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منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

# COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

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| <b>Thirteenth Session</b>                         |
| <b>Rome, 16-20 April 2018</b>                     |
| <b>e-Commerce - IPPC Activities on e-Commerce</b> |
| <b>Agenda item 11.6</b>                           |
| <b>Prepared by the IPPC Secretariat</b>           |

## I. Background

1. The topic of e-commerce of plants was discussed during the 22nd Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (TC-RPPO) in 2010<sup>1</sup>. Following these recommendations, in 2012, the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS) conducted a study on “Internet Trade (e-Commerce) in Plants: Potential Phytosanitary Risks”<sup>2</sup>. During CPM-7 (2012), a special topic session was organized on internet trade. The topic of e-commerce was discussed during CPM-8, and after further consultation, a CPM-Recommendation 014/14 on Internet Trade (E-Commerce) in Plants and other Regulated Articles was adopted at CPM-09<sup>3</sup>.

2. A special session was organized during CPM-12 (2017), which aimed to:

- emphasize the CPM-9 Recommendation on e-commerce and its implementation so far;

<sup>1</sup> The report of the 22nd TC-RPPO is available at <https://www.ippc.int/en/2010---22nd-tc-among-rppos/>

<sup>2</sup> The IRSS study Internet Trade (e-Commerce) in Plants: Potential Phytosanitary Risks is available at <https://www.ippc.int/en/irss/activities/2/>

<sup>3</sup> The CPM-09 Recommendation 014/14 is available at [https://www.ippc.int/sites/default/files/documents/20140127/cpm\\_2014\\_14\\_cpm\\_recommendations\\_2014-01-26\\_201401270647--202.46%20KB.pdf](https://www.ippc.int/sites/default/files/documents/20140127/cpm_2014_14_cpm_recommendations_2014-01-26_201401270647--202.46%20KB.pdf)

- raise awareness on the phytosanitary risk associated with e-commerce;
- share experiences on e-commerce in relation to phytosanitary risk in order to:
  - develop mechanisms for collaborating with e-commerce traders to reduce phytosanitary risks;
  - promote compliance by customers and traders operating through e-commerce;
  - strengthen coordination with postal and express courier services;
  - highlight phytosanitary risks posed by the pathway; and
  - facilitate the implementation of the CPM-9 Recommendation.

3. During this session, the latest initiatives on e-commerce by international organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the World Custom Organization and the Convention on Biological Diversity were presented.

4. For the first time, key stakeholders from the private sector, namely Global Express Association (federating the main carriers such as DHL, Fedex and UPS) and eBay, one of the major e-traders, provided their views and received recommendations to take phytosanitary considerations into account in their activities.

5. The National Plant Protection Organizations of Australia and the Republic of Korea shared their experiences of awareness raising and technologies to manage phytosanitary risks through e-commerce. All speakers convened in a panel to discuss concrete activities to further implement the IPPC recommendation on e-commerce. CPM 12 requested that the Bureau consider a way forward during its June 2017 meeting<sup>4</sup>.

6. The CPM-12 (2017) special topic session on e-commerce proposed further actions that are summarized in Annex 1, and include:

- Enhance collaboration among international organizations:
- Collaborate further at the national level
- Identify and report risks to e-traders
- Engage express delivery companies can (DHL Express, Fedex, UPS, TNT)
- Raise awareness of suppliers, transporters and other organizations and the general public.

7. The CPM-12 recommendations on e-commerce are provided in Annex 1.

## **II. Conclusions from the June meeting of the CPM Bureau**

8. During its June 2017 meeting, the CPM Bureau conducted a teleconference on e-Commerce with William John Gain (World Bank), Ana Hinojosa (WCO), Mike Carson (e-bay), Corry Martin (APHIS USDA) and Deepmar Miost (Global Express Association). Participants shared their experience with regulating consignments moving in e-Commerce and dealing with non-compliance including incorrect declaration of imported goods, forgery, tax evasion, lack of knowledge on import/export regulations, duty exemptions or illegal trade of banned products.

9. The Bureau recommended that e-Commerce issues could be addressed through the Trade Facilitation Agreement and suggested that the Secretariat should work with Bureau members to undertake the following actions:

- 1) Prepare a concise factsheet on e-Commerce addressed to NPPOs and collate a contact list stakeholders/websites involved in e-Commerce in cooperation with APHIS to be posted on the IPP on restricted pages.

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4 IPPC CPM-12 (2017) E-commerce (Internet trade) of plants Special Topic Session held in Incheon, Korea <http://phytosanitary.info/activity/ippc-cpm-12-2017-e-commerce-internet-trade-plants-special-topic-session-held-incheon-korea>

- 2) Contact other e-Commerce players like Amazon to raise the importance of the issue (through their Directors if necessary).
- 3) Engage Universal Postal Union in cooperation.
- 4) Draft standardized information for those stakeholders with a list of key traded commodities that present a phytosanitary risk and advice to contact relevant NPPO.
- 5) Participate in the WCO subgroups for traders representing different stages in trade chains – IC to select champions for watch topic or use FAO Representatives.
- 6) Create an umbrella work programme on e-commerce, ePhyto, PCE, etc. within the TFA/World Bank, work within the 3 sisters, organize the IPPC Seminar during the SPG with the World Bank after which more concrete actions should be discussed again by the Bureau.
- 7) Prepare a joint publication with WCO based on the WCO manual.
- 8) Prepare a draft summary with an Action Plan for the next 3 years regarding TFA that would include e-commerce recommendations (currently unfunded). The Plan will be discussed during the SPG in October. The Plan would culminated in a 2020 conference/symposium to be dedicated to the implementation of the TFA.

