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Report of the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC)

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Executive Summary

1. The Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) convened for the first time in 1956. It administers the Plant Protection Agreement for Asia and the Pacific Region and reviews the plant protection situation at the national level in its 25 member nations and the regional level. Among its key objectives are coordinating and promoting the development of regional plant protection systems, assisting member nations in developing and implementing effective plant protection programmes, setting Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPMs), facilitating inputs into the development of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), and promoting information exchange. It also plays a leadership role in supporting the implementation of integrated pest management (IPM) and pesticide management programmes at regional and national levels. Focus is given to capacity development among the member nations. This report reviews APPPC's activities in the past biennium (2022–2023) and provides updates on various plant protection and pesticide management programmes in the region.

Brief biennial report of activities of APPPC (2022-2023)

2. As the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have been relaxing gradually, APPPC has recovered in-person activities during the biennium. Activities implemented in the biennium included, among others, the 32nd Session of the Commission, 2022 and 2023 International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)-APPPC Regional Workshops, pre-meetings for the sessions of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), regional workshop on commodity standards (virtual), and three training workshops on surveillance, IPM and pesticides. In addition to holding meetings and workshops, APPPC developed its six-year Strategic Plan 2022–2028 and Regional Implementation Guidance (RIG) for Phytosanitary Procedures for Seed Certification, and revised the APPPC Regional Standard Setting Procedural Guidelines. New commodity RSPMs on fresh longan fruit and white rice are being developed. To support the effective operation of APPPC and the administration, monitoring and review of its biennium work programme, the APPPC Advisory Group was established.

Thirty-second Session of the Commission

3. The 32nd Session of the APPPC¹ was held from 7 to 11 November 2022 in Bangkok, Thailand. Sixty delegates from 18 member nations, one observer, and three international organizations – the Asian Development Bank, the German Society for International Cooperation and the World Bank – attended the meeting. The Session adopted the APPPC six-year Strategic Plan 2022–2028 and the revised APPPC Regional Standard Setting Procedural Guidelines, and approved the biennium work programme, RIG for Phytosanitary Procedures for Seed Certification, and the establishment of the APPPC Advisory Group. The Session also discussed the 1983 and 1999 amendments to the Plant Protection Agreement for Asia and the Pacific region in pursuance of the acceptance of these amendments by the members.

APPPC Strategic Plan 2022-2028

4. APPPC has developed its Strategic Plan 2022–2028 through a member survey, a regional workshop on strategic planning (2021), and a consultation. New Zealand took a leading role in developing the plan. The plan includes a position statement considering the current environment of APPPC, and a mission statement. Noteworthy are five strategic objectives: 1) developing an effective APPPC operation system; 2) developing capacity; 3) developing measures for plant protection and promoting integrated plant health management and the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management; 4) strengthening information management; and 5) coordinating input into international systems. The strategic goals are also set out as a way of implementing APPPC's objectives and mission.

¹ Report of the session: <http://www.fao.org/3/cc7308en/cc7308en.pdf>

2022 and 2023 IPPC-APPPC regional workshops

5. Annual regional workshops were held from 29 August to 2 September 2022 in Incheon and from 4 to 8 September 2023 in Busan, hosted by the Republic of Korea. The meetings covered three main areas: consultation on draft ISPMs and CPM Recommendations; discussion on regional plant protection issues; and updates on phytosanitary activities under the IPPC framework.

Regional workshop on commodity standards

6. The workshop was held virtually from 2 to 3 June 2022, led by New Zealand, with around 80 participants across Asia and the Pacific region. The focus of the meeting was to recognize the strategic value and basic principle of the commodity standards, discuss the implementation of commodity-specific ISPMs and RSPMs among APPPC, and discuss the next commodities for the development of RSPMs. After the workshop, APPPC agreed to develop commodity RSPMs on fresh longan fruit and white rice at the 32nd Session.

Surveillance workshop on pest-free places of production (PFPP), pest-free production sites (PFPS), and pest-free areas (PFA)

7. The sixth and final surveillance workshop on the implementation of ISPM 6 *Surveillance* and management of national surveillance systems was held from 22 to 26 May 2023 in Bali, led by Australia and hosted by Indonesia. Around 30 technical officials from 14 National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) participated in the meeting and increased their technical knowledge. The outcome of this workshop would contribute to developing NPPOs' surveillance capability to plan, establish, implement and maintain PFPP, PFPS, and PFA in their countries.

IPM workshop on systems approaches for the management of fruit flies on mangoes

8. The workshop was held from 19 to 23 June 2023 in Mumbai, led and hosted by India. Through workshop presentations and field and facility visits, approximately 30 technical officials of NPPOs from 12 countries developed their technical expertise and operational procedures of pre-harvest IPM and post-harvest treatment to control fruit flies on mangoes. The workshop would contribute to harmonized risk management options for fruit fly control in the region.

Workshop on pesticide applications by unmanned aerial vehicles

9. China led and hosted the pesticide workshop held from 24 to 27 August 2023 in Nanjing. Around 20 technical officials of the national pesticide management authority from ten countries gained knowledge of regulations and guidelines and developmental processes for pesticide application by unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as efficacy evaluation and risk management. The workshop result would promote regional capacity in pesticide regulatory management.

Workshop on lifecycle management of pesticides

10. A training workshop was held from 4 to 8 September 2023 at FAO headquarters for professionals working on pesticide management across the relevant ministries of Bangladesh (including environmental protection, agriculture, fisheries, and public health departments). The workshop provided training on all aspects of pesticide management through their lifecycle, from registration and production to use and waste management. In addition, it identified key issues for a lifecycle management roadmap in Bangladesh.

