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**PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN THE MANAGEMENT
OF PLANT HEALTH IN AFRICA**



INTER-AFRICAN PHYTOSANITARY COUNCIL (AU-IAPSC)

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AIPs	Alien Invasive Plants
AMI	Agricultural Management Institute
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-IAPSC	African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council
BCA	Biological Control Agents
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CTA	Consolidation of the Free Trade Area
CPM	Commission on Phytosanitary Measures
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPPO	European Plant Protection Organization
FAO	Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAW	Fall Army Worm
IFU	Implementation Facilitation Unit
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISPMs	International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures
IST	Integration and Support Team
IYPH	International Year of Plant Health
RPPOs	Regional Plant Protection Organizations
MS	Member States
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPPO's	National Plant Protection Organizations
NRO	National Reporting Obligations
OCS	Online Commenting System
PACA	Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa
PPM	Partnership Platform Meeting
PRA	Pest Risk Analysis
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SC	Standards Committee
SPG	Strategic Planning Group
STC	Specialized Technical Committee
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TFT	Task Force for Topics
TRIPS	Trade Related Aspect of Intellectual Property
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization





MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present to you all our latest news bulletin which covers the period January 2020-to-December 2021. The bulletin showcases the many ways in which AU-IAPSC has implemented various activities in support of plant health in Africa and how we have collaborated with various stakeholders towards achieving the same mission.

Our major activities in the two years included strengthening capacity of member states in areas such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Invasive Alien Plant Species, Transboundary Pests, Plant Health Risks and Biological Control among others. We championed these activities through workshops which saw member states and partners deliberating, exchanging views and sharing information on various levels, with the aim of addressing crop productivity, to ensure food and nutritional security across the African continent.

All these we accomplished, in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which as you are aware, has thrown the world into disarray. AU-IAPSC was not spared from its wrath; however that did not stop us from moving forward; we re-strategized and took advantage of the technological trends to implement our work. Hence we remained vigilant in seeking sustainable solutions to challenges encountered in the management of plant health across the continent.

Through virtual meetings, we continued to engage with member states at all levels and collaborated with our partners in harmonizing our work and address the challenges that face us. I am glad to report that information shared through various captivating presentations, questions and general discussions tackled even the most difficult aspects of our work but most importantly, provided sustainable solutions.

Through the meeting reports and other key updates, we also share with you how pests and diseases remain some of the fastest rising problems in Africa, which then demands a proactive approach by everyone involved, to ensure that modern solutions are applied in mitigating it.





We also share on developments surrounding the formulation and development of plant health strategy for Africa, whose implementation we reckon will provide guidance and direction to the plant health efforts that are much needed on the continent. Through the strategy, we commit to continue raising awareness of the importance of plant health in protecting the environment and preserving biodiversity.

In the year 2020, we also completed the development of our new look website www.auiapsc.org as part of our efforts to enhance information and communications as well as provide information access to member states and partners. The website is furnished with all relevant plant health information for all stakeholders, acting as a one-stop shop for everything plant-health, within the Africa region. It is enabling AU-IAPSC to broaden its reach, expand the information database and improve information sharing at national, regional and global level.

Additionally, in keeping with global technological trends, social media and digital platforms have been created for IAPSC to allow for timely and convenient sharing of information and updates with NPPOs, MS and partner organizations regionally and globally.

We are greatly indebted to all member states through National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO)'s, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Regional Economic Communities and all others, for continued collaboration and support to our work. Together with our many partners in Africa and every part of the world, AU-IAPSC will continue to deliver plant health on the promise of the African Union Agenda 2063 and its global goals, seeking food security for all. Enjoy the read,

**Director of AU-IAPSC,
Dr. Jean Gerard MEZUI M'ELLA**

We re-strategized and took advantage of the technological trends to implement our work. Hence we remained vigilant in seeking sustainable solutions to challenges encountered in the management of plant health across the continent.





AN OVERVIEW OF AU-IAPSC

The Inter-African Phytosanitary Council of African Union (AU-IAPSC) is a Specialized Technical Office of the Department of Agriculture, Rural development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) of African Union (AU) and one of nine Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in charge of Africa. The Office's 10-year-strategy is achieving a robust plant health systems and reduced pest risks contribute to better livelihoods, enhanced trade and biodiversity preservation in Africa. AU-IAPSC mission is to develop, promote and coordinate sustainable plant health systems among continental, regional and national actors for increased agricultural production and market access.

Its mandate is to coordinate and provide support to the protection of plant resources for the welfare and economic development in the Member States of the African Union (AU). Specifically, our particular mandate is to prevent the introduction and spread of pests which attack and damage crops and forests in Africa and develop a common strategy against the introduction and spread of pests particularly through the harmonization of phytosanitary legislation. We also ensure co-operation and a harmonized approach in all areas of plant protection where governments take official measures (registration of pesticides, certification of plant materials, accreditation of people who apply pesticides etc).

AU-IAPSC is also mandated to provide a documentation service for provision and exchange of information in all areas of its activities such as plant protection information management. AU-IAPSC is further mandated to champion development of strategies against the introduction and spread of plant pests, lead the promotion of safe and sustainable plant protection techniques, enlighten member states on the implications of the WTO-SPS and lead in agreement on international agricultural trade among others.:

2020-2021

KEY ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

In the years 2020-2021, AU-IAPSC prepared and implemented various activities most of which aimed at enhancing member states' capacity on the standards setting processes and other technical consultations among RPPOs and Standards Committee meetings.

Activities in these two years also strengthened cooperation on migratory pests between countries and RECs through workshops to discuss the problems of main migratory crops pests and we also explored development of SPS information systems and enhancing advocacy, awareness and communications to ensure sufficient safe biological control agents are available to manage plant-related issues.





ASSESSMENT OF LOCUST INVASION IN EAST AFRICA ISIOLO AND SAMBURU EAST COUNTIES, KENYA 22 – 24 JANUARY, 2020



A close shot at some of the desert locusts that invaded Samburu, Kenya in 2019

BACKGROUND

From December 2019, desert locust (*Schistocera gregaria*) swarms were reported to have invaded East Africa, specifically Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. The swarms came into Kenya from Somalia and Ethiopia which are the breeding and swarming grounds for the desert locust. The locust upsurge and outbreak is being linked to the favorable rainfall in the region, leading to adequate vegetation and food supply for the locusts. Additionally, the continued north-easterly winds are said to aid the locust swarm movements. Locusts have the capacity to migrate over long distances making them pests of international importance. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has already warned that an outbreak of locusts in the region is likely to spread to other countries, potentially leaving millions of people without food.





AU ACTIONS AND INTERVENTION



A phytosanitary expert collecting desert locusts samples in Samburu, Kenya

Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) now Department of Agriculture, Rural development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) through the African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) worked with AU Member States to analyze the risk posed by invasive and emerging pests in the continent and to recommend measures to prevent their introduction, spread and devastating impacts to livelihoods and the environment. Following the reports of desert locust invasion in the East Africa region in January 2020, DREA through AU-IAPSC, intervened in the situation by conducting a three-day mission to East Africa, beginning initially with Kenya. It assessed the actual situation on the ground and determined the locust management options instituted.



Crop protection experts after inspecting desert locust-invaded fields in Samburu, Kenya

MISSION HIGHLIGHTS, RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The desert locust invasion assessment mission was conducted in Kenya between 22 and 24 January 2020. The mission entailed discussions in Nairobi with personnel from the lead institutions involved in the management, monitoring and surveillance of the desert locusts, namely, Plant Protection Services Division in the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO.EA).

The mission also entailed field visits to two of the counties affected by the desert locust invasion; the counties visited were Isiolo and Samburu East, both of which are in North Eastern Kenya.

KEY FINDINGS

- Desert locust (*Schistocera gregaria*) swarms were reported to invade Kenya in late December 2019. The swarms came into Kenya from Somalia and Ethiopia which are the breeding and swarming grounds for the desert locust
- The locust upsurge and outbreak is being linked to the favorable rainfall in the region, arid and semi-arid climate, leading to adequate vegetation and food supply for the swarms. Additionally, the continued north-easterly winds are aiding the locust swarm movements.





- New locust swarms are still getting into Kenya from Somalia. On the first day of the mission, a report was made to DLCO.EA about a new locust swarm measuring 15km long that had entered Mandera, Kenya from Somalia.
- New swarms and those already in the country have been reported to be splitting and moving to new previously uninvaded sites – this phenomenon has made the management of the locusts even more challenging. Locusts are migratory pests thus following them is a challenge.
- A continental approach is needed to manage the current locust outbreak; The Plant Protection Services Division, Kenya is in discussion with the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in a bid to involve member states in managing the desert locust plague, both now and in subsequent years.
- Aerial spraying with chemical pesticides (Fenitrothion 96% ULV and Dimilin (Diflubenzuron)) has been deployed as the management method to target the desert locust swarms. Ground spraying using mounted boom sprayers to boost the aerial spraying is also being done. A lot more of the chemical pesticides is needed as what is in the reserves is not adequate.
- The aerial sprays are targeting the adult locusts when they roost on vegetation and the surrounding ground as well as the immature locusts and the hoppers which are still on the ground

Aerial pesticide sprays are often done early in the morning before the locust swarms become active and migrate to new locations.

- Five (5) aircraft have been deployed to conduct aerial spraying; four (4) aircraft have been deployed for surveillance which entails following the locust swarms to determine their flight paths and roosting grounds, as well as to map the GPS coordinates of the locust swarms when sighted and when they roost on the ground – for purposes of coordinating with the aerial spraying teams
- Training of trainers is ongoing; this has proved to be very useful in the monitoring and surveillance, coordination, information sharing and management of the locust swarms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The African Union Commission should take the lead in desert locust management on a regional scale; the desert locust swarms in Kenya have continued to spread beyond the borders of the initial county or region that was first reported to be invaded in December 2019; the locusts are now in 10 counties, and may spread even further.
- 2 Funds should be availed to ensure adequate resources are availed as the current personnel, equipment, aircraft and chemical pesticides are overstretched, considering the magnitude and the continued spread of the locust swarms.





AU INTERVENTIONS AND WAY FORWARD

3. The DLCO.EA, headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, should be empowered with financial resources; the nine (9) member countries that make up the DLCO.EA (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) are expected to make yearly contributions that ensure that this strategic regional body/organization has adequate and better equipment and resources to facilitate their operations. Contributions from four member countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) is keeping the DLCO.EA running as they are up-to-date with their contributions; the commitment by some member countries to make their annual contributions has been a challenge and these countries owe DLCO.EA lots of monies.

4. Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO.EA) should be strengthened further with aircrafts, trained pilots and personnel, spare parts, fuel. Personnel to manage aircraft are required as well as experienced and skilled pilots. Pilots are expensive to maintain hence funds are required.

5. Intensive training and strengthening of ground support teams should be conducted in all member countries that are already affected or likely to be affected.

AU through DREA continues to closely monitor the situation and seeking swift measures to among others, ensure availability of adequate resources as the current personnel, equipment, aircraft and chemical pesticides are overstretched, considering the magnitude and the continued spread of the locust swarms. AU is also working on strengthening the efforts and capacity of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) of member states to effectively manage, and for those at risk, prepare for the pest invasions, upsurges and outbreaks, by strengthening their monitoring and surveillance capacities. AU is looking into supporting and strengthening efforts of Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO.EA) which is in dire need of resources such as aircrafts, trained pilots and personnel, spare parts and fuel. Currently, contributions from four member countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) is keeping the DLCO.EA

SPECIAL NOTE

Somalia left the DLCO.EA in 1991 and thus have a challenge with ground support to manage desert locusts. This is probably what has also contributed to the locust invasion and upsurge in Kenya. Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia have departments that deal with and manage desert locusts every year. Yemen, Saudi Arabia, the Red Sea area, East Ethiopia, Mid and West Somalia are breeding areas for desert locusts; Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are invasion (not breeding) areas for desert locusts and thus don't have well developed systems to manage desert locusts.





**AU-IAPSC CELEBRATES THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE,
ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY
8 MARCH 2020**



Part of the AU-IAPSC staff after the International Women’s Day celebrations

On International women’s Day that falls on March 8 every year, AU-IAPSC joined the Cameroonian government and the rest of the world, in celebrating the role of women in our society. As we provide leadership in the management of plant health in Africa, we are proud of our women across the continent, as they contribute 60 to 80 percent to food production for both household consumption and sale; hence they also play a major part in agricultural activities. Cameroon celebrated its 35th edition of the day under the theme;

“promoting gender and protecting women’s rights by 2020: taking stock of actions undertaken, setting a new course.”





AU-IAPSC DIRECTOR BRIEFS THE MEDIA ON AU MEASURES ON COVID-19 YAOUNDE, CAMEROON 12 APRIL 2020



AU-IAPSC Director Gerard Mezui M'ella briefing the press from CRTV on Covid measures

AU-IAPSC Director Dr Jean Gérard Mezui M'ella took time to brief members of the media from the Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) on the measures being taken by African Union through the Department of Agriculture, Rural development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) to prepare the continent for the aftermath of COVID-19, particularly in the area of plant health. In his remarks, he said since the pandemic was already raising food insecurity fears in Africa, IAPSC through the department, is therefore working towards implementing strategies that will among other measures, facilitate farmer's access to phytosanitary products.

African Union, through the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), is supporting all the African Member States, to manage the impact of COVID-19. AU is also already working with Member States to ensure that small-scale farmers recover from the negative impacts of COVID-19 through continuous support to increase food production. He also shared insights from the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) which said the COVID-19 global outbreak is showing the world how adopting preventive measures is essential to secure countries from the introduction and spread of devastating human diseases and that applies to the health of humans, animals and plants.



FOSTERING COMMUNICATION FLOW THROUGH THE LAUNCH OF AU-IAPSC NEW WEBSITE

2 JUNE 2020



“Providing leadership in the management of plant health in Africa”



Programmatic Areas



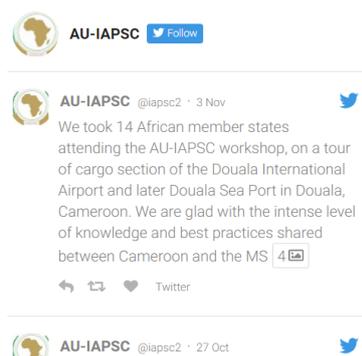
Phytosanitary Compliance
Compliance with standards and regulations to adapt to changing demands in food safety and quality.



Plant Pest Risk Reduction
Early detection of pest outbreaks and correct identification of incursions of new threats to prevent damage to crops.



Human Capacity Development
Building human capacities to carry out plant protection work and react rapidly with the appropriate measures.



A snapshot of the new AU-IAPSC website content

In June 2020, African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) launched its new website www.auiapsc.org. The new website was launched with a fully responsive layout for all platforms, serving all stakeholders in plant health and acting as a key resource in the field. AU-IAPSC Information and Communications Officer Chipiliro Kansilanga said the new website contains helpful information on plant health, useful news, announcements and successes being registered across the region, as well as updates from Member States.

“As a leader in plant health management in Africa, we felt it important for us to make information regarding our mandate, activities, approach, thought leadership and services easily accessible for NPPO’s, other RPPO’s and all stakeholders in plant health,” she said.

“As a Specialized Technical Office for the African Union, we endeavor to provide the most accurate, up-to-date information and share our knowledge and expertise in the field of plant health management and also share the innovations and developments from our partners.”. The site also contains useful information about AU-IAPSC vision and mandate, but also annual bulletins as well as various publications dating back to 15 years ago. Programmatic areas are also highlighted, while 2014-2021 Strategic Plan is also downloadable from the site, allowing users to understand AU-IAPSC’s focus, approach and how stakeholders can further collaborate with its work. Amongst other key features, the site also contains integrated social media buttons for Facebook and Twitter, to foster improved communication with NPPO’s, partners and stakeholders.





**A HEARTY FAREWELL TO AU-IAPSC RETIRING STAFF:
PROF. ABDELFAH, MABROUK AMER (SENIOR SCIENTIFIC OFFICER –
ENTOMOLOGY) AND ISAAC ZAMA (DRIVER)
29 JUNE 2020**



Mr Isaac Zama (left) and Prof Adbelfattah Amer after being gifted traditional attire as part of their farewell following 12 years of service with AU-IAPSC

On this day, AU-IAPSC bid farewell to two of its staff who retired after serving the office diligently. Prof Abdelfattah Mabrouk Amer served AU-IAPSC for 12 years as Senior Scientific Officer-Entomology while Isaac Zama served for 12 years as a driver. Prof Amer and Mr Zama each received a certificate of appreciation, in recognition of their work and contribution to AU-IAPSC in their combined 24 years of service.

They both expressed gratitude for an opportunity to be part of the African Union family, whose memories and experiences they said will forever cherish. In his remarks, AU-IAPSC Director Dr Jean Gérard Mezui M’ella said

the two, in their respective roles had contributed positively to the growth of AU-IAPSC by not only working hard but diligently and with passion.

“Twelve years is not a short time, we have learnt so much from you in these years and we will keep those lessons with us as a team and as individuals. So thank you for all your hardwork over the many years; it has helped make this the African Union vision successful, and all that has not gone unnoticed. We believe the impact of your work will be evident even for many years to come, for both IAPSC and African Union in general.”



**13TH SESSION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF AFRICAN UNION
INTER-AFRICAN PHYTOSANITARY COUNCIL, (VIRTUAL)
HOSTED FROM YAOUNDE, CAMEROON
20-22 JULY 2020**



Part of AU-IAPSC Communication Control Centre and staff, during the meeting

Introduction

The meeting started on the 20th of July 2020, with the presence of 32 participants from all over Africa. Participants included statutory members of the Steering Committee, representatives from Regional Economic Communities (RECs), contact points of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and representatives from partner institutions. Main agenda points included the following:

- Opening Session;
- Meeting Arrangements;
- Review of IAPSC 12 SC;
- Phytosanitary and Plant Health Related Activities in the Region;
- Reports on Emerging Pests, Pest Management, Arising Plant Health Concerns;
- Regional Integration, Plant Health & Pest Management Related Concerns;

Opening session and welcome remarks

The Moderator of the virtual meeting, Ms. Luiza Munyua, Senior Scientific Officer, AU-IAPSC, welcomed all participants and thanked them for their attendance in the first ever virtual session of the Steering Committee held this way because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Welcome remarks were done by the AU-IAPSC Director Dr Jean Gerard Mezui M'ella who said despite the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, AU-IAPSC specialized office was committed to holding Steering Committee so that stakeholders continue to collaborate as the sector still needed to implement activities.





