies of FAW.

[37] Mr Robert Hunter, CropLife International and TC member, agreed with Mr Jepson, emphasizing the importance of working with farmers on responsible use of pesticides and use of the best technologies available, and said he looked forward to the transition to a focused Global Action on Plant Health.

[38] Mr Kongming WU, President, Chinese Academy of Agriculture Science (CAAS) and SC Vice-Chair, said that early warning systems and IPM remain important priorities and urged national-level field demonstrations in 2023.

[39] Mr B.M. Prasanna, Director of CIMMYT's Global Maize Programme and the CGIAR Research Programme on maize, and TC member, described strong performances under a CGIAR plant health initiative to test and integrate conventional FAW resistant hybrids as well as other IPM tactics in the field.

[40] Mr Rhett Harrison, Center for International Forestry Research-World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), and TC member, said that despite great progress, much work remains in terms of FAW control, particularly updating IPM guidelines and thresholds; and warned that impact assessments and measurements based on household surveys must be viewed with care, and any findings supported with other surveys.

[41] Mr Darrell Sextone, policy officer, Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) European Commission (EC), brought into focus the initial narrative of the importance of FAW as a threat to food security and questioned whether the impact of the pest has sufficiently abated to merit shifting focus elsewhere.

[42] Mr Hadi responded that while in many countries FAW was no longer seen as an emerging threat but was instead now considered as a perennial threat to be managed, the impact must not be under-estimated – including the fact that FAW has triggered overuse of dangerous chemical pesticides with severe environmental fallout. Mr Prasanna agreed that it is now time to take the lessons learned from fighting FAW and apply those to fighting the next invasive pest.

[43] Ms Isabel Calderón, economic affairs officer, Agriculture and Commodities Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO), highlighted the [WTO SPS declaration](#) from the 12th WTO ministerial declaration of June

2022 that acknowledges changes in food and agricultural systems, including those related to pests.

[44] Mr Are Izquierdo Skjær, representing the Ambassador of Norway to FAO, H.E. Morten von Hanno Aasland, said it was encouraging to see that new biopesticides are showing positive results and urged the GA to continue its important work. He said that Norway is acting to support small-scale food and local food producers in the fight against pests as a natural and integrated part of that work, noting that Norway recently approved a new national strategy on food security that emphasizes the role of small producers.

[45] Mr Xia thanked Norway and the EU for their consistent and meaningful support for the GA and added that he agreed with Mr WU on the need for national-level field demonstrations, including in Asia. He also agreed with Mr Harrison on the importance of updating IPM guidelines, especially the economic thresholds.

[46] Mr Bertram noted that many comments focused on the importance of best practices and sharing good information as a basis for action going forward in dealing with new challenges.

8. Closing Remarks

[47] Ms Bechdol closed the meeting by thanking participants for providing support in a variety of forms and noted that the challenges ahead include finding a balanced, pragmatic, and realistic way of continuing the important work of the Global Action on FAW while extending it to cover all invasive pests. These considerations should be captured in the upcoming concept note from the FAW Secretariat in FAO, with input from the TC and SC, that would be developed in early 2023 and is scheduled for discussion in mid-2023.

Appendix 1: Agenda

Joint Briefing on the Implementation of FAO Global Action (GA) for Fall Armyworm (FAW) Control

1 December 2022

14.30-16.00 Rome time (Central European Time, GMT +1)

AGENDA ITEMS		DOCUMENTS	PRESENTER	TIME (MIN.)
1	Opening of the Meeting		QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO	10
2	Adoption of the Agenda		Beth BECHDOL, Deputy-Director General, FAO	5
3	Progress and Achievements for Implementation of FAO GA for FAW Control	Video presentation		10
4	Progress and Achievements for Implementation of FAO GA for FAW Control	Presentation (PPT)	Jingyuan XIA, Director, NSP, FAO	10
5	Progress and Achievements for Technical Support to FAO GA for FAW Control	PPT	Robert BERTRAM, Chief Scientist, USAID	10
6	Core Activities for Implementation of FAO GA for FAW Control in 2023	PPT	Buyung HADI, Agricultural Officer (IPM), NSP, FAO	5
7	General Discussion: the Way Forward		Beth BECHDOL, Deputy Director-General	30
8	Closing Remarks		Beth BECHDOL, Deputy Director-General	10