Workshop on pesticide registration in Asia

11. FAO, in cooperation with the Centre for Pesticide Suicide Prevention, conducted a regional FAO Pesticide Registration toolkit training co-funded by the Swedish Chemicals Agency in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) from 10 to 14 July 2023. In total, 22 participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka attended the workshop. The training included the standard modules on pesticides registration including addressing highly hazardous pesticides and their alternatives.

Workshop on pesticide residue risk assessment and the establishment of maximum residue limits in Asia

12. Most Asian countries lack sufficient capacity for generating supervised residue trial data, conducting a risk assessment of pesticide residue and setting maximum residue limits (MRLs) to ensure food safety and facilitate trade. To improve the capacity of Asian countries, FAO's regional training workshop on pesticide residue risk assessment and the establishment of MRLs in Asia was held from 20 to 24 November 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. A total of 22 participants from ten countries in the region were invited to the workshop. The themes covered in the training included how to evaluate data on pesticide residues, the methodology to assess the risk of pesticide residues, and the approach to setting MRLs.

Regional training workshop on the FAO Pesticide Registration Toolkit in the Pacific

13. The workshop was held from 6 to 10 November 2023 in Suva, Fiji, for ten Pacific countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, The Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. During the five-day workshop, in addition to the standard toolkit modules, a special topic on highly hazardous pesticides was presented. The country regulators learned how to find data requirements, choose assessment methods, evaluate technical aspects of the registration dossier, choose an appropriate pesticide registration strategy and procedures, review human health and environmental risks, find appropriate mitigation measures, and make an informed decision on pesticide registration. The workshop will support the establishment of institutional arrangements and operationalization of the Pacific Regional Pesticide Registration Scheme. The scheme is conceived as a regional support mechanism that pools resources and technical expertise from the Pacific member nations to facilitate national decision making based on sound scientific evaluations. The scheme also intends to foster regional collaboration and harmonization of national systems so that technical capacity is strengthened through sharing of risk assessment methodologies and data management systems.

14. Activities to take place in 2024 include the 33rd Session of the Commission, the IPPC-APPPC Regional Workshop, hands-on training on molecular diagnostics for South American leaf blight, an IPM workshop on banana diseases, and a workshop on pesticide residue testing for food safety. The 33rd Session is scheduled to be held from 23 to 27 September 2024 in Suzhou, China.

Acceptance of the amendments to the Plant Protection Agreement for Asia and the Pacific region

15. Presently, 25 countries are the contracting governments to the Agreement. There are three sets of amendments to the Agreement that are open for acceptance by the contracting governments: 1983 amendments; and two sets of 1999 amendments. The 1983 amendments, which include introducing mandatory contributions, have entered into force with the acceptance of 18 members. Both sets of 1999 amendments have still not entered into force, since acceptance by two-thirds of the contracting governments is needed. The two sets are: the alignment with the revised text of IPPC and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures; and the deletion of the article of "Measures to Exclude South American Leaf Blight of Hevea from the Region" from the

Agreement. The measures are now provided as RSPM 7 *Guidelines for Protection against South American Leaf Blight of Rubber* to maintain and protect the region from South American leaf blight. These three amendments remain open for acceptance by the contracting governments who have not accepted the amendments.

The IPPC ePhyto Solution

16. The IPPC ePhyto Solution is a tool that transitions paper phytosanitary certificate information into a digital phytosanitary certificate. Electronic exchanges of phytosanitary certificates between countries make trade safer, faster and cheaper compared with paper certificate exchange processes. The number of ePhyto certificates has increased significantly between 2018 and 2022. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic may have driven this increase. An unpublished study indicated that the introduction of ePhyto would significantly reduce total costs incurred by certificate rejections. The CPM Focus Group on Sustainable Funding for ePhyto has been working to explore options for short-, medium-, and long-term funding solutions to secure a sustainable funding mechanism. The plans of ePhyto include translation into other languages, continued collaboration with non-phytosanitary agencies and organizations, and linkage to other government and non-government systems, such as customs and ASEAN Single Windows, among others. APPPC continuously provides opportunities to discuss and exchange information on ePhyto implementation in order to assist members in joining the solution to facilitate safe trade.

International Day of Plant Health

17. The United Nations designated 12 May the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) to raise global awareness of how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect biodiversity and the environment, and boost economic development. IDPH is a key legacy of the International Year of Plant Health 2020. Following the first-ever International Plant Health Conference held in London in 2022, a high-level and technical event was organized on 12 May 2023 to commemorate IDPH and to advocate and raise awareness of the importance of plant health for our planet. APPPC continues to encourage countries in the region to take action to maintain this momentum and enhance the value of IDPH.

18. Key focus areas for 2024 and beyond

- a. Continue building capacities on preparedness, early warning, monitoring, surveillance, and management measures for priority pests identified by members, as well as pesticide management.
- b. Continue developing RSPMs and RIGs of regional priority.
- c. Continue contributing to the development of ISPMs and international discussions.
- d. Develop IPM methods and pesticide application protocols to control specific pests.
- e. Continue to strengthen capacity of lifecycle management of pesticides.
- f. Develop effective information management for collecting, sharing and exchanging information, including reorganizing the APPPC website.
- g. Work closely with IPPC and the Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO in implementing the APPPC Strategic Plan 2022–2028.
- h. Encourage members to plan and implement biodiversity-based crop protection.
- i. Encourage members to maintain the momentum built by IDPH and the International Year of Plant Health to further enhance phytosanitary capacities and raise awareness of plant health.
- j. Encourage member to accept the amendments of the Agreement.