Opening remarks by Commissioner, REA

The Commissioner, represented by Dr Simplice Nouala, welcomed everyone to the SC meeting held virtually, having been initially scheduled for Libreville, Gabon in April 2020. He briefed participants of AU-IAPSC's mandate in the management and coordinating of plant health activities in Africa, stressing that its programs are validated during sessions of Steering Committee meetings that take place annually. The Steering Committee oversees the implementation of activities of IAPSC towards achieving the goal of its ten year Strategic and Implementation Plan, 2014-2023. He congratulated members for their dedication to, and personal active involvement in the Steering Committee to identify the challenges and to propose the recommendations to resolve the issues constraining by IAPSC programme budget and activities.

Adoption of the agenda

The Chair introduced the agenda of the virtual meeting of the 13th session of IAPSC's Steering Committee and it was adopted as presented in Annex1 of this report.



An IAPSC staff Ms Maryben Chiatoh following the proceedings

Review of IAPSC 12th Steering Committee

1. Review of the status of IAPSC 12th SC Recommendations; Achievements

The Director presented the level of implementation of the recommendations agreed upon during the 12th Steering Committee of the AU-IAPSC; noting that despite the Covid19 pandemic, AU-IAPSC has thrived to implement most of the recommendations directed to them with the following highlights;

- On implementation of ISPM 15, AU-IAPSC had to consider the recommendations of the project carried out under the funding of STDF on ISPM 15 targeting four African countries and carry out a desk survey to inform development of strategies, policies and initiatives in other member states. However, this has been challenging as the office has not received concrete feedback from beneficiary countries on the overall execution of the project.
- On the creation of a database to share information on plant health issues on the continent, the AU-IAPSC encouraged Member States to share official phytosanitary related information for publishing. It was indicated that AU-IAPSC website and reporting portal were in the final stages of development and will be launched soon.





- On Coordination mechanism at continental level to harmonize planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting on Fall ArmyWorm and other emerging pests in the continent, it was reported that the TCP on FAW with FAO had been executed successfully and there's continued collaboration with partners for continental initiatives to tackle FAW and other emerging pests.

2. Presentation of IAPSC 2019 Progress Report

Presenting this report, Ms Luiza Munyua, Senior Scientific Officer presented key activities implemented by IAPSC in 2019 which fell under the following topics :

- Plant Protection, Plant Quarantine and Access to International Markets
- Compliance with Phytosanitary Standards and Access to International Markets
- Strengthening Food Security & Capacity building for Improved plant health management systems in Africa

Other activities implemented by IAPSC (SC & GA) included AU-IAPSC organizing the 12th Steering Committee meeting and 27th General Assembly meeting which were attended by several AU Member States and National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) representatives. She further shared how AU-IAPSC and various stakeholders (FAO, IPPC, NPPOs, CABI, STDF,

Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) updated the sharing of information on emerging pests, established an expert working group to develop common pest risk analysis, developed contingency measures and risk management plans to implement appropriate plant health management in Africa. She also presented the key achievements of IAPSC within the said period and major challenges faced in the implementation of various activities. Members of the Steering Committee endorsed the report.

3. Financial Report 2019, 2020, 2021; Resource mobilization, Funding proposals

The Finance and Administrative Officer - AU IAPSC, Ms Jovita Akiumbeni presented the financial report for the budget programme of 2019, 2020 and 2021. In the feedback session, AU-IAPSC was encouraged to continue to mobilizing funds for implementation of the activities of the strategic plan.



An IAPSC staff Mr Nana Sani following attentively during the meeting





4. Presentation of IAPSC 2020/2021 Program of activities

AU-IAPSC workplan for the year running 2020 was presented. The main items on the workplan bordered on building the capacity of Member States in Integrated Pest Management review of plant-related legislation and promotion of Member States' standards setting processes. The level of progress for these activities has been greatly affected by the Covid19 pandemic as summarized on the table below:

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTPUT
Desert locust Assessment East Africa, Kenya	January 22- 24	AUC Action plan for D L Management in East Africa and the Horn of Africa; Fund mobilization to support MS manage the locust invasion as well as other emerging pests
African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) Congress 2020, Zambia	March 2-6	Enhance quality seed trade and innovation environment in Africa
Pan-African Parliament Permanent Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economy, Environment and Natural Resources, Johannesburg, South Africa	March 3-6	Awareness raising on Plant Health Systems – FAW; Desert Locust Invasion in East & Horn of Africa; Fund mobilization to support MS manage the locust invasion as well as other emerging pests
CPM-15 Preparatory Meeting, Douala, Cameroon	March 3-5	Adopt a common Africa position for CPM-15 2020 (CPM-15 postponed to June/July 2020; further to 2021)
5th Session of the Continental SPS Committee Meeting, Kigali, Rwanda	March 9-11	Africa position on SPS and Trade standards
IAPSC incorporated as working group members tasked with addressing the impact of Covid-19 on Africa's Food and Nutritional Security	Ongoing virtually from April 2020	Working Group is building on the mandate of African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC) as advisory body to the AU and its Member States in responding to similar challenges)
Regional and NRO Workshop, Africa (Virtual), September 8-11, 2020	Planning phase	Recommendations of draft standards; phytosanitary capacity development





Change of name of Directorate

Ms Munyua informed participants that the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) was renamed the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) at the 11th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in November **2018**. The mandate of DARBE is to “initiate, develop and promote continental policies, frameworks and programs that will contribute to agricultural transformation, rural development, blue economy and sustainable environment in line with Agenda **2063**”.

2021 Budget proposal

DARBE’s 2021 budget proposals are categorized under five programs. The activities of the **2021** programme budget of IAPSC are found in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and related activities of 2021 programme budget of DARBE. The process of approval is on-going.

5. Adoption of reports

After a series of questions, comments and further délibérations, the reports were adopted.

Phytosanitary and plant health related activities in the region

1. ePhyto and eCommerce

This was presented by Josiah Syanda, ePhyto Steering Committee-Africa. He shared the three core components of ePhyto which is:

- **The Hub:** a system to facilitate the exchange of ePhytos between National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs).
- **The GeNS:** a centralized web-based system that enables countries (without their own national systems) to produce, send and receive ePhytos through the Hub.
- **Harmonization:** harmonized and standardized approach to format, structure, and code (where applicable) in the certificate exchange process.

Regarding the general adoption of the ePhyto in the world, implementation started in **2017** and as at June 2020; 89 (46%) countries in the world are registered with IPPC ePhyto solution, 46 (24%) countries in the world are in the testing phase and 43 (22%) of countries in the world are trading using ePhyto certificates (live production). In Africa, 78% of Member States have registered on ePhyto solutions and 22% not registered.





Four countries (Kenya, Morocco, South Africa and Uganda) have live production while seven other (Benin, Ghana, Nigeria Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Tunisia and Zambia) have undertaken ePhyto testing. On initiatives to fastrack ePhyto adoption in Africa, two workshops held respectively on 23rd -25th July **2019** in Accra Ghana on keys tools and steps for development, implementation and management of electronic phytosanitary certification systems for import and export of plants and plan products and on 18th -22nd November 2019 on ePhyto, in College Park, Maryland, Washington DC-USA.

From the presentation, the following recommendations were made:

- 1. IAPSC to promote ePhyto implementation in the region and to assist Member States to source for funding support towards implementation of ePhyto.**
- 2. Member States to start working on the implementation of ePhyto and to initiate sustainability plans towards the maintenance of the GeNS;**
- 3. Development partners to assist Member States with the implementation of the ePhyto.**

2. Impact of COVID-19 on plant health: IPPC global perspectives

This presentation was done by Arop Deng - Integration and Support Team Leader at the IPPC Secretariat. He gave an overview of the IPPC including its history, governance and structure; the mission and vision of IPPC, its strategic objectives and core activities. The year 2020 should have been a remarkable year for the IPPC as there had to be; the Launch and delivery of the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH), launch of 2 websites in 6 FAO languages, and the beginning of implementation of the IPPC SF 2020-2030.

However, because of the advent of the Covid19 pandemic, some key events were either cancelled or postponed, including; CPM15, the Standards Committee (SC), the Strategic Planning Group (SPG), Financial Committee (FC) Technical Consultation (TC) of RPPOs, and activities related to the IYPH. For mitigation strategies, the IPPC has adopted extension of some activities while other meetings are being held virtually. As Covid19 has a great impact on food security and safe trade, Mr Arop Deng shared the various future activities of the IPPC in the Covid19 era.





3. FAO response to plant protection challenges in Africa

This presentation was done by Professor Jean Baptiste Bahama - Crop Production and Protection Officer of the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAF). The presentation was centered on the major pest issues in RAF, priorities for action, activities focus, Covid-19 impacts and mitigation and the response to Desert Locust.

He said at the moment, the main pests impacting agricultural production in Africa include the Fall Armyworm, maize lethal necrosis disease; multiple fruit fly species affecting different fruit crops, new races of wheat rusts mainly yellow (Ug-99) and stem rusts; cassava mosaic virus/EACMV-Ug variant, Banana Xanthomonas wilt (BXW); Banana bunchy top, Banana Fusarium wilt (TR4), Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD), tomato leaf miners (*Tuta absoluta*), Locusts, Grain eating birds and Invasive alien plants.

On the activities focus for the FAO RAF, the major focus is on capacity development under the following thematic areas:

- Pest diagnostic (identification materials, trainings for lab staff, etc);
- Pest monitoring, surveillance, early warning and response (tools);
- Pest management including pesticide risk reduction.

Covid19 has greatly impacted pest management activities such as monitoring for the pest; field activities; capacity development initiatives; and distribution and application of pest management products. These activities have either been reduced or stopped. Some mitigation strategies have been adopted by FAO and these were share with the participants.

4. Update on Standards Committee (SC) Issues

This presentation was done by David Kamangira, member of the Standards Committee (SC). The May meeting of the SC was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic, but SC managed to approve three draft standards for the first consultation which where via Online Comment System (OCS) and approved them via e-decision.





2020 consultation for draft specifications, draft ISPMs and CPM recommendations:

The 2020 consultation period was opened on 1st July 2020 for 20 drafts as:

- 3 drafts specifications (for first consultation) and will close 31 August 2020;
- 4 draft ISPMs (for first consultation) will close 30 September 2020;
- 12 draft Phytosanitary Treatments (PT) will close 30 September 2020;
- 5 drafts (for first consultation);
- 7 drafts (for second consultation);
- 1 CPM Recommendation (for 2nd consultation).

All drafts were uploaded on IPPC for commenting via OCS for PPOs comments. All IPPC regional workshops will be done virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic

Key issues discussed during SC July informal virtual meeting

SC recently endorsed to have webinar on “authorisation of entities to perform phytosanitary measures” to resolve issues raised by other members as they indicated that they were not ready to adopt it as “Standard”. The bureau will participate to provide a forum to present concept of authorisation, present case studies and demonstrate successes and challenges identified in order to discuss concerns and way forward. SC recently in collaboration with Capacity Development Committee (CDC) endorsed the “Phytosanitary Treatments Search Tool” to TPPT have expertise to review and ensure

that the search tool include all necessary database to facilitate safe movement of plants and plants products in international trade.

As a way forward, the Standards Committee requested NPPOs to provide their comments for draft specifications, draft ISPMs and CPM recommendations.

Reports on Emerging Pests, Pest Management, Arising Plant Health Concerns

Five countries (Kenya, Egypt, Zambia, Burkina Faso and Cameroon) were invited to present the status of emerging pests, pest management and arising plant health concerns at country levels. Kenya was presented by Mr George Momanyi who shared on three main pests (Desert Locust, Fall Armyworm and Maize Lethal Necrosis) and how Kenya was managing these. He mentioned that due to Covid19, pest management activities have been negatively impacted leading to a surge of non-compliances, especially in export markets. Furthermore, very high shipment costs-3-4 times high and reduced orders for some markets such as cut-flowers have also been noticed. Egypt presented through Dr. Ahmed Abd Elmageed Director of Plant Protection Research Institute/ Agricultural Research Center who shared on national legislation to prevent the entry of transboundary plant pests and diseases.





He pointed out that FAO is collaborating and supporting Egypt in the management of Fall Armyworm in the country in terms of technical and material support. Dr Kenn Msika of Zambia, presented on how, despite the covid19 pandemic, surveillance activities have continued in the country, with some funding boost to continue surveillance activities. Additionally, Zambia is exploring new countries (China and South Africa) for market access and the legal framework (plant pest and disease act) is being reviewed. For Cameroon, Dr Nying Charles Shey shared measures being taken by the Cameroonian government to limit the impacts of Covid-19 while Bukina Faso's presentation was based on the status of FAW and the Tomato Leaf Miner in the country and development of a guide for specific disease prevention measures for agricultural workers and producers.

Progress in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by Dr. Simplicie Nouala

Regarding AfCFTA, the mandate of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the African Union is to support annex 7 of the AfCFTA which is on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS) Trading under the AfCFTA Agreement was due to commence on 1 July 2020, but as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, this date was being postponed to January 2021.

The role of DREA is to build capacities of member states to facilitate annex 7 of the agreement. The SPS policy framework was already developed and endorsed. The next step will be to start the implementation of the framework. The continental SPS Committee met in earlier in the year and agreed on the development of key strategies including the Plant Health and Food Safety strategies. The next step will be the development of the plant health strategy to support the SPS policy framework for Africa.

Update on the establishment of the emergency fund

On the establishment of the emergency fund, Dr Nouala said this was a request by the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture and is a high level policy request which is not dependent on IAPSC or DREA. The establishment of special funds has a long procedure before operationalization is achieved. An example is that of the Peace Fund which took up to 10 years.

The concept note for the establishment of this fund has been prepared with support from FAO. Next step is the establishment of Working Groups to work on the framework of the emergency fund. The WG will not only be limited to plant and animal production experts, but will also include financial institutions, the civil society, farmer organizations, etc.





The framework will be ready for submission to ministers (finance) for endorsement. The fund will be used strictly for emergencies such as the locust invasion, and the concrete establishment cannot be realised before 2022.

Update on desert locust and fall armyworm (Thomas Dubois Head Plant Health, ICIPE)

Dr. Dubois of ICIPE provided general information about ICIPE which is an African Centre of Excellence for research and capacity building for insect science and its application. It is an intergovernmental organization charter signed by 13 countries worldwide and trains 150-180 graduate students annually. He shared updates on Fall ArmyWorm and Desert Locust and relevant research being conducted in those areas.

Strategy for Managing Invasive Species in Africa 2021–2030 CABI

Presenting for CABI, Ivan Rwomushana, shared how, despite invasive pests continue to ravage all parts of Africa, there is no continental strategy to control these. The decision of an invasive species strategy came up as a strong recommendation after an Invasive species workshop in Nairobi in 2018 that brought together 122 participants from 26 countries in Africa.

A consultative meeting was convened by AU-IAPSC in Douala in December 2019 to validate the draft that was developed. The overall objective of the strategy is to effectively guide and coordinate actions at the continental, regional and national levels towards prevention and eradication of invasive species in Africa.

The strategy has six Strategic Result Areas and Actions Framework (SRAAF) while its implementation plan include five key areas from political support, to coordination mechanisms, establishment of national programmes, government's support through line ministries and international agencies support. Next steps include the popularisation of the strategy across the African continent and feedback from member states, formalization of the strategy through adoption of the strategy as an AU policy document at the next STC in 2021 and funds mobilization and implementation of the strategy across the continent.

Key strategic target pests and diseases interventions (Komi Fiaboe, IITA)

Dr. Komi shared the plant production strategic objectives of IITA, and pests and disease interventions under strategic objective 2, which is environmentally friendly pest management options.





A number of success stories have been recorded under this strategic objective. IITA has also developed a Farmer Interface Application (FIA) which operates even without internet connection.

Updates from SADC by Mr. E. Tjelele

Southern African Development Community (SADC) presentation by Dr. Etjelele shared how SADC has been participating in AU meetings such as the regional workshops, has addressed six pests that affect the region and drafted a regional strategy for plant health in line with that of AU-IAPSC.

SADC also developed guidelines for pesticides management and risk reduction, although some gaps still exist in meeting international standards. It was also mentioned that SADC is working with partners to support these 5 member states at the risk of desert locust. Regarding the International Year of Plant Health, there were several arrangements with SADC member states to help them create awareness.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were arrived at by the close of the 13th Steering Committee of IAPSC:

1. CAB International to share the strategy on Invasive Alien Species being developed to avail IAPSC to make inputs before its finalization by the African Union.

2. Member States to draw and implement national strategies taking into account the on-going Strategy on Invasive Alien Species in Africa and IAPSC ten years strategic plan 2014-2023.

3. IAPSC and Member States to co-operate, as appropriate, with stakeholders in the prevention of introduction of invasive alien species, the mitigation of their impacts on native flora and fauna and natural habitats, and their eradication or containment where feasible and practical, inter alia by exchanging information, and paying particular attention to invasive alien species in trade and transboundary areas.

Concerning ePhyto and ecommerce, the Committee recommends:

4. IAPSC to promote ePhyto implementation in the region and to assist Member States to source for funding support towards implementation of ePhyto;

5. Member States to start working on the implementation of ePhyto and to initiate sustainability plans towards the maintenance of the GeNS;

6. Development partners to assist Member States with the implementation of the ePhyto, in cases where a national system is in existence, they should support the integration of ePhyto into the system.





Regarding pests and diseases interactions, desert locust and FAW, the Committee recommends:

7. AU-IAPSC to enhance awareness creation on impact of pests and diseases on plant production food security livelihoods, and export trade, as well as value preventive measures and advocate for conducive policies and increased resource allocation to facilitate implementation;

8. AU-IAPSC to promote strategy for regional coordination of measures to control emerging plant pest and disease threats to plant resources and food crops in Africa.

On plant protection challenges, the Committee recommends:

9. AU-IAPSC, FAO and Member States to develop a proposal on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme that will strengthen the Member States institutional framework for plant protection, and promote innovative ecologically- based IPM approaches to tackle key and new emerging pests.

Recommendations from Country presentations

From country presentations, it is clear that emerging pests are still a great challenge in Africa; thus the 13th Steering Committee recommends:

10. AU-IAPSC and partners to increase efforts towards supporting Member States in the management of emerging pests.

11. Urge Member States to share Information on emerging pests and other good practices to ensure good benefits.

12. AU-IAPSC should work with donors to raise funds to enhance implementation of phytosanitary programme in the region;

13. The 13th Steering Committee welcomes the call from Zambia and urges Member States to support the adoption of May 12, as the International Day for Plant Health.