Appendix 2: List of Participants

	Name, Last name	Organization name, Address
1.	Dr QU Dongyu, SC Chair	FAO Director-General
2.	Ms Beth Bechdol, SC Co-Chair, WGRM Chair	FAO Deputy Director-General
3.	Mr Luis Augusto Becerra Lopez-Lavalle (Observer)	Chief Scientist, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA)
4.	Mr Robert Bertram, SC Vice-Chair, Chair of the Technical Committee	Chief Scientist, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington, D.C., United States of America
5.	Ms Isabel Calderon (Observer)	Economic affairs officer, Agriculture and Commodities Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO)
6.	Ms Regina Eddy (Observer)	Coordinator, Interagency Task Force on FAW, USAID
7.	Mr Neil Fourie (Observer)	First Secretary and Agriculture Attaché UK Representative Rome at Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
8.	Mr Rhett Harrison, TC Member	Tropical forest ecologist and conservation biologist with the Center for International Forestry Research-World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF)
9.	Mr Neil Hausmann, SC Member, WGRM Member	Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
10.	Mr Robert Hunter, TC Member, WGRM Member	Interim President and CEO, Crop Life International, Brussels, Belgium
11.	Mr Are Izquierdo Skjær (Representing H.E Morten Von Hanno Aasland, [Observer])	Representing Ambassador of Norway to FAO
12.	Mr Paul Jepson, TC Member	Professor (retired), Oregon State University, Corvallis, United States of America
13.	Mr Alexander Jones, WG RM	Director, Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships Division (PSR)

14.	Mr B.M. Prasanna, TC Member	Director, Global Maize Programme and the CGIAR Research Programme on Maize, International Maize and Wheat improvement Center (CIMMYT), Mexico
15.	Mr Darrell Sexstone (Observer)	Policy Officer, European Commission (EC - INTPA)
16.	Ms Anne Wetlesen (Observer)	Senior Adviser, Department for Climate and Environment Section for Food, Norad
17.	Ms Frances Williams	Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI)
18.	Mr Kenneth Wilson, TC Member	Professor, Lancaster University, United Kingdom
19.	Mr Kongming WU, SC Vice-Chair	President, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)
20.	Mr Jingyuan Xia, SC Member	Director, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) and Executive Secretary of the FAW Secretariat
		Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
21.	Mr Shoki AlDobai	Senior Agricultural Officer, Team Leader, Locusts and Transboundary Plant Pests and Diseases Team (NSP MD)
22.	Ms Valeria Awad	Office Assistant, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
23.	Mr Jean Bahama	Plant Production and Protection Officer, Regional Office Africa (FAORAF)
24.	Ms Alessandra Benedetti	FAO Photo Library
25.	Mr Henry Burgsteden	Coordinator, Office of Director-General (ODG)
26.	Ms Sandra Cordon	Communications Consultant, FAW Secretariat, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
27.	Ms Francesca Epis	Office Assistant, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
28.	Mr Yubak Dhoj GC	Senior Agriculture Officer, Regional Office for Asia Pacific (FAORAP)
29.	Ms Ariella Glinni	Senior Technical Officer, Office of Deputy Director-General Bechdol (DDCB)

30.	Mr Buyung Hadi	Agricultural Officer, FAW Secretariat, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
31.	Mr Abebe HaileGabriel	ADG/Regional Representative Regional Office Africa (FAORAF)
32.	Ms Xiaoruo Jiang	Coordinator, Office of Director-General (ODG)
33.	Mr Matthew Keil	Coordinator, Office of Director-General (ODG)
34.	Mr Haekoo Kim	Technical Adviser, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
35.	Mr Godfrey Magwenzi	Director of Cabinet, Office of the Director- General (ODG)
36.	Ms Rosanne Marchesich	Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer, Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)
37.	Mr Francis Markus	Communications Consultant, OCCM
38.	Ms Gabriella Piacentini	Special Assistant, Office of Director-General (ODG)
39.	Ms Dina Rahman	Senior Coordinator, Office of Director- General (ODG)
40.	Mr Selvaraju Ramasamy	Senior Agricultural Officer, Office of Innovation Research and Extension Unit (OINR)
41.	Mr Jiaoqun Shi	Special Adviser, Regional Office for Asia Pacific (FAORAP)
42.	Ms Katarina Spisiakova	Programme Assistant, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
43.	Mr Ibuki Takamishi	Agricultural Officer, Regional Office for Asia Pacific (FAORAP)
44.	Ms Svetlana Velmeskina	Office Assistant, FAW Secretariat, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
45.	Ms Verena Wilke	Programme Specialist, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
46.	Mr Anping Ye	Director, South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division (PST)