### **III. Participation in the WCO E-commerce Working Group**

10. On the 11th of October 2017, the IPPC-Secretariat participated in the WCO e-commerce working group held in Brussels (BE) to present its activities.
11. Contacts were made with Amazon, International Air Transport Association (IATA), Alibaba and Universal Postal Union.
12. The WCO was positive about the drafting of a joint manual on plant health and e-commerce.

### **IV. Conclusions from the SPG and the October meeting of the CPM Bureau**

13. The SPG was updated on activities conducted and planned on e-commerce.
14. Concrete proposed activities were the following:
  - Develop cooperation with institutions and stakeholders (attending relevant meetings)
  - Prepare a factsheet on e-Commerce addressed to NPPOs with a contact list of stakeholders/websites involved (in cooperation with APHIS)
  - Draft standardized information for those stakeholders with a list of key commodities and advice to contact relevant NPPO
  - Prepare a joint publication with WCO (WCO is in agreement)
  - Develop a webpage on the IPP on e-Commerce
  - Develop a video or tutorials on e-Commerce to raise awareness
  - Convene an ad hoc working group with relevant stakeholders
  - Consider harmonizing risk assessment with the 2 sisters on the basis of the WCO risk assessment
15. The SPG and the Bureau during its October meeting requested that these activities be costed to be further discussed during the December and June CPM Bureau. The Bureau agreed that no activities would be undertaken without extra-budgetary resources allocated.

### **V. Recommendations from the 1st Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC)**

16. The IC discussed the possible activities on e-commerce and agreed that:
  - The IC should coordinate the various e-commerce activities to ensure an optimal collaboration between all relevant groups;

- a virtual meeting should be convened with all relevant stakeholders to identify gaps in technical resources and plan for the coordinated development of resources targeting different audiences (factsheet, publication, video, etc.);
- the postal services, ASYCUDA (Automated System for Customs Data) and the World Bank may be added to the stakeholders to be involved to conduct the future e-Commerce activities.
- a call for collecting e-commerce related technical resources should be issued and the resources collected would be posted on the phytosanitary.info webpage after due review by the IC;
- collaboration should be sought with the FAO food safety unit.
- more clarity is needed on the risk assessment undertaken by three sisters and the World Customs Organization (WCO). The system whereby some products can be flagged warranting closer inspection and risk assessment should be targeted. The possibility to discuss this with WCO and the sisters should be envisaged.

17. The CPM is asked to consider all actions being undertaken by the Secretariat on the topic and:

- 1) *Note* the activities undertaken;
- 2) *Request* the Bureau to consider a work plan as a project-based funding (if no extra budgetary resources are made available the Secretariat will not take any specific action in this area).
- 3) *Provide* the IPPC Secretariat with updates on related e-commerce actions in their region to the IPPC Secretariat, if any.

**Annex 1: Proposal to work collaboratively on e-commerce following the CPM-12 (2017) special topic session**

1. The CPM-12 (2017) special topic session on e-commerce allowed to formulate the following recommendations.

Enhance collaboration among international organizations:

- IPPC to continue monitoring the issue of phytosanitary risks related to e-commerce and the implementation of its recommendations
- Follow Members exchanges on e-commerce, including any possible identification of gaps in trade rules regarding e-commerce of plants and plant products
- Pursue Secretariat to Secretariat information exchange and contribute to discussions on e-commerce held within the structures of the WTO, WCO, CBD and others, for example IPPC to participate in the WCO WGEC
- IPPC to encourage the other standard-setting organizations (Codex, OIE) to study/identify relevant risks arising from e-commerce and to develop any necessary recommendations
- Develop joint risk assessment for more effective targeting (use as a basis the WCO efforts in this regard)
- Develop further guidance and involve e-traders and others (align with existing guidance example those developed within the framework of the CBD expert meeting on e-commerce in December 2017).
- Inform SPS Committee members of IPPC work and recommendations on the issue of e-commerce

Collaborate further at the national level

- Closer cooperation between NPPOs and Customs at the national level.
- Increase engagement in relevant fora to raise awareness to relevant border and courier agencies and other national stakeholders.
- Engage and participate in the trade facilitation committee (under the trade facilitation agreement of the WTO) to ensure awareness on e-commerce on a broad scale.

Identify and report risks to e-traders

- Highlight regionally or nationally the top concerns of commodities being sold on-line to the suppliers:
  - IPPC Secretariat to create with the e-commerce industry a template and procedure with e-traders for CPs to report major concerns
  - IPPC Secretariat to provide information to all RPPOs and NPPOs on how to use the template
  - IPPC Secretariat to collect feedback on good practices following reporting and issues an annual report involving the e-commerce industry

Engage express delivery companies can (DHL Express, Fedex, UPS, TNT):

- Carriers to provide advance electronic shipment information to enable customers/other agencies to perform risk assessment
- Track and trace packages identified by authorities as suspicious and remove them from traffic flows for further examination
- (Provide customs with adequate and controlled facilities to conduct examinations efficiently)
- Provide authorities with available relevant information on shippers and consignees of shipments identified as containing goods with potential phytosanitary risks (subject to legal limits)

- Close accounts of customers identified by authorities as repeat offenders (subject to legal limits).

Raise awareness of suppliers, transporters and other organizations and the general public

- Create an IPPC webpage on e-commerce and a contact point for additional information exchange
- IPPC Secretariat in cooperation with the industry and the relevant international organizations to develop videos, manuals, e-learning or tutorials to explain the phytosanitary risks through e-commerce.