Adoption of the recommendations

The Steering Committee members adopted the recommendations. The Committee Members agreed that the report shall be finalized by AU-IAPSC and shared with the statutory members of the Steering Committee.

Date and venue of the next Steering Committee

This was not addressed given that the AU-IAPSC 2021 programme budget is still under review, however a strong recommendation is that it be conducted virtually.

Closing remarks.

On behalf of H.E. Commissioner for REA, the Director of AU-IAPSC thanked all participants members of the Steering Committee for their valuable contributions.





IPPC REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR AFRICA INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANT HEALTH (IYPH) LEGACY 8-11 SEPTEMBER 2020



Dr Mezui M'ella delivering opening remarks for the workshop in the AU-IAPSC control room

1.0 Introduction

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in collaboration with the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council of African Union (AU-IAPSC) and the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) of Kenya organized the Virtual 2020 International Plant Protection Convention Regional Workshop for Africa from the 8th to 11th September, 2020. It was attended by over 70 participants representing 47 Member States in Africa, IPPC, FAO-RAF and AU-IAPSC.

1.1 Workshop procedure

AU-IAPSC, following consultations with IPPC Secretariat, organizing committee, experts, and member states proposed that the 2020 workshop be structured virtually, hence member participation was via Zoom. The workshop was conducted in a total of six sessions (two sessions daily). First session: 11:00 to 13:00 (CAT) and second session 14:00 to 16:00 (CAT). The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. David Kamangira, Standard Committee Representative and Ms. Faith Ndunge, Implementation and Capacity Development Committee Representative.





Workshop objective

Objectives of the workshop were to:

- Review and discuss draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and recommendations;
- Share experiences on plant health issues and related challenges, and
- Draw recommendations for future engagement.

Workshop Summary

Day 1: The first day of the 3-day workshop consisted of an official opening where participants provided updates on governance and strategic issues. There were also discussions and shared views on draft ISPMs and Commission for Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) recommendations.

Day 2 & 3: Participants discussed regional and national phytosanitary issues, which bordered on topics of interest to the region, including updates on key plant pests and diseases threatening livelihood in Africa. Other relevant topics included, the IPPC guide on pest free areas, the IPPC e-Phyto solution and IYPH.

Opening statement Director AU-IAPSC

In the opening remarks, Director of the AU-IAPSC Dr Jean Gérard Mezui M’Ella, stressed the importance of cooperation between IAPSC and FAO regional and sub-regional offices in addressing plant health issues in Africa before declaring open the workshop on behalf of the Commissioner.

Welcome Remarks – IPPC Secretariat

In his remarks, Mr Arop Deng, IPPC Integration and Support Team Lead and chair of the Organizing Committee of the 2020 Regional Workshop-Africa welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of creating awareness on plant health issues during the current International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). He urged the region to support Zambia in proclamation of the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH).

Welcome Remarks – ADG/RR-RAF

In his remarks, Mr Abebe Haile Gabriel, FAO Assistant Director-General, Regional Representative for Africa expounded on the negative impacts of plant health issues concerning the achievement of FAO strategic objectives and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular those aimed at eliminating hunger and malnutrition. He extended his warm greetings and congratulated IAPSC and IPPC Secretariat together with the FAO for organizing the meeting.

Election of the Chairperson

Mr. David Kamangira, NPPO Malawi and Ndunge F, KEPHIS were appointed to be respectively chair and deputy chair of the workshop while AU-IAPSC as rapporteur.

3.3 Review of the Agenda

After a thorough review of the draft agenda, it was adopted with minor modifications. The number of participants in attendance varied from day to day. There were 80, 78, 73 and 77 in days 1,2, 3 and 4 respectively.





Governance and strategy (CPM, CPM Bureau)

In his presentation; Mr Lucien Kouame; CPM bureau member, gave a presentation on IPPC Governance, COVID-19, CPM Bureau, SC & IC, CPM Bureau Decisions. He explained the IPPC governance chart which is made of the CPM bureau, the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), the Strategic planning Group (SPG), the IPPC Financial Committee (FC), the Standards Committee (SC) and the implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC). Mr Kouame also presented a number of the CPM Bureau decisions arrived at during virtual meetings. In addition, concerning the IYPH, the bureau agreed to push major events into 1st semester of 2021 (CPM-15 ministerial segment, International Plant Health Conference (IPHC), Helsinki & closing ceremony), selected May 12 to celebrate the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) and supported Zambia to be a champion in the process of proclamation of the day.

Update from Standards Committee

Mr David Kamangira, SC member from NPPO Malawi made presentations on Standard Setting activities in 2019, the ongoing 2020 SC activities, the consultations on standards, the consultation specifications and planned work. Regarding the 2019 standards setting activities, he affirmed that there was a delay in the adoption of 3 ISPMs recommended for adoption by CPM 15 (2020), since the meeting of the CPM was cancelled due to Covid19.

The 3 concerned ISPMs were:

1. Draft 2018 amendments to ISPM 5; Glossary of phytosanitary terms (1994-001);
2. Draft Revision of ISPM 8: Determination of pest status in an area (2009-005);
3. Draft ISPM: Requirements for the use of modified atmosphere treatments as phytosanitary measures (2014-006).

However, for consultation on standards, the SC worked through the Online Comment System (OCS) to review and approve 3 draft standards for first consultation.

Contracting parties have been invited to provide their comments on the following draft ISPMs by the 30 September:

1. 2020 Amendments to ISPM 5(Glossary on phytosanitary terms)
2. Focused revision of ISPM 12 in relation to re-export”
3. Audits in the phytosanitary context
4. Draft ISPM: Commodity-based standards for phytosanitary measures

Mr David Kamangira also presented the workplan and other priority issues of the SC which included the reorganization of PRA related standards with suggestions to have an overarching standard and annexes for each stage of the PRA process. He emphasized on the proposed standard setting meetings coming up which include Expert Working Group and Technical Panel Meetings.





Update from International Committee (IC)

Ms Faith Ndunge, in her presentation provided updates on the IC members for the next term, the IC meetings, the IC sub-groups and teams, the ICD topic, the Phytosanitary System component pages and ICD web pages. She affirmed that in 2020 the implementation and Capacity Development Committee has so far organised 7 virtual meetings on the update on developing e-learning materials, Implementation Plan for guides and training materials, list of topics on capacity development and update beyond compliance project. She emphasized on the 4 IC subgroups and teams.

Update on Sea Containers Task Force

Natalie Nicora shared a video on sea container Task force (SCTF) which revealed the risks associated with movement of sea containers and their cargoes and another presentation on the update on Sea Containers Task Force. Ms Faith Ndunge emphasized on the purpose, composition, tasks and SCTF actions. She affirmed that The CPM Bureau has extended the mandate of the SCTF until the end of 2021 with outcomes to be presented to CPM in 2022 and insisted on the composition of the SCTF and its tasks. These tasks consist of Measuring the impact of the IMO (International Maritime Organization)/ILO (International Labour Organization) /UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe)'s Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units and Increasing awareness of pest risks of sea containers.

The meeting also received updates from Mr David Kamangira on the following :

1. **Audit in phytosanitary context**
2. **Revision of ISPM 12 (phytosanitary certificates) in relation to re-export (2015-011).**
3. **Draft 2019 and 2020 amendments to ISPM 5: glossary of phytosanitary terms (1994-001).**
4. **Commodity-based standards for phytosanitary measures (2019-008) (priority 1) IPPC.**
5. **Draft CPM Recommendation: safe provision of food and other aid to prevent the introduction of plant pests during an emergency situation (2008- 026).**

Regional capacity FAO development phytosanitary activities

This presentation was done by Professor Jean Baptiste Bahama, the Crop Production and Protection Officer of the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAF). The presentation was centered on the major pest issues in RAF, focus areas for FAO interventions, specific activities and Covid-19 impacts and mitigation. The focus areas for FAO interventions include the subregional Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on management of fruit fly in Southern Africa (FSF); the sub regional TOT workshops on fall armyworm, *Tuta absoluta*, maize lethal necrosis disease.





On the activities focus for the FAO RAF, the major focus on SFW was on: FFS, training of NPPOs and extension officers on border surveillance and the development of a holistic plant pest control programme in West Africa (\$50,000,000) by the African development Bank (AfDB). He noted that Covid19 has greatly impacted pest management activities such as monitoring for the pest, field activities, capacity development initiatives as well as distribution and application of pest management products.

RPPOs Activities

This presentation was done by Ms Luiza Munyua, the Senior Scientific Officer - Phytopathology at AU-IAPSC. The presentation centered on AU-IAPSC's mandate including its mission, priority actions and strategic plan 2014-2023, impact of COVID -19 on plant health and mitigation, and current core activities of IAPSC. The activities of the 2021 programme budget of IAPSC are found in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and related activities of 2021 program budget of Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE).

Topics of interest for the region

The following topics were tackled and addressed during the meeting:

- Desert locust Upsurge and FAO Response by Ms Francesca SANGIORG
- Fall Army Worm (FAW) Threat: Overview of the Global Action and its implementation plan by Elisabetta Tagliati, CTA of FAW Global Action, and FAO.
- Update on Banana Fusarium Wilt Disease TR4 by Mr Fazil Dusunceli from the Plant Production and Protection Division, Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome, Italy.
- Maize lethal necrosis in East Africa by Francis Mwatuni.
- Update on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by Dr. Oswald Chinyamakobvu.

An update on the AfCFTA Agreement

Presenting this update, Dr. Oswald Chinyamakobvu focused on AfCFTA agreement and structure, key milestones dates, signing and ratification of the agreement, outstanding issues in phase 1 negotiations among others. The summary of signing and ratification of the Agreement was provided as follows:

- 54 out of 55 countries have signed the AfCFTA Agreement
- 28 out of 54 countries have ratified the agreement (for operationalization 22 ratifications were required); and
- Trading under the AfCFTA to start on 1 January 2021.

Presentations were also made on the outstanding issues in Phase 1 and Phase 2 Negotiations, Annexes to the Protocol on Trade in Goods, Implementation and Important Complementary Instrument were also discussed.





He concluded his presentation with an SPS Status Summary on plant health where African Member states are categorized in four groups:

- Well developed
- Reasonable developed
- Limited to partial developed
- Not or very limited developed

International Year of Plant Health Legacy

In his presentation, Dr. Msiska Kenn, NPPO Zambia, highlighted on IYPH background, objectives, key global initiatives, IYPH communications and the discussion on global IYPH legacy. He explained that the objectives of the IYPH include:

- Raising awareness of the public and political decision makers of the importance of plant health to achieve UN 2030 Agenda;
- Ensure that people are aware of the risks that each person's behaviour poses to plant health;
- Increase resources dedicated to plant health and
- Promote good practices, knowledge, research and partnerships.

Dr. Msiska also stated that a proposal for the International Day of Plant Health has been put in the agenda to propose to the United Nations General Assembly on the 12th of May as the International Day of Plant Health. He noted that Zambia is championing this issue and there is need to CPs to support this initiative.

Presentations

Other presentations done were in the following areas:

IPPC guide on Establishing and Maintaining Pest Free Areas: Implementation of the Convention and ISPMs by Mr Jan Hendrik Venter.

IPPC call for topics: standards and implementation by Mr David Kamangira, SC member, NPPO Malawi.

ePhyto Solution Status Update by Mr. Josiah Syanda, ePhyto Steering Committee-Africa.

Conclusion and Date of Next Meeting

Participants agreed that the next IPPC regional workshop for Africa will take place on September 6-10, 2021.

The full report can be accessed on www.ippc.org



AU-IAPSC WELCOMES TWO MEMBERS OF THE AU FAMILY TO YAOUNDÉ 1 OCTOBER 2020



Dr Decius Chipande (left), Dr Mezui M'ella and Prof Elizabeth Abenga at the welcome dinner

AU-IAPSC welcomed to Yaoundé, two senior colleagues who joined the AU family under Pan-African University (PAU) and Sports Council (AUSC) respectively.

Professor Elizabeth Sarange Bosire Abenga joined as Director of the PAU-Institute of Governance Human Resource and Social Sciences (PAUGHSS) whilst Dr Hikabwa Decius Chipande joined the African Union Sports Council as the Coordinator.

African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC), in its capacity as the AU representative office in Cameroon,

hosted a dinner in honour of the two, to officially welcome them to the AU family in the country.

Over sumptuous traditional Cameroonian cuisine and hearty laughs, the event brought together staff from all the three AU institutions in Yaoundé, AU-IAPSC, PAU and AUSC. Prof Abenga said she looks forward to contributing her skills and knowledge in advancing academic research and innovation across the continent through PAU, in response to the massive challenges facing Africa.





On his part, Dr Chipande expressed joy and immense gratitude at the prospect of closely collaborating with colleagues in other respective AU offices in Cameroon, to strengthen the various sports disciplines and the mandate of the AU Sports Council in the region. They both expressed hope that their respective roles and responsibilities, enormous as they may be, would be supported by the AU staff, in quest for a more integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. In his remarks, AU-IAPSC Director Dr Jean Gérard Mezui M'ella said the coming of the two Directors was a clear indication that AU is continuously seeking excellence in execution of its mandate, as the new Directors are experts in their respective fields, with vast experience that would contribute positively to the mandate of the institution across the African continent. Prof. Abenga has 32 years of experience in higher education and holds a PhD in Educational Communication and Technology

and a Master's Degree in Educational Planning & Administration and Curriculum Development from Moi University in Kenya. Prior to joining AU, she was Acting Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in Kenya.

On the other hand, Dr Chipande- a Zambian national, is a seasoned Sport Administrator. Prior to joining the African Union Sports Council, he lectured in Sports Studies at the University of Zambia, after working for the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa Zone VI at the headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana, and also in Sports-For-Development projects in South Africa, Zambia and Norway. His specialties include Sports History, Sports Politics, Sport-for-development and Physical Education. He holds a PhD from Michigan State University in USA, Masters and Bachelor's degrees in Sport Science from the Norwegian School of Sport Science.



Dr Chipande and Dr Abenga alongside AU staff were treated to a sumptuous traditional Cameroonian cuisine for their welcome.



IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) STRATEGIES AND MIGRATORY/TRANSBOUNDARY PESTS MANAGEMENT VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS 12-16 OCTOBER 2020



Some of AU-IAPSC staff keenly following the opening remarks by Cameroon's Minister of Agriculture.

1. Introduction

The Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC) organized a virtual workshop with the Member States of the African Union from the 12th to 16th of October 2020.

1.1. Opening remarks, Director AU-IAPSC

AU-IAPSC Director Jean Gerard Mezui M'Ella stated that despite challenges of travel due to COVID-19, AU-IAPSC appreciated the presence of all Member States. He shared recent challenges that have impacted agriculture and trade in Africa while justifying the holding of these two workshops.

1.2. Opening remarks, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture

The Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union, Her Excellency Mrs. Josefa Sacko in her remarks, expressed contentment with the fact that great strides are being done towards achieving agenda 2063 of the African Union. She said the African continent harbours some of the most devastating migrant pests and is increasingly becoming a victim of invasive alien species





She said management of these species requires special skills related to proper communication policies, incidence reporting, data management, risk analysis, early warning techniques, appropriate intervention options, preparedness and eventually disaster management. She said timing of these workshops to strengthen member states' capacities as in the management of migratory and transboundary pests is therefore perfect. She pledged the continuous support of the commission towards enhanced trade in the continent and mitigating any impediments to achieve expected results.

1.3 Opening remarks, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon

On his part, Cameroon's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Mr. Gabriel Mbairobe welcomed the idea of holding the workshops even in the midst of Covid-19 saying agriculture in the region has experienced several threats from transboundary pests and diseases such as locusts, armyworm, fruit flies, banana diseases, cassava diseases and wheat rusts which are among the most destructive pests and diseases of transboundary plants. He hoped the workshop brings tangible results in reducing the negative effects of these pests and diseases, which pose a major threat to food security and poverty reduction in Africa. He declared open the workshops.



*Commissioner for DARBE,
Her Excellency Josepha Sacko*

1.4 Meeting arrangements justification and expected outcomes

This session was led by Luiza Munyua, Senior Scientific Officer at AU-IAPSC. It was agreed by participants that the role of moderator and rapporteur be taken by IAPSC for easy coordination as it is a virtual workshop. The agenda was presented and adopted by participants. Ms Chipiliro Kansilanga, Information & Communications Officer, reminded participants of all technical logistics of the Zoom participation and availability of both English and French interpretation.

Ms Maryben Chiatoh, Assistant Scientific Officer shared on the justification of the workshop, drawing from the various risks, effects, systems and IPM approaches. She also shared the expected outcomes and how participants can contribute to the same. At the end of the workshop, IAPSC in collaboration with member states will prepare and adopt recommendations stemming from the workshops and finally circulate workshops report to all participants.





Implementing Integrated Pest Management Strategies – Continental, Regional and National Approaches

1.1. Capacity building and Implementation of IPM strategies (Saliou Niassy, ICIPE)

This presentation was given by Saliou Niassy of ICIPE and was followed by questions and comments from the participants. Discussions centred on the need to standardize pest control practices through research among many solutions. Additional clarifications were sought on Push Pull technology as advanced by ICIPE. Dr. Niassy said an evaluation of this technology has just been concluded with some institutions in Ghana and has yielded very encouraging results.

1.2. IPM Strategies and Management of Migratory /Trans-boundary Pests: case studies (FAO/ RAF - Jean Bahama)

Prof Jean Bahama stated why a new approach to pest management is needed (pesticide resistance, secondary pest outbreaks, and environmental concerns). He defined Integrated Pest Management and stressed the need to utilize all suitable pest management tactics including cultural, mechanical, sanitary, biological control and host plant resistance while pesticides as last resort. He shared pathways of Migratory transboundary plant pests such as environmental forces (DL, fall armyworms and rusts), International trade, tourism and people's migrations.

FAO control strategies on IPM and migratory pests include

- *Coordination, Prevention, Monitoring, early warning and response, Capacity development.*

Some examples of successful IPM programs:

- In Philippines, IPM farmers obtained 4.7 to 62% higher rice yield and reduced pesticide use by 15% compared to non-IPM.
- In India in, IPM farmers obtained 6.2 to 42.1% increased rice yield, and reduced pesticide use by 50% compared to non-IPM farmers.
- In Argentina, IPM in cruciferous against the diamondback moth, *Plutella xylostella*: plowing to eliminate crop residues, and rotation with non-host crops, careful inspection of nursery plants for diamondback moth eggs and larvae to prevent accidental introduction of diamondback moth into the field, use of native parasitoid species and the introduction of effective exotic species.
- In Thailand in 1993 adoption of IPM technology resulted in 145% increase in net profit in IPM fields over non-IPM fields in cruciferous vegetables.
- IPM of fruit flies, *Ceratitis capitata* in Mexico.
- Eradication of the oriental FF in Mauritius.

