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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Second Session

Rome, 26 – 30 March 2007

**Opening Statement Delivered by the FAO Director-General at the
Second Meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM)**

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Second meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM)

26-30 March 2007, Rome

Welcome by the FAO Director-General

1 Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. As Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, it is a great pleasure to welcome you here today to this Second Session of the International Plant Protection Convention's Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, the CPM.

2 The International Plant Protection Convention was first adopted by the FAO Conference in 1951. Since that time, 56 years ago, the international environment associated with agriculture and food production has undergone remarkable changes. The world's population has tripled in numbers and modern transportation and communication technology have resulted in a six-fold expansion of international trade, including plants and plant products, among an increasing number of countries. This in turn has increased the opportunity for pests of plants to be introduced into new areas, and natural borders such as oceans and mountain ranges can no longer be considered effective in keeping them out. It is not just the expansion of trade that is an issue. There are many other ways that pests of plants may accidentally be introduced into a new area and threaten agriculture, biodiversity and the environment. These include rapidly expanding tourism, packaging materials, emergency food and agricultural aid, research materials, and the movement of used machinery and commercial vehicles such as trucks, buses, aircraft and ships. All these pathways need to be managed if the spread of plant pests from one part of the world to another is to be prevented.

3 The Convention currently has 160 contracting parties, with another six nearing the final stages of adherence. Such involvement by the international community demonstrates the importance of being part of an international body concerned with preventing the transboundary movement of pests that may affect commercial crop production, forests, wild flora and ecosystems. The World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures recognizes the IPPC as the international phytosanitary standard setting body responsible for developing international standards on which WTO members are required to base their phytosanitary measures for the safe trade of all plants and plant products (including forestry).

4 Within FAO, high priority has consistently been given to the IPPC by the Governing Bodies, in particular for the underlying/basic activities of standard setting, information exchange and capacity building. The continuation of this high priority can be seen in the further proposals presented to the 131st Session of the FAO Council, where the biennial allocation for IPPC was increased by over half a million US dollars.

5 Despite the international recognition of the IPPC, the ongoing challenge of financing its operations must still be faced and resolved. During the past few years an intensive CPM work programme has evolved, which is not sustainable under the current funding mechanism. The IPPC Secretariat does not have sufficient funds and human resources to organize, coordinate and report on the wide range and number of meetings and workshops required to meet the expected standards development programme, to enable the implementation of effective communication between the contracting parties and to undertake expected technical assistance activities.

6 This funding problem is not only restricted to the IPPC. FAO itself is facing significant financial challenges. In real terms there has been a decline in the FAO Regular Programme budget of 25% from 1994-95. Notwithstanding this, since 1998 the proportion of core funding to the IPPC by FAO has increased from 0.38% in 1998 to 0.68% in 2006. This reflects the importance given to the IPPC by the FAO membership.

7 While FAO may be in a position to continue to supply core funding to the IPPC at a level agreed by its Members (US\$ 5.188 million for 2006-07), additional activities over and above those covered by the FAO core funding will have to be funded from extra-budgetary sources. In this regard, I am aware of the IPPC trust funds for participation of developing country Members and the additional activities that have been implemented thanks to the generous contributions from the European Community and the Governments of Canada, New Zealand, the USA, the Cook Islands and the Republic of Korea. We also welcome the placement by the Government of Japan of a professional officer to support regional capacity building and by the Government of the USA of two associate professional officers to support standard setting and information exchange.

8 In line with our aim of identifying strategic extra-budgetary funding, the Secretariat and Bureau, in collaboration with the CPM informal working group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance, has developed a Business Plan with five-year goals and performance indicators to be considered by this meeting of the CPM. Those activities requiring extra-budgetary funding (including extra Secretariat staff when appropriate) will be clearly identified on an annual basis and members will be expected to contribute to the implementation of these activities. I strongly support this results-oriented, transparent approach, which will enable donors to identify areas of importance and monitor the outcomes of their contributions.

9 This meeting may further wish to consider calling for a high-level, Ministerial event to be convened at the end of the third session of the CPM in 2008, to examine from a longer term perspective the accomplishments and growing role of the IPPC in providing global public goods. This may not only secure firm government support but also build momentum for the IPPC for political will towards sustained technical and financial support.

10 During this current biennium, an independent evaluation has been conducted on the IPPC and its structures, in which most of you here will have been involved. The Evaluation Team has a dedicated three-hour session on Thursday afternoon to discuss with the Commission the findings emerging from their evaluation and their associated recommendations. It is very important that the CPM comment and give feedback that can be considered when the final report is completed in June. The report will then be presented to the FAO Programme Committee at its 98th Session in September 2007.

11 On a personal note, I wish to acknowledge the profound contribution made to the IPPC by its past Secretary, Mr Niek Van der Graaff, and welcome his replacement Mr Peter Kenmore. Mr. Van der Graaff was closely involved with the Regional Plant Protection Organizations and was instrumental in expediting the 1997 revision of the IPPC, including the establishment of this Commission on Phytosanitary Measures. I would like to take this opportunity to wish him a very happy retirement.

12 Mr Peter Kenmore brings to the IPPC a very wide professional knowledge and experience in plant protection, Integrated Pest Management, biodiversity, policy advice and capacity building. I know that his skills and experience will be of great benefit to the IPPC.

13 Finally, in closing, may I welcome you again to FAO Headquarters. I know you have a very busy and active programme ahead of you over the next five days and wish you every success.