IPM strategies were also given on pests such as the Desert Locust, the Fall Armyworm and the Tomato Leafminer. In conclusion, IPM strategies can be successful for the management of migratory and transboundary pests.





COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

Country presentations were made by Tunisia, Egypt, Lesotho, Senegal, Chad, Kenya, Chad and Sierra Leone on IPM strategies for pest control. Presentations generally centered on the following topics:

- The main migratory / transboundary pests in the countries
- Problems posed by migratory / transboundary pests
- Surveillance and monitoring;
- Challenges in managing transboundary pests.
- Management practices / response plan
- Interventions or programs
- Management of pests (chemical control, biological control, cultural approach, push pull technology etc);

Participants deliberated on these topics and questions and comments made on the same. Other presentations were made as follows:

- Implementation of IPM to manage trans-boundary pests by Esaiah Tjelele SADC.
- Technological advances in the management of migratory and trans-boundary pests by Ivan Rwomushana, CABI.
- IPM for transboundary pests in Africa by Dr. Subramanian Sevgan, ICIPE
- IPM innovations and technologies for surveillance and control of transboundary pests by Dr Lava Kumar, IITA.

Questions / discussions

- Participants wanted to know how the IITA technology could be transferred to member states. Dr Kumar said this technology is available and interested countries can contact IITA;
- The proposals of standards to the IPPC should be risk-based. Africa has a lot of resource challenges (human and infrastructure), few border staff etc, hence priority should be given to commodities that are high in risk;
- Senegal succeeded in the use of drones for the application of pesticides this year. Drones help reduce waste and over-application of pesticides, thus protect the environment;
- African countries should not relent efforts in transposing and updating existing regulations to be aligned with phytosanitary standards;
- Chad complained that it has problems with the implementation of standards due to lack of standards committee. Internet connection is a challenge as well in accessing the online commenting system (OCS);
- At the level of ECOWAS, a pest list is released in a timely manner that reflects the pest lists of member countries; however, there is still a strong need for capacity building when it comes to diagnostics;
- Africans must also be very strict and request for pest list when products are imported into the countries;





WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the workshop, the following recommendations to member states, stakeholders and IAPSC were adopted by participants;

a) Member States:

1. Member State should better recognize the contribution of IPM to sustainable agriculture and consider integrated and sustainable crop production and the pertinent drivers for sustainable agriculture in all systems. Therefore, they should put the infrastructure in place to facilitate the adoption and implementation of IPM.

2. Member States should develop indicators and ways to measure implementation and impacts of IPM.

3. Each member state should set up a standards committee which can identify phytosanitary challenges at country levels and propose topics for submission into new standards.

4. Member States should carry-out IPM-communication activities.

b) Stakeholders (CABI, ICIPE, FAO, IITA)

5. Stakeholders should carry-out research on and contribute actively to the adoption of the entire IPM system in the continent and communicate on the benefits of IPM and sustainable agriculture.

6. Stakeholders should undertake environmental performance evaluation of pesticides usage and other IPM tools to develop or support demonstration plots/farms and investigate better options for research funding on IPM and share experiences.

7. Research institutions such as IITA and ICIPE should create platforms for the transfer of technologies on surveillance, monitoring and diagnostics to Member States for better management of migratory and trans-boundary pests.

c) AU-IAPSC

8. IAPSC should encourage / support African countries and Regional Economic Communities to strengthen their capacity on IPM and migratory and trans-boundary pests management and to implement the recommendations made by the workshop participants to Member States and stakeholders (see above).

Closing remarks

Dr. Jean Gerard Mezui M'Ella, Director AU-IAPSC appreciated the presence of member states who have been committed in attending workshops despite the COVID-19 pandemic. He pledged the support of AU-IAPSC and its commitment to support African Member States towards improving safe agricultural trade especially with the upcoming African Free Continental Trade Agreement (AfCTA).





REPORT ON THE CONTINENTAL SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) COMMITTEE MEETINGS 19-21, 28-30 OCTOBER 2020

The Continental Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee held two virtual meetings; October 19 – 21, and 28-30, 2020. The African Union Commission (AUC) organized the consultative meeting to coordinate implementation of Africa’s SPS programs. The meeting was hosted by the African Union Commission’s Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (AUC-DREA) with support from the United States Department of Agriculture, (USDA) U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Norman E. Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and Development, Texas A&M University. The main aim of the meeting was to chart a way forward following the endorsement of the African Union’s Continental SPS Policy Framework by the Third Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) in October 2019.

The meeting therefore, considered the implementation of SPS Policy Framework; the communication plan for sharing the SPS Policy Framework with stakeholders; and the development of the framework for monitoring and evaluation of progress of implementation of the Policy Framework.

The outcome of the meeting included; enhanced understanding and ownership of the SPS Policy Framework by participants; an outline of the plan for implementation and monitoring of the SPS Policy Framework; and the communication strategies for reaching key stakeholders.

SPS FIRST MEETING 19-21, OCTOBER 2020

The first meeting took place from the 19th to the 21st of October 2020, with the following objectives:

1. Implementation of SPS Policy Framework

- a. Discussion of strategies to move priority activities into action and scale up existing efforts.
- b. Communication plan for sharing Framework with stakeholder groups.

2. Monitoring and evaluation of progress of SPS Policy Framework

- a. Link to existing indicators and reporting mechanisms.
- b. Frequency of evaluation and responsible parties.

The three day meeting started with a welcome address from the Director of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (AUC DREA) of the African Union Commission Godfrey Bahigwa and Rachel Bickford of USDA –FAS.





Jack Elliot of Texas A&M Borlaug Institute acted as moderator for the entire meeting period and also spelt out norms and ground rules of the meeting. Discussions of day 1 included a brief from Dr. Simplice Nouala of the AUC DREA on actions taken on the implementation of the SPS policy framework since March 2020 and Oswald Chinyamakobvu of AUC DTI elaborated on how the Annex 7 of the AfCFTA is being implemented. Thereafter, there was an overview of the SPS Policy Framework for Africa followed by presentation of African Union's work in supporting the SPS Policy Framework Implementation from the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council and AUC DREA. For day two, Jack Elliot of Texas A&M Borlaug Institute presented results from pre-meeting consultations and survey.

This was followed by short presentations of selected SPS capacity building in action (ECOWAS, COLEACP, ICPALD/IGAD and AU-NEPAD). Amare Ayalew of AUC DREA made a presentation on Experience in the Africa Food Safety Index and PACA M&E: Relevance to M&E of progress on SPS Policy Framework, and then there was a breakout session to identify M&E indicators and action steps in implementing the SPS Policy Framework.

Day three involved reports by various groups from the breakout sessions of the second day. These were on:

- Policy Harmonization
- Collaboration and Trade
- Technical Capacity Building
- Political Support and Investment

Jack Elliot gave a presentation on the strategy for communicating the SPS policy framework after which there was a summary for all the meeting days by Diana Akullo. The communique of the workshop was read by Diana and closing remarks given by the Director of DREA.

SPS SECOND MEETING 28-30 OCTOBER 2020

From the objectives, the second meeting was mainly based on the Food Safety Strategy and the Plant Health Strategy of the African Union. The following presentations were made on Food safety laboratory initiatives:

- The Pan African Food Safety Reference Laboratory by Diana Akullo – AUC-DREA.
- The Food Safety Laboratory Centre of Excellence by John Oppong-Otoo – AU IBAR.
- Building Capacity in Food Safety Laboratory by Amare Ayelew.

There was a second presentation on The African Union Food Safety Agency (AFSA): background, rationale, functions and scope of activities by Dr. Nouala.





The last activity for the day included group discussions on the Pan African Food Safety Reference Laboratory: Value proposition, Mandate, roles functions, scope of activities. Day two started off with a presentation on the African Union Food Safety Strategy (Background, Rationale, Process and proposed roadmap), after which there were breakout sessions where groups were allowed to discuss the guiding principles for a food safety strategy. Discussions centered around four main questions:

1. What are the key issues that the food safety strategy should address?
2. Define the scope of an effective food safety strategy
3. What are the guiding principles for food safety strategy? Who (Stakeholders) needs to be involved? How should we involve them?
4. What should an effective food safety strategy accomplish in 5 years? What measureable impacts, outcomes or outputs are the highest priority?

At the end of the day, each group made a presentation on their discussions and comments / questions were discussed as well. For day three, there was a presentation on the Status of Plant Health in Africa by AU-IAPSC followed by the work on the framework for invasive species – CABI. Breakout sessions discussed the same questions on Plant Health Strategy as was done for the Food safety strategy.

Same routine was followed as the previous day. The meeting was concluded with next steps and closing remarks.

Implications

For the African Union Commission

- African Union should use this SPS Policy Framework to reconcile all continental efforts to avoid overlapping initiatives.
- A more concrete strategy is needed specifically for working with MS to implement elements of the Framework, given their large role and for some, limited capacity.
- Allocating resources is always a challenge and constrains implementation. Prioritizing the long-term value of addressing the SPS Policy Framework Objectives with MS and donors should be the top AU message.
- Developing a coordinated plan to track the SPS Policy Framework implementation progress will enhance monitoring and communication.

For AU-IAPSC

- AU-IAPSC must be fully engaged in the drafting of a continental plant health strategy that is aligned with the Africa Free Continental Trade Agreement (AFCTA).

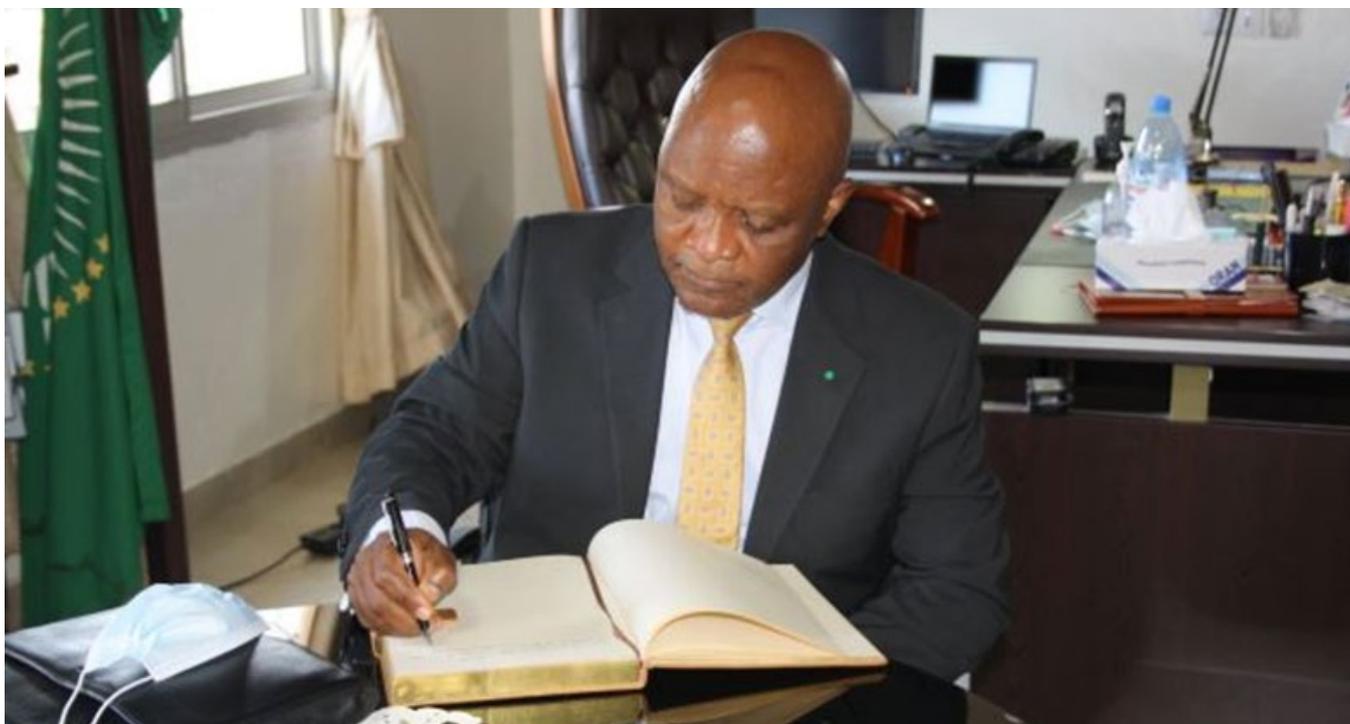
NPPOs

- Though they did not participate in these meetings, NPPOs should be willing to share information regarding SPS for the development of efficient strategies (food safety and plant health) that will be able to boost intercontinental trade and support the AFCTA.





AFRICA CDC DIRECTOR APPRECIATES ACTIONS BY AU IAPSC TO FIGHT COVID-19 3 NOVEMBER 2020



Africa CDC Director Dr John Nkengasong signing a visitor's book after addressing AU-IAPSC staff.

AU-IAPSC was delighted to host Africa CDC Director Dr. John N. Nkengasong and his team to our offices in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Dr Nkengasong, having earlier engaged with government officials, health care workers & volunteers, expressed satisfaction and gratitude with measures being taken to fight Covid-19. Dr Nkengasong pointed out that health care workers and volunteer medical professionals have been diligent in their commitment to fight the pandemic and that they still need more support. He called for vigilance from everyone to avoid a second wave of the pandemic. He said communities need to maintain the public health safety measures, revealing that Africa CDC would soon mobilize 500 additional local responders in recognition

and support of the role communities have been playing.

“We are better prepared today than we were months ago, we can't afford to drain down all the efforts from the lessons learnt,”.

He said despite the pandemic taking the continent by surprise with uncertainty and no prescribed solutions, joint efforts from Member States, stakeholders and communities had been encouraging, partly helping to reduce the impact of the pandemic. He commended AU-IAPSC for taking its own part to enforce measures against the vice. Earlier in the week, Dr Nkengasong toured testing sites to appreciate the work being done by health care workers, community members and volunteers.





**CAPACITY BUILDING VIRTUAL WORKSHOP ON
INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT SPECIES ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT,
PEST BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AND BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AGENTS.
23-27 NOVEMBER 2020**



Some of AU-IAPSC staff following proceedings of the workshop.

1. Opening Session

The 5-day workshops of Strengthening Member States Capacities on Invasive Alien Plants Risks Assessment and Management, Pest Biological Control and Biological Control Agents were virtually held on 23-27 November 2020, organized by the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council of the African Union (AU-IAPSC), within the framework of the implementation of its 2020 programme budget.

Welcome remarks by Director of AU-IAPSC

The AU-IAPSC Director Dr Jean Gerard Mezui M'ella emphasized on the importance of studying weeds and invasive alien plant species.

He solicited participants to contribute to help raise current levels of IAPS, pest biological control and BCAs awareness, share strategies for a prevention and management of IAPS in their countries, and identify practical opportunities for cooperation and better use of existing bodies, resources, and institutions within the region. He hoped that at the end of the 5th day, workshops will emphasise the need to develop regional information tools and clearing-house mechanisms, as well as improve co-ordination and information exchange and strengthen linkages between scientific organisations, NPPOs, AU-IAPSC and natural resource management agencies within Africa.





1.1. Official Opening remarks by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Cameroon

The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Cameroon Mr Gabriel Mbairobe thanked AU-IAPSC for inviting him to open the workshops on behalf of the Government of Cameroon. He stated that globalisation has created a situation in which even the most prosperous countries in the world are now economically dependent on the goods and services provided by other countries. Nearly every imaginable good and service is now traded internationally.

The Minister emphasized that costs of biological invasion are measured not just in currency, but also unemployment, damaged goods and equipment, power failures, food and water shortages, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, increased rates and severity of natural disasters, disease epidemics, and lost lives.

Therefore, with the Malabo declaration, every country including Cameroon are making efforts to protect crops from pests and contribute to the achievement of the UN sustainable Goals and to the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. He hoped for fruitful deliberations, exchange of expertise that will contribute to achieving the goal of the workshops.

2.1. Election of the chair

Ms Luiza Munyua from IAPSC chaired the workshops.

2.2. Nomination of the rapporteur

Rapporteurs for the workshops were Mr. Nana Sani and Ms Maryben Chiatoh from AU-IAPSC

2.3. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda of the workshops was reviewed by participants and adopted with minor modifications.

2.4. Administrative matters

Ms. Chipilliro Kansilanga of AU-IAPSC provided some guidelines for the conduct of the virtual workshops.

2.5. Participants

About 62 participants from Member States NPPOs, CABI, ICRISAT, FAO, University, Research Institutes and IAPSC virtually attended the workshops.

3. Objectives and outcome of the workshops

Mrs Maryben Chiatoh, Assistant Scientific Officer, presented the objectives and outcome of the workshops which were to:

1. Raise awareness of the IAPS problem and opportunities to manage them;
2. Strengthen and expand cooperation between sectors, among governments, and between governmental and non-governmental entities;
3. Lay the groundwork for the development of a comprehensive regional strategy to address IAPS, review biological control of pest practices for improvement and update the list of Biological Control Agents in Member States.





4.0 Update on Invasive Alien Plants Species in Africa

This presentation was by done by AU-IAPSC Assistant Senior Scientific Officer Flaubert Nana Sani who highlighted the common characteristics and traits of invasive species, impacts of invasive species in Africa, pattern of invasions, common pathways for the introduction of invasive alien plants species in Africa, strategic responses of IAPSC for addressing the problem, the continental invasive species programme, measures, regulations and list of invasive alien plants species in Africa. He shared on the impacts of invasive species in Africa that compromise Member states' ability to meet the UN sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030.

4.1 Invasive alien plants species, risks assessment and management

For this topic, Dr Orlando Sosa of FAO highlighted key issues including:

(1) the impact and potential threats of plant pests to eastern African countries; examples of emergent/invasive pest introductions (insects, diseases, and weeds) and potential emergent plant pests, (2) the institutional and technical challenges faced by countries, (3) opportunities to bridge gaps and (4) recommended actions. He gave the list of 16 examples of emergent/invasive pest introductions (insects) affecting crops in East African countries. He also highlighted on the institutional and technical challenges faced by countries with

emphasis on Member states contingency planning, huge gap in terms of the countries' ability to look forward in identifying potential risks and prediction. He described the FAO's approach toward the issue of invasive species management which is to work closely with communities most affected to build resilience, enhance food security and build capacity at all levels. He also identified institutional and operational challenges before providing recommended actions which are:

- Countries, particularly in Africa, to consider strengthening their plant health systems that are designed to mitigate these risks through: early warning, early detection and rapid response for eradication, containment or management of plant pests.
- Member states to enhance the preparedness of the relevant authorities that have the responsibility to confront these pest invasions and encourage governments to invest sufficiently to ensure these authorities are well equipped and trained.

4.2 Weed biological control; challenges and opportunities

In his presentation, Arne Witt of CABI provided the list of some 39 African countries of weed species, agents released and agents established with intentional and unintentional introductions. He stressed on biological control of pests in Africa with a number of target species, number of agents released, number of agents established and target species at least partially control with emphasis on:





- Weed biological control;
- Arthropod biological control using insects;
- Arthropod biological control using pathogens;
- Arthropod biological control using mites and snail biological control.

CABI recorded successes in Africa of bio-control with 357 releases of 133 weed CBC agents with just under three-quarters of releases resulted in permanent establishment. He also said that despite the cost effectiveness of biological control and the availability of agents, especially for shared invasive plants, only eight biological control agents targeting seven terrestrial weeds have been released in countries in Africa, outside of South Africa in the past 20 years. He also gave the list of agents available for African weeds. It is good to note that CABI and national partners will be publishing a field guide to the naturalized and invasive plants of Malawi and Zambia early next year. CABI has also undertaken a number of formal and casual surveys of all and/or parts of Botswana, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, and Namibia.

4.3 CABI's Horizon Scanning Tool

In his presentation Dr. Ivan of CABI focused on the Horizon Scanning Prioritizing invasive species threats.

He defined the aim of horizon scanning being to predict the likelihood of the arrival and establishment of invasive species that are likely to impact socio-economically or impact biodiversity and ecosystems. He affirmed that the tool is able to predict which damaging species are most likely to arrive and allows resources to be allocated cost-effectively by focusing effort where risk is highest.

He also stressed on the targeted users which include risk assessors, plant protection officers, quarantine officers, protected area managers and researchers. He stated that the tool provides user-friendly means of accessing a large volume of relevant data for categorizing and prioritizing potential invasive species threats to a country, state or province with potential threats that can be prioritized by habitats, pathways and taxonomic group.

He further emphasized on the results output as a list with links to datasheets with further information in the Invasive Species Compendium and Crop Protection Compendium. They can also be exported to CSV for analysis. He finally gave the overview demonstration of the horizon scanning tool free version on google with the available open source be on <https://www.cabi.org/HorizonScanningTool>





4.4 Update on the country list of invasive alien plants species; surveillance system and management in place

The session consisted of updates and overview of the status and trends of IAPS. Presentations from Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria Senegal and Tunisia were designed to provide the participants with an overview of the multi-faceted problems caused by IAPs and prospects for their amelioration.

4.5 Mass rearing of parasitoids for use in augmentative biological control of insect pests

Malick Ba of ICRISAT in his presentation defined the Biological control as the control that can offer an economically and environmental friendly alternative and contribute to IPM. He projected the three biological control approaches and used three cases studies to illustrate his presentation which include:

- Case study1: The millet head miner (*Heliocheilus albipunctella*) that causes yield losses up to 85% with the mass culture and release *Habrobracon hebetor*; following with field persistence of *H. hebetor* after single release.
- Mass culture and field release of *Trichogramma* and Case study2 of the fall armyworm with the mass culture and release of *Telenomus remus*.

At the end of his presentation; a need was identified for improving infrastructure by enhancing the development of national program and private sector capacities in production of parasitoids and the establishment parasitoids factories (private or cooperatives).

4.6 IITA initiatives on diagnosis and control of invasive plant pests in Africa

In his presentation Lava Kumar of IITA stressed on IITA brief description, outbreaks caused by pests of foreign origin like fall armyworm outbreak, modes of pathogen and pest dispersion, intra-continental spread of pathogens and pests: some recent examples map of native pest species considered invasive pests by other countries and weak phytosanitary capacities in developing countries.

IITA innovations to control invasive and established pests was not left out with examples of major plant health projects. He also discussed the integrated approaches to control invasive pest with prevention, early detection and control; early detection and control; prevention, protection and recovery and biocontrol of invasive pests. He shared more on invasive and endemic pests with Innovations in diagnostics and surveillance.

Dr Kumar further reviewed the diagnostics at IITA for Member States' knowledge. He finally stressed that Africa lacks a functional and well-coordinated mechanism for surveillance, predictive modeling, forecasting, monitoring/surveillance, data handling, institutional arrangements, and governance structures. There is need for a mechanism for prevention, preparedness and early detection, control and management of invasive species, and the recovery from the impact of invasive species.





The strategy for managing invasive species in Africa 2021-2030 is developed to coordinate Member States in achieving global targets.

.4.7. Update on biological control of pests in Member States

The session consisted of updates and overviews of the status and trends of pest biological control. Presentations from Burkina Faso, Chad, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Eswatini and Madagascar provided information on ongoing Biocontrol of pests' actions, challenges and prospects.

4.8 Tackling invasive species through sustainable use and exchange of Biological Control Agents in Africa

In his presentation, Maurice TINDO-University of Douala highlighted on: invasive species and some examples in Africa; biological control and strategies or approaches; sustainable use and exchange of Biological Control Agents (BCA) with illustration on international and national regulations and the example of *Acerophagus papayae* vs *Paracoccus marginata* in Cameroon. He urged Member states to comply with IPPC standards especially ISPM3 (Guidelines for the export, shipment import and release of biological control agents and other beneficial organisms) and elaborated national regulations on BCA.

He also highlighted on the classical biological control of the papaya mealybug in Cameroon; with the mass production, field release and the establishment of the natural enemy and the monitoring of its impact on the disease.

4.9 Update on specific BCAs in Member states

The session consisted of updates and overview of the status and trends of Biological Control Agents in Africa. Presentations from Ghana, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sudan, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe with Lesotho, Eritria and Togo not left out provided information on BCA update in their respective countries.

Fall Armyworm (FAW) - *Spodoptera frugiperda* J



Photo by Desiree Van Heerden from Syngenta

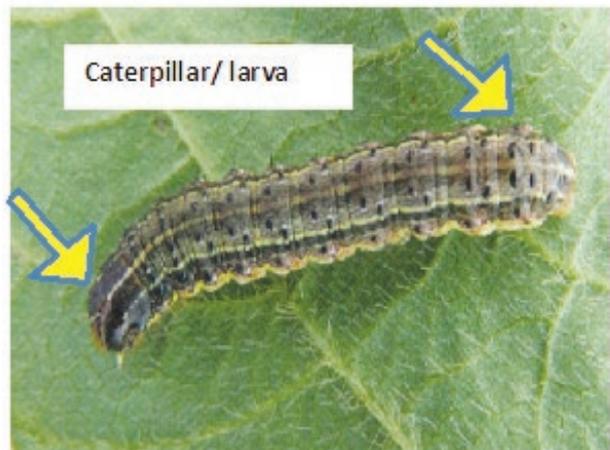


Photo by: Johan Dreyer





5. Recommendations and Action Points

A) Member States to:

1. Develop National programme and private sector capacities in production of parasitoids or even establish parasitoids factories by setting up private or cooperatives.
2. Ensure political commitment in terms of policy, legislation, enforcement, and implementation of activities to prevent and manage IAPS initiated through national and regional strategies and action plans.
3. The strategy for Invasive Alien Species Management should cover: preparation of accurate database and control methods.
4. The government should prepare the rules as a guide to tackle problems on Invasive Alien Plant Species.
5. Initiate assessments of problems related to IAPS and develop early warning and monitoring systems.
6. Encourage appropriate and relevant research on IAPS issues.

B- AU-IAPSC together with partners' institutions and stakeholders to:

7. Build capacity in terms of human resource development and technology transfer to address IAPS, Biological control and BCAs;
8. Provide adequate financial and technical support from relevant national, regional, and international assistance agencies to address IAPS, Biocontrol and Biological control agents;

9. Promote community participation and involvement in efforts to address IAPS;
10. Encourage partnerships between public and private sectors in activities to address IAPS;

C) AU-IAPSC to:

11. Establish coordination mechanisms and information exchange systems at national, regional, and continental levels by the promotion of Member States to create IAPS National Focal Points in NPPOs.
12. Promote awareness of IAPS issues by convening workshops and seminars, as well as conducting publicity events and media campaigns; and
13. Ensure the sustainability of IAPS prevention and management activities in Africa by developing long-term programmes of action.
14. Determination of priorities as control target of Invasive Alien Species should cover aspects on ecology, economy and health.
15. Intensify communication of involved parties in Invasive Alien Species Management among others through mail list, workshops/trainings or other scheduled meetings.

6 Closing of the meeting

In his closing remarks, the Director of AU-IAPSC said concerted action is needed and IAPSC will continue to endeavour for coordination of Member states actions and implementation.





2021 reports and updates





PREPARATORY 15TH SESSION COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES VIRTUAL MEETING 23-25, FEBRUARY 2021.



Cameroon's Minister of Agriculture Mr Gabriel Mbairrobe delivering his remarks at the opening of the meeting

1. Introduction

The Inter-African Phytosanitary Council of African Union (AU-IAPSC) within the framework of implementation of its 2021 programme budget, virtually organized the Preparatory Commission on Phytosanitary Measures to review the CPM-15 provisional agenda with the objective of harmonizing African Member States' views and adopting Africa common position on the agenda items. The meeting took place from 23-25 February, 2021. The meeting also helped to project effective participation by the African contracting parties to the IPPC to the CPM-15 meeting, which would hold virtually on March 16, 18 and 1st of April 2021. About 72 participants attended the virtual meeting.

1.1 Welcome remarks, AU-IAPSC

Dr. Jean Gerard Mezui M'ella, Director of AU-IAPSC; acknowledged the African Union Commission (AUC) for financial support in the implementation of the activity; he congratulated H.E Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) Madame Josepha Sacko for her re-election and conveyed his appreciation to the African Contracting Parties (CPs) to the IPPC for their massive response. He reminded participants of the purpose of the meeting which is to discuss the draft agenda of the Commission of Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) which is submitted to parties of the Convention well in advance for discussions and consultations.





He urged participants to always keep in mind, the challenges of managing the spread of emerging pests and the damage it causes to plants and consider the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and make concrete proposals to the IPPC that will raise the image of Africa in the eyes of the international community.

1.2 Remarks by H.E Commissioner of ARBE

Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the African Union Commission Madame Josepha Sacko acknowledged the important role IAPSC is playing in protecting Africa’s plant resources from pests, thereby promoting crops production, food security, facilitating trade and protecting the environment. She highlighted the risks and devastating effects of migratory plant pests, associated with travel and trade especially as the Africa Continental free Trade Area (AfCFTA) went operational on the first of January 2021. She mentioned the huge potential the AfCFTA has in lifting up to 30 million Africans out of extreme poverty, which won’t be achieved without the effective and efficient implementation of international standards related to trade especially the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards. She advised that the deliberations and proposals should address the challenges related to the implementation of SPS measures including capacity for participation in standards setting and implementation, protectionist use of the Agreement by developed countries, and high compliance costs for developing countries.

1.3. Remarks by Minister of Agriculture– Republic of Cameroon.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Cameroon Mr Gabriel Mbairrobe through a video address, expressed the support of the government of Cameroon to H.E the Commissioner of ARBE for her re-election. He highlighted the important role played by IAPSC to bring together the AU Member States and Contracting Parties of the IPPC, to discuss and establish phytosanitary standards that allow for safe trade of plant resources among countries. He highlighted some of the key themes on which CPM decisions have an impact, including the ending of poverty, zero hunger, sustainable production and consumption, safeguarding climate actions and ecosystems. The Minister appreciated the importance given to the plant health issues over the past years which culminated in the proclamation of the International Year of Plant Health, urging participants to thoroughly discuss and adopt Africa common position on the draft CPM-15 agenda items.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The pre-CPM adopted as working document, the CPM-15 provisional and annotated agenda. The Pre-CPM15 made up of African contracting parties to the IPPC, suggested that the IPPC secretariat should add emerging pests (desert locust and fall army worm) management (Mr. Abdoulay-Senegal NPPO proposition, supported by Cameroon, Chad and Madagascar) as one item on the agenda before its adoption;





since it is a big challenge faced by many African countries. The meeting was chaired by David Kamangira, Malawi-NPPO while rapporteurs were Flaubert Nana Sani and Maryben Chiatoh from AU-IAPSC.

3. Report from the CPM Chairperson

Dr. Benoit from ECOWAS observed that the budget proposed for this activity is too small to effectively support activities promoted by the IPPC. Increasing the budget will allow the participation of many more contracting parties. Financial information from the proposed chairperson report indicates that there is US \$2 million budget requested by the African Union Contracting parties to the IPPC to face enormous needs, considering plant health challenges in the continent. The pre-CPM noted the report, but considered that this budget should be increased to at least US \$ 2.5 million to better cater for many crops protection challenges. The pre-CPM proposed that Ghana should take the floor during the CPM-15 meeting to point out the issue, supported by Sierra Leone.

4. Report from the IPPC Secretariat

The proposed 2020 report of the IPPC secretariat highlights several important achievements including: IPPC governance activities; standards setting; standards implementation; ePhyto; promotion of IYPH 2020; communications and advocacy; international cooperation; resource mobilization; internal management and regional workshop to review draft standards and does focus on the IPPC's activities for 2021.

The Director of IAPSC raised the point that the AU through IAPSC has supported costs related to the organization of regional workshops for the past few years such as sponsoring some Member States to attend and also paid for translation/ interpretation yet none of these reflected in the reports prepared by the IPPC. Ghana was in support of this and committed to raise it during the CPM.

The following resolutions were also agreed from the discussions:

- That countries should be able to sponsor representatives to these regional workshops as it is done in other regions. REC and Member States should take note and consider this as a major activity to be included in their budgets.
- That in addition to the work done by AU-IAPSC, each region should be allowed to build its capacity and grow as a region.
- That for the AU to better coordinate activities, there are budgetary implications and RECs could assist in getting some funding for coordination and that there should be some sort of projection from AU-IAPSC on funding required for coordination so that RECs can know to what proportion they can support.
- That AU-IAPSC and partners should focus more and put more resources on countries with weak phytosanitary systems.





The pre-CPM noted the report but affirmed that, efforts provided by AU-IAPSC to support the IPPC in the organization of the Regional Workshops for Africa to review draft standards are likely captured in the report of the IPPC secretariat. It was recommended that Member States and Regional Economic Communities support IAPSC in the organization of the IPPC Regional Workshops for Africa.

5. Adoption of the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030

The proposed IPPC strategic framework 2020-2030 presented for adoption does likely take into consideration the preoccupation of plant protection in Africa. The information on pre-CPM15 meeting was not shared on time by IAPSC thus Eisaiah TJejele from SADC affirmed that participation to CPM meeting is still a challenge and proposed that IPPC/IAPSC should improve on communication and further engage Member States and give regular updates on phytosanitary happenings.

He informed participants that SADC will organize another pre-CPM meeting in March for SADC countries before the CPM-15 holds. The Pre-CPM noted and urged IAPSC to improve its coordination methods to bring Member States to be part of the world body of plant protection with better participation to different meetings.

6. Adoption of the revision of the Implementation and Capacity Development

The Pre-CPM noted the document on the revision of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee terms of Reference and Rules of procedures to be presented for adoption and proposed that time should be given to contracting parties for further inputs. The meeting raised that a call for experts under this committee is expected and we should ensure that we have experts from Africa while clarifications were sought on the procedure of expert selection to ensure that selection is fair and has a representation of all FAO regions. The pre-CPM recommended that Africa should be prepared to provide the list of experts to respond to a call of experts by the IC.

7. Reports from Strategic Planning Group

Participants glanced through (1) Adoption of the revision of the Strategic Planning Group Terms of Reference, (2) Establishment of CPM Focus Group on Implementation plans for the IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030, (3) Establishment of CPM Focus Group on Communications, (4) Establishment of CPM Focus Group on Climate change impacts on plant health. Comments made included the need for NPPOs to allocate budget during the elaboration of their national activities to enable their participation and also for NPPOs to explore other avenues like REC's and other donors to fund their participation.





8. Endorsement of updated framework for standards and implementation

Contracting parties from Africa are to take the floor to raise the issue of methyl Bromide and alternate measures but also take advantage of ISPM24 to promote bilateral collaboration between contracting parties so that an agreement could be reached for trade improvement. Dr. Nying Charles Cameroon -NPPO brought up discussions under this topic on the use of methyl bromide for treatment of wood packaging material, given that there is a CPM recommendation on the reduction of the use of methyl bromide, in addition to the Montreal convention. During the last WTO SPS meeting, this topic was discussed and the recommendation for contracting parties was to adopt bilateral agreements. The pre-CPM noted the concern from Contracting Parties and agreed it would be raised.

9. Standard Setting

9.1 Report from Standards Committee

The issue of the report of the Standard Committee to be presented by the chairperson of the Standard Committee during CPM15, Cameroon had concerns that the Technical Panel for Forest Quarantine (TPFQ) was going to be dissolved despite the fact that there are still so many issues with wood treatment in Africa and Dr. Nying Charles, Cameroon -NPPO suggested that the dissolution of the technical panel on quarantine should not be envisaged; this was supported by Senegal.

In response to this, Nigeria said the IPPC spends a lot of money to keep technical panels and decides to dissolve these panels in the absence of any pressing issue. Regarding the challenges with wood treatment, it can be submitted as a topic backed by science and sufficient literature, as required by the IPPC. Nigeria and South Africa further recommended that contracting parties from Africa should be able to prepare topics and submit them when there is a call for topics.

9.2 Adoption of standards and noting of ink amendments

It was observed that the CPM 15 provisional agenda keeps changing as we get closer to the day of CPM meeting; making it difficult to better work on current documents during pre-CPM meeting and effectively contribute to standards setting. The pre-CPM encouraged the IPPC Secretariat to facilitate the task by improving on the procedures of adopting provisional agenda of CPM. The meeting also noted that not all documents were translated in all FAO working languages and agreed that Cameroon will take the floor to table the problem of document translation. With regards to draft standards for Phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) to be adopted by the next CPM meeting, David Kamangira, Malawi-NPPO and Chair of the pre-CPM-15 meeting glanced through 5 Individual ISPMs and 7 Phytosanitary treatments (PTs) Annexes and requested participants to the pre-CPM-15 to provide active and substantive comments.





On Standards Committee recommendations to the CPM including adoption of the List of topics for IPPC standards, the pre-CPM15 agreed with the list.

CPM recommendations

10.1 Adoption of draft CPM Recommendation on “food aid”

Regarding the safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid to prevent the introduction of plant pests during an emergency situation (2018-026), Senegal suggested that control should always be carried out on food aid before it is introduced and the document should be looked into before endorsement. The pre-CPM noted and found no objection.

10.2 Approval for first consultation of CPM Recommendation on “contaminating pests”

For facilitating safe trade by reducing the incidence of contaminating pests associated with traded goods (2019-002), the pre-CPM considered the recommendation for endorsement. It agreed that Ghana will take the floor to propose the endorsement of the recommendation, supported by Malawi.

11. Implementation and Capacity Development

The different documents under this topic: report from the implementation and capacity development committee, adoption of the list of implementation and capacity development topics, and the update from the sea containers task force; were discussed and adopted by all with Senegal and Kenya taking the lead.

12. Adoption of the List of Implementation and Capacity Development Topics

Regarding the Adoption of the List of Implementation and Capacity Development Topics – Adjustments, Nigeria- PQS suggested that, the IC should develop implementation guides to enable Contracting Parties from Africa and other developing countries to make good use of them. Elisa Mazuma of Malawi -NPPO also suggested that capacity building should be put in place in order for Africa to adequately use the draft ISPMs. The pre-CPM agreed that all topics with priorities1 should be adopted.

13. e-Phyto - Long-term financial sustainability

For the direction and guidance provided on the best way forward on the long-term financial sustainability of the IPPC ePhyto solution to be considered by the CPM, no issue was raised. However contracting parties from Africa should look into the document prior for adoption.

14. Update on International Year of Plant Health

With regards to an update on International Year of Plant Health, Prudence Attipoe Ghana-NPPO raised the points that Contracting Parties from Africa which have celebrated or carried out any activities within this framework should make sure they are captured in the report presented by the IPPC secretariat and bring them to its attention if not included. However, Kenn MSISKA, Zambia--NPPO provided an update on IYPH which includes:





i. Two webinars on 29-30 June and the IYPH closing ceremony on 1 July;

ii. The IYPH ISC asked to identify a new host country for the first International Plant Health Conference, which should be around 12 May 2022. More details on the following link

https://assets.ippc.int/static/media/files/publication/en/2021/02/04_CPM_2021_IYPH2020-2021-02-16t.pdf. Unfortunately

funds were not allocated. Countries are supposed to have their own national initiatives for the celebration.

15. Updates on Technical Cooperation among regional plant protection organizations (pre-recorded)

AU-IAPSC indicated that it had hosted 2 to 3 times; the Technical Consultation among the Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs).

16. Confirmation of Membership and Potential Replacements for CPM Subsidiary Bodies (including selection of new CPM Chairperson)

Participants to the pre-CPM-15 analysed the situation of African Member States to these committees concerning: Confirmation of Membership and Potential Replacements for CPM Subsidiary Bodies - Standards Committee and Confirmation of Membership and Potential Replacements for Implementation and Capacity Development Committee.

17. Cooperation between IPPC and RPPO

The direct intervention of the IPPC Secretariat in African countries without informing or notifying AU-IAPSC as the RPPO for Africa are not to be encouraged. It is important for IPPC to communicate with RPPO, when IPPC works with one of the countries of the RPPO. The pre-CPM wishes to see IAPSC and IPPC secretariat step up their cooperation.

Closing of the Session

The Director of AU-IAPSC affirmed that the pre-CPM meeting recorded a success as participants went through the agenda and made valuable contributions and came to a consensus on several topics. African contracting parties to IPPC agreed on various issues that they deem beneficial to the African continent and to bring them up at the CPM.

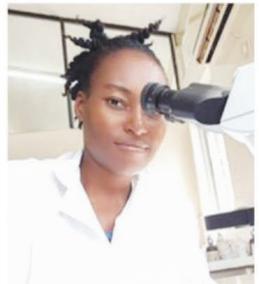
IAPSC's Director further thanked all participants for their active participation during the three days of deliberations, discussions and sharing of information in preparation for the CPM. He promised that AU-IAPSC will continue coordinating Member States and getting ideas and suggestions from all sectors to enhance plant health in the continent.







PARTICIPATION IN PLANT HEALTH VIDEO CONTEST: RESEARCH THAT HELPS PLANT HEALTH MARCH 2021



The winners and runners-up of the Euphresco plant health contest

For some months, African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) took part in the Plant Health Video Contest, as one of the initiatives proposed by Euphresco and the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies of Bari (CIHEAM), a network of organisations that fund research projects and coordinate national research in the phytosanitary area.

The contest was to celebrate the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH), increase the visibility of plant health research activities and celebrate the work and dedication of scientists across the world. Hence, the initiative sought to give visibility to plant health research activities and to target a public of non-specialists with short videos. In its capacity as a Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) for Africa, AU-IAPSC got involved from the beginning of the contest, sharing ideas and helping to disseminate the message on the contest to our regional networks through its various social media platforms. Furthermore, AU-IAPSC Information & Communications Officer Chipiliro Kansilanga was nominated and appointed as a member of the jury, alongside four others from different parts of the world

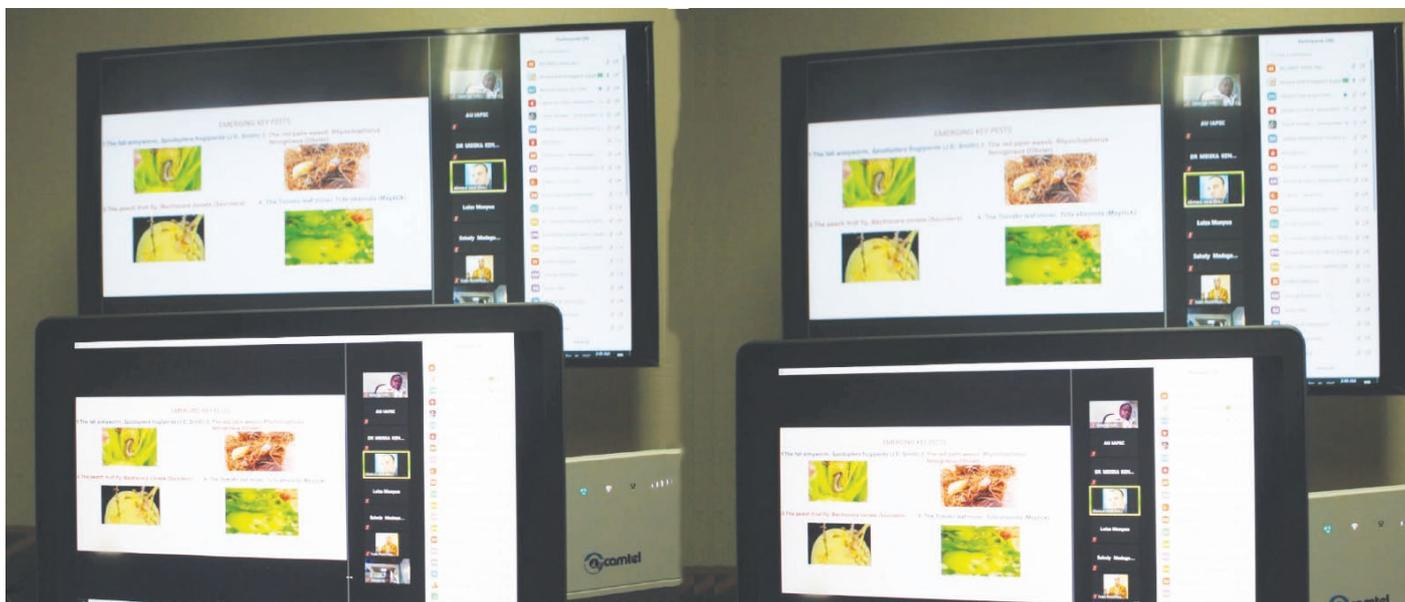
with different skills in science, communication, policy, etc. The jury thoroughly analysed the entries received, carefully examining originality, language, communication and impact. On 9 March 2021, the jury members met by teleconference, discussed the individual ranking and identified the winner and the four runners-up. The winner (gold medal) of the video contest was Ms Shery-Ann Brown, from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Jamaica.

The competition covered topics on pests of important crops, fruit trees and forest, highlighting the importance of plant health for food security, environment and trade among others. The jury expressed their delight about the diversity and quality of videos received. Applicants came from all over the world; Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Fiji, France, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Jamaica, Mauritius, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Peru, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

More about the contest on <https://www.euphresco.net/contest/>



THE VIRTUAL 29TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION INTER-AFRICAN PHYTOSANITARY COUNCIL (AU-IAPSC) 14-16 APRIL 2021



AU-IAPSC Communication Control Centre for the virtual assembly

Opening Session

The 29th session of the African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) General Assembly was held virtually from 14th -16th April, 2021. AU-IAPSC meets for its General Assembly at least once every two years.

Welcome remarks by Director of AU-IAPSC

In his address, Dr. Jean Gérard MEZUI M'ELLA thanked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural development of the Republic of Cameroon and partner institutions, including FAO-RAF, IPPC, NPPOs Contracting Parties to the IPPC in Africa, CABI, ICIPE, ICRISAT, AFSTA and IITA for their participation. He recalled the mandate of AU-IAPSC and indicated that working together with Member States through NPPOs to draw action plans for Phytosanitary compliance and promotion of crop protection is imperative at the time

the African Continental Free trade Area (AfCFTA) entered in force since January 1, 2021. Thus, the theme of the 29th session of the general assembly: “Protecting Plant Health and Enhancing Free Trade in Africa”. He added that due to COVID-19, IAPSC budget was drastically reduced since mid-2019 and attention focused on to the pandemic by the African Union Commission (AUC). He cited some achievements such as follow up emerging pests, establishment of the taskforce by ECOWAS on International Year of Plant Health (IYPH), AU-IAPSC communication unit fully functional and effective, cooperation with the USDA-FAS to strengthen the harmonization of bio pesticides in Africa, and promotion of e-phyto and enhancing pest surveillance in the region. He urged NPPOs, RECs and research partners to discuss all topics presented and make concrete recommendations to improve plant health situation in Africa.





Opening remarks by the Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Cameroon

The Minister MBAIROBE Gabriel expressed his satisfaction on behalf of the Cameroon Government on the fruitful collaboration between his country and AU-IAPSC. He listed some of the current emerging pests in Africa affecting agriculture with major impact on yield loss and pointed out the effect of COVID-19 on the African countries economy. Despite the second generation agriculture launched by the Cameroon government, pests remain one of the limiting factor of crops production in the country, he said. He also stressed that AU-IAPSC has worked hard to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests in the continent, but efforts are still required to step up compliance of member states with international standards to facilitate trade, ensure food security and protect the environment.

Election of the Bureau

The 29th session of the General Assembly bureau elected Dr. Ahamed Hamdy, AU-HRST, Nigeria as Chair while Vice-Chair was Cameroon. Rapporteurs were Mr. Nana Sani and Mrs. Maryben Chiatoh from AU-IAPSC.

Adoption of the Agenda

AU-IAPSC introduced the agenda and it was adopted with minor changes.

Keynote Address: Protecting Plant Health and Enhancing Free Trade in Africa by Dr. Washington Otieno, CABI.

In his key note address, Dr. Otieno presented the vision of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); its general objectives and phytosanitary perspectives and stressed the place of AU-member states to manage phytosanitary risks as requisite to safe trade, promote phytosanitary dispute resolution mechanism embedded. He suggested that there be an institutional arrangement within the AfCFTA which provides cooperation in all trade- related areas and the implementation of trade facilitation measures. He recognized the market for goods and services which will be facilitated by the movement of persons in the Agenda 2063 but pointed out key challenges to establish an efficient and effective system for managing Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures, in particular crop protection across the continent as its borders open for trade.

Several RECs and Partner states to the AfCFTA are at different levels in terms of their regional and economic integration, regulatory frameworks for managing SPS, transport and communication infrastructure as well as quality infrastructure and technical capacities for crops protection enforcement he said. Investment in phytosanitary capacity development and technical capacity assistance of outputs from tools like the Investment of Market Access of the STDF and the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation of the IPPC will boost phytosanitary compliance in the continent. The RPPO for Africa just needs to learn lessons and make good use of what has been discussed.





He also highlighted the development of technical cooperation arrangements among the RECs and the partner states on the management of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures. Massive investments will be required for capacity building activities to ensure that all the actors along the value chain from the farm to fork, have the trainings and the know-how needed to allow them to contribute to the provision of plant health both for the domestic and intra-African markets. Dr. Otieno re-emphasized that at the start of AfCFTA negotiations; cooperation in the area of standards and addressing NTBs was identified as important for the successful implementation of the historic free trade area agreement. Therefore to effectively address phytosanitary risks engagement emphasis should be on the following:

- Enhance cooperation in the area of understanding the basis of phytosanitary measures (as NTBs) including TBTs;
- Good practice in governance and resourcing institutions mandate;
- Sovereignty–state party right to prevent imports should they constitute a designated risk;
- Stronger commitment and engagement of NPPOs, IAPSC and IPPC in the global activities of the IPPC, WTO-SPS and;
- Provide adequate resources and actions required for all parties.

Presentation and adoption of the AU-IAPSC 14th Steering Committee report

The recommendations of the 14th session of the AU-IAPSC`s Steering Committee, virtually held on 12th -13th April, 2021 was presented and endorsed by the Assembly.

1. Review of the implementation of the recommendations of AU-IAPSC 28th Session of the General Assembly by the Director of IAPSC

Dr. Jean Gerard MEZUI M'ELLA, Director of AU-IAPSC presented the review of the implementation of the recommendations from the 28th session of the AU-IAPSC General Assembly which was noted and endorsed by the assembly.

2. Presentation of AU-IAPSC 2019-2020 report - discussion and adoption

In her presentation, Ms Luiza Munyua, Senior Scientific Officer highlighted on key activities implemented by AU-IAPSC; within the framework of the 2019-2020 programme budgets of the office that fall under CAADP and related activities. They include:

1. Build Member States capacity on Integrated Pest Management strategies and implementation of IPM for sustainable agriculture ;





2. Mainstream SPS in country CAADP investment plans and development of SPS information systems and enhancing advocacy, awareness and communications to ensure sufficient safe biological control agents are available to manage plant with a continental training;

3. Strengthen Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) capacity to control migratory and trans-boundary pests; case study of fall armyworm;

4. Review and update member states plant quarantine legislation and law in compliance with international requirements; strengthening their capacity on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) risk assessment;

5. Improve Member State capacity building in Phytosanitary standard setting through the organization of the IPPC's workshop for the comments and review of the 2020 draft ISPMs and specifications in Africa and;

6. Promote member states on standards setting process for CPM-15; Participation to CPM-15; Technical Consultation among RPPOs and Standards Committee and SPS Standards Committee meetings; participation of IAPSC to the IYPH 2020.

Key achievements as well as recommendations that came up during the implementation of AU-IAPSC above mentioned activities were also presented.

However attention of the office is still required on major challenges faced in the implementation of various activities like the budget austerity, restriction of the movement of the people due to Covid-19 pandemic.

AU-IAPSC also held its 13th Steering Committee and jointly organized with the African Federation of Seed Trade Federation (AFSTA) a workshop on seed movement to share knowledge on ISPM38.

The assembly noted and endorsed the report.

Presentation of AU-IAPSC`s 2021 - 2022 Work Programs, discussion and adoption

Ms Munyua in her presentation; focused on the 2021 as well as projected 2022 programme budget of the office. With respect to the 2021 programme budget of AU-IAPSC, she highlighted on the six approved activities within the framework of the implementation of CAADP and related activities which include:

1. Build member states capacity on integrated Pest Management strategies and implementation of IPM for sustainable agriculture;





2. Review and update member states plant quarantine legislation and laws in compliance with international requirements and strengthen their capacity on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) risks Assessment and management;
3. Promote member states on standards setting process for CPM-16;-Participation to CPM-16, 34rd Technical Consultation among RPPOs and standards committee and SPS standards committee meetings;
4. Improve member states capacity building in Phytosanitary standards setting through the organisation of the IPPC`s workshop for the comments and review of 2021 draft ISPMs and specifications in Africa;
5. Promote developed quarantine pest detection methods for use by National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) and inspection services.
6. Strengthen Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) capacity to control migratory and trans-boundary pests; case study of banana Fusarium wilt (TR) 4.

The implementation of the above mentioned activities is on-going with the office workplan developed and approved by the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Regarding the projected 2022 programme budget of AU-IAPSC, eleven activities were submitted in the AMERT systems and are found in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and related activities of the programme budget of DARBE. These activities are under three outputs that include :

1. Access to Agricultural Infrastructure, inputs and services enhanced with 2 activities;
2. Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Systems among Member States enhanced with 3 activities:
3. Plant health Management System Strengthened with 6 activities:

Discussion; endorsement of AU-IAPSC progress report and programme activities

The assembly examined and endorsed the 2019-2020 progress report of AU-IAPSC and the programme budget for 2021 and projected programme for 2022.

Presentation of AU-IAPSC`s financial report and discussion

Ms Jovita Akiumbeni, Finance and administrative Officer, presented the financial report for the AU-IAPSC`s budget programme of 2020, 2021 and 2022 as well as the summary of the operational budget.





The operational budget for AU-IAPSC stood at \$1,172,036 (One million one hundred and seventy two thousand and thirty six dollars), expenses as at 31/12/2020 amounted to \$1,053,906.48 (One Million fifty three thousand nine hundred and six dollars and forty eight cents with a budget execution rate of 90%. The program budget for 2020 stood at \$390,853 (Three hundred and ninety thousand and eight hundred and fifty three dollars, expenses as at 31/12/2020 amounted to \$51,992.54 (Fifty one thousand nine hundred and ninety two dollars and fifty four cents with a budget execution rate of 13% with poor execution rate due to the COVID 19 pandemic as no physical meetings and data collection exercises could be carried out. Under administrative issues, two AU-IAPSC staff retired in 2020 (Senior Scientific Officer-Entomology and Driver). Recruitment is currently on-going to fill these positions. For 2021 it is worth noting that the Coordinator will retire in a year's time, hence administration procedures have been put in place to ensure his replacement is recruited. The assembly endorsed the report.

Presentation on Information and Communication update

Miss Chipiliro Kansilanga, Information and Communication Officer at AU-IAPSC presented the synopsis of the office communication services, the key areas of cooperation, the communication strategy

through COVID-19 pandemic, the digital platforms including website and social media, which the Communications Unit is undertaking. She said to strengthen AU-IAPSC's role of information exchange among member states, NPPOs, the Secretariat initiated a systematic analysis of the country reports with the aim to improve its information exchange services and to explore multiple information channels. This requires resources which, although not currently available, AU-IAPSC through the Unit is undertaking various innovations to strengthen its role in collection, collation and dissemination of crucial plant protection information. She said this will allow a more systematic assessment of the state of plant protection in Africa. The assembly endorsed the report.

Progress report for the development of Plant Health Strategy for Africa.

The Assembly was notified by the Director of AU-IAPSC, on the development process of a new Plant Health Strategy for Africa and appreciated the on-going initiative in partnership with stakeholders. This strategy sets out how AU-IAPSC will ensure everyone with a role to play in plant health is aware of the risks and is acting on their responsibilities.





This strategy will provide a broad overview of the work to be undertaking at AU-IAPSC with the Department of Agriculture, Rural development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment and internationally and will be flexible to ensure the systems are dynamic, and constantly evolving to keep pace within changing threats. The assembly agreed that the development of the new strategy ought to be the result of extensive discussion and input from a wide spectrum of interested parties, all of whom willingly contribute their expertise and time.

AU-IAPSC/ USDA-FAS Collaboration

AU-IAPSC Director, Dr Jean Gerard Mezui M'ella briefed the assembly on "AU-IAPSC/ USDA-FAS Collaboration" on the following identified topics (harmonization of bio pesticides registration, ephyto promotion and pest surveillance in the continent. He said the cooperation will be broadening to put in place an effective plant health strategy for Africa. The assembly welcomed the cooperation between USDA-FAS and AU-IASPC and required more details about this new initiative.

Emerging plant health concerns in the region – Lava Kumar-IITA

Dr. Lava presentation was focused on increasing risks for African crops; biosecurity application, surveillance innovation, mode of pathogen and pest dispersion, causes of

recurrent outbreaks, phytosanitary capacity, safe handling and movement of germplasm and seed, as well as the range of biotic threats faced by crops and the way they can be managed to optimize yields and ensure safety and quality in crop production and CGIAR plant health network. He highlighted the emerging plant health concerns in Africa which include: phytosanitary capacity needs, introduction of new pests, resource limitations, trade issues centred on market access and collaboration issues among national stakeholders (legislation, regulatory framework and policy, intuitional arrangement and governance structure). He noted Africa is characterized by a weak phytosanitary capacity and there is need to enhance plant pests early detection and control; prevention, protection and recovery. He suggested, IAPSC to develop a framework for information sharing in key areas to support member states prepare and respond to emerging pests, including innovation in diagnostic, intelligence, analysis, awareness, information sharing and response action.

Pest Risk Analysis – Africa Region - CABI

Dr. Ivan RWOMUSHANA, Senior Research officer at CABI made the presentation containing an outline Pest Risk Analysis tool, which assists risk assessors and risk





managers to conduct a pest risk analysis for a plant commodity pathway or an individual pest and also presents key scientific information from the Protection Compendium (CPC) CPC in the way that helps you decide; which is the most appropriate action to reduce the risk of damaging plant pests, being introduced and make sure plants and plant products are transported safely between countries. He also highlighted the features of PRA tool and for access to the PRA tool he urged participants to contact sales@cabi.org or they can apply their use open source Horizon Scanning Tool. Dr. Ivan further provided an illustration by a video product risk analysis for the home page and described the three stages of PRA; initiation, assessment and management. With respect to access for AU member states on the usage of the PRA tool in Africa, he stressed that five countries including Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia are using the tool.

Bio-pesticide uptake in the Region-ICRPE

Considering that Biopesticides have long been attracting global attention as a safer strategy than chemical pest control, with potentially less risk to humans and the environment; Dr Thomas Dubois of ICRPE's presentation focused on: prospecting, the role of research; commercialized bio pesticides in Africa; focus on new pests in Africa; bio pesticides in the lift (ha/year)

and bio pesticides in Kenya. He stressed that co-operation between the public and private sector is required to facilitate the development, manufacturing, and sale of environmentally friendly alternatives. In this context, discovery of new substances and research on formulation and delivery would boost commercialization and use of bio pesticides he said. Additional research on integrating biological agents into common production systems is necessary. Maintaining low cost to farmers for a given product quality and availability, particularly in member states, is also important. For bio pesticides in Kenya, a datasheet including a list of some of the registered bio pesticides available in the country was provided. These bio pesticides are registered in Kenya by the Pesticide Control Products Board (www.pcpb.go.ke).

Efforts are on-going in the continent to identify bio pesticides active ingredients (AI) which are registered for the use against fall armyworm. Twenty three (23) of the fifty (50) bio pesticides AI which have been registered in one or more than 30 countries for FAW management and are recommended for follow-up; for example field trials or bioassays. While new substances could serve as a promising option for use in pest control, more field research is required to assess the efficacy on specific pest problems in various cropping systems.





Update on plant health and pest surveillance in selected Member States

Six member states including Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Uganda made their presentations: Full presentations can be found on www.auiapsc.org/reports but a summary is provided below.

1. Cameroon

Mr Charles Nying Shey highlighted that agricultural pests and disease are a major concern in Cameroon as agriculture contributes about 25% of the country's GDP. Due to the increasing global concerns related to food security in Africa, Cameroon is applying the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concepts to develop long lasting and more competitive agricultural systems. For the status of general surveillance system of Cameroon; on-going TCP on pest surveillance with preparation of base line data is on-going. As an achievement, NPPO staff were trained on the FAO pesticides registration toolkit which designed to assist pesticides registrars from developing countries, in the day to day pesticides registration tasks including risk assessment. He highlighted pest report from Cameroon including: banana bunchy top virus, East African cassava mosaic virus, papaya mealy bug and fall army worm.

2. Comoros

In his presentation Mr. Issimaila Mohamed Deputy Director of Comoros NPPO highlighted on the Agricultural sector which is the driving force behind the Comorian economy. It provides a large share of the food products consumed, contributes significantly to household income and is the country's main source of foreign exchange. He also stressed the main challenges in the agricultural sector which include: lack of knowledge of SPS issues and good agricultural practices; pest outbreaks and miss use of plant protection products; lack of technical capacity (human and material); no substantial market opportunities for Comorians. He stressed that the Comorian SPS system requires major restructuring in order to stimulate national discussions on capacity development priorities.

3. Congo Brazzaville

In her presentation, Mrs. Alphonsine LOUHOUARI highlighted on the country's major pest list, control strategy and challenges. She stressed that agriculture in Congo contributes only to 4% of its GDP and the key pests affecting crops production include: FAW, CMV, BBTv, papaya mealy bug and cassava root rot.





Currently chemical control is the most practice method in the country saying challenges to crop protection include insufficient crops protection staff, fragmentation of NPPO, insufficient financial resources and lack of training. As a way forward, she suggested that the country should set up a plant protection action plan and update its plant protection regulations and legislation; as well as awareness creation of decision makers on plant health issues.

4. Namibia

In her presentation, Mrs. Matengu Margaret – Deputy Director, Plant Health highlighted on the Namibian plant quarantine Act 7 of 2008, updated on 20 March 2008 to provide for the preventing, monitoring, controlling and eradication of plant pests to facilitate the movement of plants, plant products and other regulated articles. She stressed that the country has developed a strategy on IPM and pesticide management and an agriculture policy which provide the legal framework to strengthen plant protection capabilities. She provided the list of quarantine pest (Fruit fly, *Tuta absoluta*, fall armyworm, African migratory locusts, and brown locust). On the status of general surveillance system; Namibia also has Pest Free Areas (PFA) supported by agro-ecological and climatic conditions which make it difficult for fruit flies to flourish. The country has a fruit fly surveillance programme.

FAW was detected in the country in 2017, African Migratory Locust in 2020 and Brown Locust in 2021. The first, second and third waves affected 400,2016ha; 150,000ha of grazing land and 1207ha of field crops respectively. As a control measure, the country uses chemical and bio-pesticides; creates awareness, organizes the training of youth services and engages private sector on aerial spread.

5. Sierra Leone

In her presentation, Raymonda Johnson, stressed on the update of plant pest management, the country key activities, results, challenges and recommendations. On achievements, she highlighted the development of quarantine pest list, establishment of pesticides and molecular laboratory, the sensitization of stakeholders and decision makers on pest surveillance, the establishment of a taskforce to develop crops pest control field guide and collaboration with the Njala University to include postgraduate degrees at Masters and PhD levels. In addition, farmers and staff were trained on pest surveillance tool, national IPM taskforce established, country pesticides list updated, field guide developed for seeds and key crops and the on-going construction of bio-pesticide laboratory. However, Sierra Leone is still challenged by serious constraints including adequately trained personnel, delay in policy renewals and enforcement, infrastructure, facilities,





mobility and operational funds and revised legal and regulatory instruments for supporting plant protection activities. For the crop protection service to effectively function there is need to re-structure, strengthen and adequately resource for continuous staff training at various levels, promote pest database management, more online sensitization materials and a strong network among member states and all stakeholders.

6. Uganda

Highlights of Mrs. Joyce Banda Ksingiri, Senior Agriculture Inspector`s presentation were: a brief Uganda-NPPO organization layout, update on trade facilitation, update on plant protection, surveillance activities, projects activities and challenges. In Uganda, the risks are that crop pests, diseases and weeds are identified as the greatest risk to Ugandan agriculture unless addressed. Examples of key pests that are seriously constraining any increases in agricultural productivity in priority crops include but not limited to: coffee wilt disease, banana xanthomonas wilt (BXW), CBSV, CMD, MLND, fruit flies, citrus canker, FAW, Desert locust and Tuta absoluta. With the update on trade facilitation, she stressed that Uganda has adopted e-phyto certification since 2020 thanks to the EU DG Santé who found and veterinary office`s audit finding in October 2019.

For pest surveillance activities, she highlighted the effective pest monitoring at border points and laid emphasis on the detection of mango mealy bug, papaya mealy bug, False codling moth and *Xylella fastidiosa*. Concerning projects, she listed the project on potato seed and the one on the harmonization of PRA on fruit and vegetables.

Improving access to high quality inputs and farmers awareness of pest and disease management as well as insufficient human and financial resources and improving in infrastructure for pest and disease management in Uganda remain the main challenges to be addressed by the country. As a way forward, there is need to ensure coordination of different crop protection initiatives to strengthen the plant health system in the country.





Update on plant health management by Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

Two of the eight RECs made presentations.

a. UMA

Mrs. Faouzia, Chakiri on her presentation, highlighted some key achievements registered in UMA which include:

- Cooperation with FAO on *Xylella fastidiosa* management;
- Mechanism for monitoring plant pest in the Mediterranean region established and functional;
- Training of journalists in plant pests and cooperation between member states and UMA strengthened in pest management.

Despite this success, several challenges remained to be addressed. These include:

- Insufficient chairing of knowledge on pest management good practices;
- Non-harmonization of phytosanitary procedures ;
- Pest list of the region non-updated and plant protection of experts' network not established.

b. SADC

From SADC, Mr. Chiluba's presentation focused on the status of African Migratory Locust (AML) in the SADC region; the overview of SADC SPS structures, recent outbreak of AML, update on resources mobilization, financial performances of member states, challenges and a way forward.

On the overview of SADC SPS structure, it has 16 member states, a SADC SPS coordination committee, a plant protection committee and various national SPS coordination committees. He shared on the financial support from the EU to identify centres of excellences, train staff on PRA and pest diagnostic and to enhance common management strategies on major emerging pests in the region which include: MLND, fruit flies, FAW, banana Fusarium wilt (TR4). He further emphasized on a technical committee of plant protection meeting among directors of NPPOs of member states that was organized to address the recent outbreak of AML in Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. He pointed out the resources mobilization with the UN central emergence response fund (US\$ 2million), FAO emergency TCP (US\$ 0.5 million), FAO special fund and rehabilitation (US\$0,5 million). The shortage of financial resources to support national efforts to contain pest outbreaks remains a main challenge in SADC, he said. Base on above experiences, he made the following recommendations:

- SADC to Strengthen collaboration in cross-border contain of swarms through the use of MoU in the region;
- Need for IAPSC to prioritize migrants pests from RECs and at AU level;
- IAPSC to create a platform for promoting coordinating phytosanitary information exchange.



Presentation of AU-IAPSC 29th General Assembly Report, Recommendations and Adoption

Upon presentations and fruitful discussions by members of the General Assembly; the session made the following recommendations:

1. AU-IAPSC to apply a higher level of scrutiny to internal and external audit on the status of implementation of its 10 years strategic and action plan (2014-2023) in response to the check source review and in view of the roll-out of the continental plant health management systems.
2. AU-IAPSC to develop and establish mechanisms for phytosanitary information sharing among member states, RECs and itself.

3. The African Union Commission to avail resources for building a solid emergency fund to effectively enhance timely response to any crops pests outbreaks in the continent;
4. AU-IAPSC, member states and RECs to continue working closely to contribute to the enhancement of human capacity development in NPPOs for better plant health management in Africa.
5. Member states and RECs should be fully engaged and work closely with AU-IAPSC and other stakeholders in the process of the development of the Plant Health Strategy for Africa.

Date and Venue of the 30th session of IAPSC General Assembly 2023

The assembly agreed that the 30th session of the IAPSC general assembly will hold in February 2023 in Cote d'Ivoire or Sierra Leone.

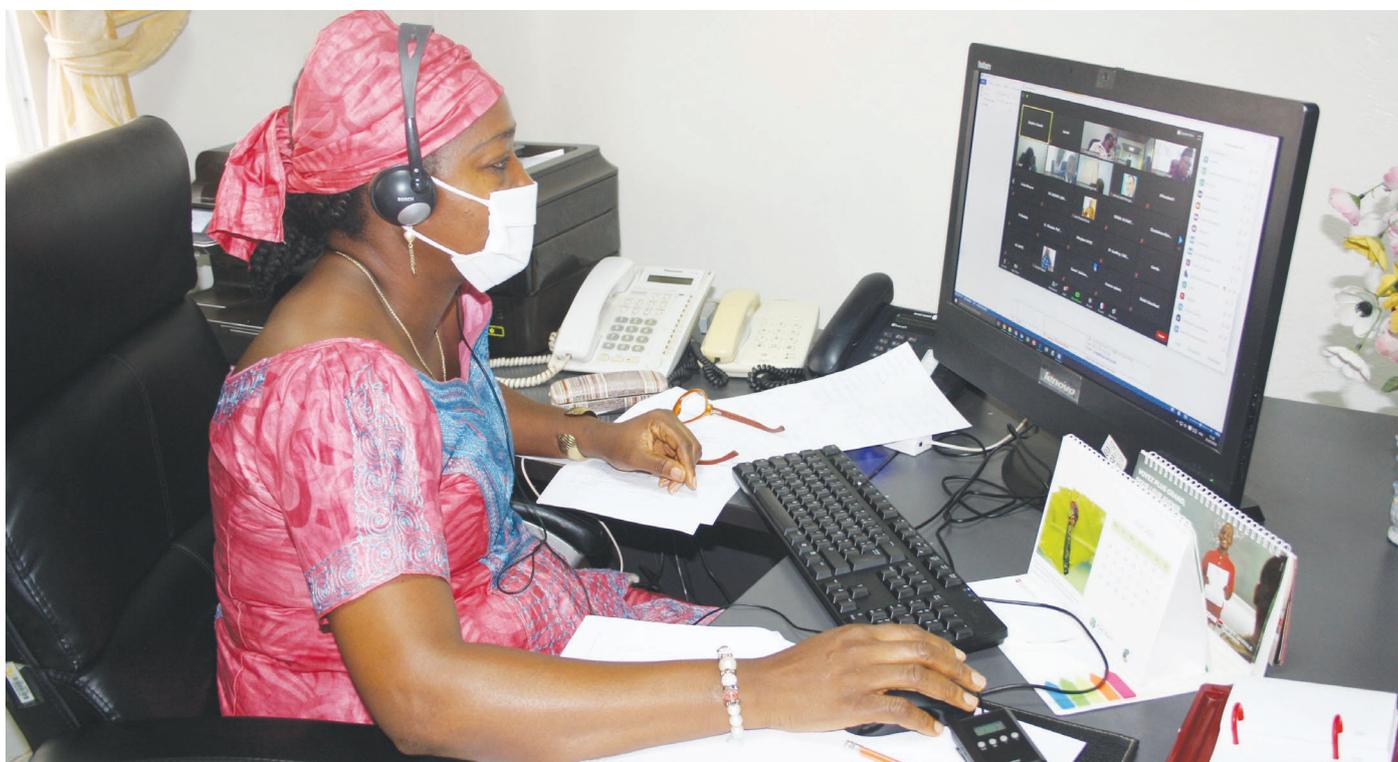


The language interpretation team on duty during the assembly





THE 14TH SESSION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN UNION INTER-AFRICAN PHYTOSANITARY COUNCIL (AU-IAPSC) 14-16 APRIL 2021



An AU-IAPSC staff Mrs Delphine Elimbi following the session proceedings during Covid 19

Opening Session

The 14th session of the IAPSC's Steering Committee was virtually held from 12th to 13th April 2021. About 33 participants attended the meeting, aimed at reviewing and endorsing the implementation status of the 13th Steering Committee, the activities progress report of AU-IAPSC for 2020 and work plan for 2021; including the administrative and financial report and information and communication service report; prior for the formulation of recommendations. The full report of the Steering Committee can be accessed on www.auiapsc.org/reports.

1.1. Remarks by Director of AU-IAPSC

The Director of AU-IAPSC Dr. Jean Gerald MEZUI M'ELLA expressed his gratitude to the government of Cameroon for accepting to open this session and thanked the African Union Commission for providing funds to organize the meeting even though virtually due to the COVID 19 pandemic. He then highlighted some of the activities of the AU-IAPSC, focusing on the phytosanitary issues, especially phytosanitary measures needed to protect plant resources from those introduced.





There was an expression of concern over a significant number of problems pertaining to the proper management of hazardous pesticides and the management of emerging pests. He said recommendations for further strengthening of organizational structures would be necessary in this meeting as was expectation that new recommendations would be made with special priority within the overall context of achieving sustainable agriculture.

1.2. Remarks by Director of DARBE

In his address, Dr Godfrey Bahiingwa, Director of DARBE speaking on behalf of H.E Commissioner for ARBE congratulated members of the 14th session of the Steering Committee of the AU-IAPSC on their working partnership for a long time. He reiterated AU-IAPSC's role of among other key mandates, coordinating plant health activities in Africa, strengthening capacities of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) in the management of pest and diseases and to assist member states to enhance plant quarantine capacities, comply with phytosanitary standards and to raise plant health awareness among key stakeholders. To play the above roles, AU-IAPSC is guided by two statutory organs which are the Steering Committee and the General Assembly.

He noted that over the past year, there were intensified efforts on the development of standards, the development of a PRA for some agricultural commodities and participation for the development of phytosanitary measures and the celebration of the International Year of Plant Health. While the present positive trend was encouraging at this time of COVID 19 pandemic, there was much to be done, including the need to persuade the member states to effective plant health best practices in the continent.

Dr Bahiingwa further described the progress made in terms of ISPM compliance but emphasized on the need to strengthen the implementation of SPS issues within member states with IAPSC promoting plant health best practices. He congratulated members for their dedication to, and personal active involvement in the steering committee to identify the challenges and to propose the recommendations to resolve the issues constrained by AU-IAPSC programme budget and activities. He hoped that AU-IAPSC, Member States, RECs and other stakeholders would implement the outcomes of the meeting of the 14th session of the Steering Committee for general improvement of agriculture in Africa.





1.3. Remarks by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Cameroon.

The Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development of the host Cameroon Mr Gabriel Mbairrobe gave a brief outline on the status of agriculture in Cameroon, noting the role of Cameroon as the leading producer of many major commodities. He said the overall increase in the problems relating to pest management were the result of global warming, changes in the agriculture system and the increased volume of agriculture trade. To overcome these challenges, he shared that infrastructure and technologies for the monitoring and control of pests have been enhanced, a new plant protection system is established, while the ephyto certification is been promoted in the country to facilitate trade. Cameroon continued her commitment to plant protection such as the involvement in activities related ISPMs and RSPMs which helped develop the pest free area concept for some agricultural commodities and pests, and enhanced the work on PRA.

1.4. Election of the Bureau

Dr. Ahmed Ramdy from AU-HRST and Mr. Abakar Mohammed from ECCASS were proposed to be the Chair and vice Chair of the meeting respectively. Mr. Nana Sani and Mrs. Maryben Chiatoh from AU-IAPSC were the rapporteurs of the meeting.

1. Review of the status of AU-IAPSC 13th Steering Committee Recommendations; Achievements.

Director of AU-IAPSC Dr. Jean Gerard Mezui M' Ella, reported on the implementation status of recommendations of the 13th session of the steering committee of the office and achievement. The report was critically discussed by the session and while it was endorsed, a recommendation was made by the session states that AU-IAPSC should endeavor to have a memorandum of understanding elaborated and signed between itself and the Regional Economic Communities to strengthen plant protection best practices in Africa.

2. Presentation of AU-IAPSC 2020 Progress Report

The 2020 Progress report of AU-IAPSC was presented by Ms Luiza Munyua, Senior Scientific Officer-Phytopathology. She highlighted key activities implemented by AU-IAPSC; within the framework of the 2020 program budget that fall under CAADP and related activities which include:

7. Build Member States capacity on Integrated Pest Management strategies and implementation of IPM for sustainable agriculture;





8. Mainstream SPS in country CAADP investment plans and development of SPS information systems and enhancing advocacy, awareness and communications to ensure sufficient safe biological control agents are available to manage plant with a continental training;

9. Strengthen Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) capacity to control migratory and trans-boundary pests; case study of fall armyworm;

10. Review and update member states plant quarantine legislation and law in compliance with international requirements; strengthening their capacity on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) risk assessment;

11. Improve Member State capacity building in Phytosanitary standard setting through the organization of the IPPC's workshop for the comments and review of the 2020 draft ISPMs and specifications in Africa and ;

12. Promote member states on standards setting process for CPM-15; Participation to CPM-15; Technical Consultation among RPPOs and Standards Committee and SPS Standards Committee meetings; participation of IAPSC to the IYPH 2020. She also presented the key achievements as well as recommendations that came up during the implementation of AU-IAPSC above mentioned activities and major challenges faced in the implementation of

various activities like the budget austerity, restriction of the movement of the people due to covid-19 pandemic. In addition she presented some activities that the office implemented and /or took part.

After the presentation and upon discussing issues raised, members of the Steering Committee endorsed the report and made the following recommendations:

1. With the outbreak and spread of locusts in Africa, in collaboration with SADC Secretariat, Member States and FAO southern region; AU-IAPSC to undertake countries locusts invasion risk assessment in the southern African region and make a comprehensive and details action plan for their management;

2. AU-IAPSC to establish a network of plant health experts to positively response to a call for topics by IPPC, get involved in the different working group panels for effective contribution of the continent to the stated subject matters.

Presentation of AU-IAPSC 2021 programme activities: Regarding the 2021 programme budget of AU-IAPSC, Ms Munyua presented the six activities approved within the framework of the implementation of CAADP and related activities.

Full activities can be accessed on

www.auiapsc.org/reports.





Projection of the 2022 programme budget of AU-IAPSC: The activities of the 2022 programme budget of AU-IAPSC are found in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and related activities of the programme budget of DARBE. 11 activities were submitted under three outputs. The committee examined and endorsed the 2020 progress report of AU-IAPSC and the programme budget for 2021 and projected programme for 2022.

3. Financial report 2020, 2021; resource mobilization, funding proposals:

Ms. Jovita Akiumbeni, Finance and administrative Officer, presented the financial report for the AU-IAPSC's budget programme of 2020, 2021 and 2022 as well as the summary of the operational budget. Under Administrative and finance report for 2020, the operational budget for AU-IAPSC stood at \$1,172,036 (One Million one hundred and seventy two thousand and thirty six dollars), expenses as at 31/12/2020 amounted to \$1,053,906.48 (One Million fifty three thousand nine hundred and six dollars and forty eight cents with a budget execution rate of 90%. The program Budget for 2020 stood at \$390,853 (Three hundred and ninety thousand and Eight Hundred and fifty three dollars).

Expenses as at 31/12/2020 amounted to \$51,992.54 (Fifty One Thousand nine hundred and ninety two dollars and fifty four cents) with a budget execution rate of 13% with poor execution rate due to the COVID 19 pandemic as no physical meetings and data collection exercises could be carried out.

4. Presentation of Information and Communication update

Miss. Chipiliro Kansilanga, Communication and Information Officer at AU-IAPSC presented the synopsis of the office communication services, the key areas of cooperation, the communication strategy through COVID-19 including engagement with member states through the website as well as the social media platforms. AU-IAPSC continues to undertake various communication innovations despite the challenges brought about by Covid-19.

She said the challenges have also presented massive opportunities for digital and online platforms to thrive and be utilized extensively. Ms Kansilanga said to strengthen AU-IAPSC's role in information exchange among member states, NPPOs and all stakeholders, the secretariat had initiated a systematic analysis of the country reports with the aim of improving its information exchange services and to explore multiple information channels.





The session commended the report but also recommended that AU-IAPSC together with stakeholders, must work on developing country profiles for the exchange of plant protection information among member states in formulating policies, recognize dangerous trends or gaps in the execution of plant protection functions, and promote transparency and harmonization of procedures.

5. ISPM 38 Implementation, Seed Health and Trade in Africa (Grace Gitu, AFSTA)

Mrs. Grace GITU's presentation highlighted: AFSTA background, seed trade and seed association, seed health, ISPM38 scope and challenges, including African seed industry. For seed health and seed industry perspective, she highlighted seed borne pests with reference to seed transmitted pests and non-seed transmitted pests. She further briefed participants on the scope of ISPM38 and provided guidance on seed pests' management.

Key challenges like the same pests being given different phytosanitary measures in different countries; changes in government import requirements; lack of pest list information; e-phyto not well implemented by member states and different requirements for the movement of small lots of seeds for research purposes were highlighted.

She finally provided some opportunities of ISPM38 which include: strengthen PRA, appropriate phytosanitary measures at pre and post borders entry points, facilitation of phytosanitary requirements and improvement of dialogue among stakeholders and recalled AFSTA membership to IAPSC's Steering Committee and shed more light on the activities implemented by her organization.

6. e-Phyto Solutions: Africa and beyond (Josiah Syanda)

In his presentation, Mr. Josiah M. Syanda, Regional Representative - IPPC ePhyto Steering Group (ESG) stressed that e-phyto came into play due to challenges of the paper certificate and it is neither the copy of paper certificate, nor a scan or image of the paper certificate but it is an XML language of the PC, which feasibility study was initiated in 2014 by CPM9. He highlighted on the status of e-phyto usage with 98 countries that have registered, 68 countries are still testing, 31 countries do user-acceptance testing, 52 countries are doing live exchanges and 49 countries have done ephyto live production. With regard to the e-phyto update in Africa, the continent has 11 percent of the 98 countries using ephyto. Twelve countries are using ephyto in Africa with some just doing testing while others are doing live exchange using either the generic system or their national systems.





There is need for Africa to pick up this system because it generates tremendous benefits including the reduction of non-compliant certificates, elimination of paper processing which is labor intensive, reduction of industry claims for late delivery and protection of legitimate trade he said. Mr Josiah also listed some challenges in the implementation of e-phyto in Africa which include: inadequate awareness, lack of computers and mobile devices, insufficient financial resources and internet connectivity and inappropriate enabling regulatory framework. He further indicated that the IPPC is working with other organizations to provide support for the ephyto solutions to be adopted by different countries and the future will rely on: exchange notices of non-compliance, inspection findings, translation into other languages and sustainable funding. He recommended:

1. AU-IAPSC to promote ephyto implementation in Africa and assist Member States to source for funding and support towards its implementation;
2. Member states to source for funding support towards implementation of ephyto and
3. Development partners to assist Member States with the implementation of the ephyto.

7. Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems In Africa (FAO/RAF, Jean-Baptiste Bahama)

The presentation of Dr Jean Baptise Bahama focused on elements of pest alert and response system (Prevention, monitoring, diagnostics, early warning and response including coordination); status of phytosanitary systems in Africa and strengthening prevention capacities. Highlights were provided on several pests' problems, emerging pests and the weak phytosanitary systems of different AU member states. He listed some current major pests in Africa which include: Fall Armyworm, Maize lethal necrosis disease, fruit fly species, wheat rusts mainly yellow (Ug-99) and stem rusts, Cassava Mosaic Virus/EACMV-Ug, Banana Xanthomonas wilt (BXW), Banana bunchy top, Banana Fusarium wilt (TR4), Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD), tomato leaf miners, Locusts, Grain eating birds and Invasive Alien plants. These pests require mitigation priorities actions in the continent.

For strengthening prevention capacities, Prof. Bahama proposed some actions to be undertaken by all stakeholders which are to:

- collaborate with international partners;
- maintain pest lists;
- conduct surveillance to identify rapidly incursions of pests of concern;
- strengthen diagnostics capacities;





- improve preparedness for the most significant pests as identified by stakeholders and partners;
- partner with stakeholders to evaluate response options and develop response plans;
- enhance data collection, quality and reporting systems for emergency response and
- ensure resources availability and plant protection personnel training.

He insisted on urgent measures to be taken to strengthen African systems for pest outbreak and alert response and on prevention and preparedness; coordination and cooperation.

8. Presentation and adoption of the recommendations of 14th session AU-IAPSC`s steering committee

Upon presentations and fruitful discussions by members of the steering committee; the session made the following recommendations.

1. AU-IAPSC should endeavor to have a Memorandum of Understanding elaborated and signed between AU-IAPSC and the Regional Economic Communities to strengthen plant protection best practices in Africa.

2. With the outbreak and spread of locusts in Africa, in collaboration with SADC Secretariat, Member States and FAO southern region; AU-IAPSC to undertake countries locusts invasion risk assessment in the southern African region and make a comprehensive and details action plan for their management.

3. AU-IAPSC to establish a network of plant health experts to positively respond to a call for topics by IPPC, get involved in the different working group panels for effective contribution of the continent to the stated subject matters.

4. AU-IAPSC, together with stakeholders to develop countries profiles for the exchange of plant protection information among itself, Member States and REC's.

5. AU-IAPSC and member states to consolidate efforts in sourcing for funding and support towards the implementation of e-phyto, for trade facilitation in Africa;

6. AU-IAPSC to enhance partnership with institutions in charge of plant health and develop projects on the continental coordination of plant pests mitigation in Africa so as to ensure sustainable agriculture for trade facilitation and better food security and safety in Africa.





3RD PHYTOSANITARY CONFERENCE IN CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANT HEALTH 12 SEPTEMBER 2021, NAIROBI, KENYA.



Plant health experts and officials interacting at KEPHIS offices in Nairobi after the IYPH celebrations

To mark the International Year of Plant Protection (IYPH) in Kenya and Africa, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and CORE organized a virtual conference from September 13 to 16, 2021 to share knowledge and best practices with stakeholders in the area of plant health.

The conference, held as part of the celebrations of the IYPH in 2020/2021, brought together participants from different member states, partners and stakeholders in the plant health sector.

It was held under the theme *“Improving phytosanitary systems for healthy plants, safe and sustainable trade”* and it provided

a platform for interaction, sharing achievements and challenges among the participants.

Deliberations also centered around the impact of various activities implemented during the IYPH and brainstorming on how to promote market access and identify potential areas of phytosanitary regulatory cooperation at regional and international levels.

AU-IAPSC Director Jean Gerard MEZUI M’ELLA called for stronger partnerships and collaborative efforts, if the African region is to record tangible results in plant health management.





INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC) REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR AFRICA 21-24 SEPTEMBER 2021



Introduction:

The IPPC Regional Workshop for Africa was held virtually from 21-24 September 2021. The meeting was organized by International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat in collaboration with Africa Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) under the theme International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) legacy. The workshop had attendance from National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO's), AU-IAPSC, IPPC Secretariat, FAO- Regional and Sub-Regional offices in Africa and other partners and stakeholders. A summary is provided here while the full report can be accessed on www.ippc.org

Key outcomes from the workshop.

IPPC Secretariat

With a video message Dr. Avetik NERSISYAN, on behalf of the IPPC Secretariat, recognized 2021 as a year of transition since over the past year the Covid-19 pandemic has destructed and changed people's life. He appreciated how people remained resilient and cooperated to break geographical barrier and worked together in this digital world. He appreciated the successful virtual meeting held for the first time in history of the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) and how the pandemic could not stop activities that support food security and safe trade of plant and plant products at a global scale.





He emphasized on the importance of the regional workshop as another opportunity to work together to share ideas and cooperate to strengthen the plant health in the African Region. He emphasized that reviewing of standards as a team is important as standards are a key to international trade.

ADG of Regional Office / FAOR

Assistant Director General FAO Regional office for Africa Dr. ABEBE HAILE Gabriel appreciated the collaboration between AU-IAPSC and FAO. He mentioned that plants are the pillars of life, plants are responsible for 80% of the food we eat and 98% of the oxygen we breathe but yet there are continuously under threat. It is estimated that 40% of food crops is lost due the plant pests and disease and it affects food and nutrition security, the environment, trade and the food quality. He emphasized on the increasing occurrence of native and non-native transboundary plants pests and disease in Africa, which have an impact on the rural livelihood, economic development and biodiversity across the continent.

AUC DARBE

Dr Godfrey BAHIGWA, Director of AUC-DARBE commended the work done by FAO and its IPPC which aim to ensure that International Standards for phytosanitary measures are developed to sustain plant health.

He mentioned that an estimated population of 9.5 billion people depends on agriculture and by 2050 the population will be doubled. He emphasised that prevention is better than cure, by preventing the spread and introduction of pests into new area is a shared responsibility. He further emphasized the need to speak with one voice, therefore standard setting is everyone's responsibility and urged Member States to further engage and discuss issues pertaining to plant health. He informed the participants on the Strategy for Plant Health for Africa which will be presented to the Ministers responsible for Africa.

Governance and strategy (CPM, CPM Bureau)

The 2021 comprehensive update on the Governance and strategy was presented by Mr Lucien KOUAME KONAN who gave a brief overview of the IPPC, taking into consideration all four stages from the year 1881 to 2018 and the process it went through from the original adoption to subsequent revisions. On the 2021 achievements IPPC governance and Strategy, Mr Kouame presented the meetings held and the CPM decisions made. He highlighted the following:

- A first virtual CPM meeting was attended by three and fifty (350) participants, one hundred and twenty two (122) contracting parties and 40 partner organizations.





He also presented the decisions which were made as follows:

- The adoption of the IPPC strategic framework 2020-2030 and eleven (11) standards (7 ISPMs and 7 PTs) and CPM recommendation on food aid.
- The establishment of three CPM focus groups under the auspices of implementation of IPPC strategic framework 2020-2030, Climate change and plant pests and communications.
- Operationalize the IYPH 2020 Technical Advisory Body to function as IPPC predatory body on the planning and organization of the first conference of IYPH conferences and webinars.
- To encourage the contracting parties to volunteer in hosting the first IYPH conference
- Support the process to establish the observance by United Nations system of an International Year of Plant Health on the 12 May every year.
- To encourage the IPPC Contracting Parties to support the proposal of observance by United Nations system and to liaise with counterparts in the FAO conference and at United Nations General Assembly to facilitates their endorsement.

Updates and reports:

Updates were made from the Standard Committee by Mr Ezequiel FERRO the chairperson of Standard Committee. He presented on major activities which took place from 2020 to 2021.

Updates were made from Implementation and Capacity Development Committee by Mr Dominique PELLETIER, the IC chairperson who among others provided a list of IPPC guides and training materials which were recently translated to French and new publications on the pest status guide.

Updates from the National Reporting Obligations Regions programme and Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) was presented, where the IC approved the PCE strategy for 2020-2030.

Drafts Standards and CPM Recommendations

The Draft revision of ISPM4 was presented by Mr David Kamagira, a Member of the Standard Committee for African Region. He highlighted on some revisions made on the standard and elaborated on some major drafting issues. He provided relevant information and potential implementation issues and invited Contracting Parties to provide substantive and technical comments and not editorial comments to the draft and use Online Comment System. He urged the Contacting Parties to be part and parcel of the development of Standards.





The draft 2021 amendments to ISPM 5: He also presented a Glossary of Phytosanitary terms and advised Contracting Parties that the Glossary is constantly updated and the process involve additions, revisions and deletions. He presented the list proposed amendments which were made. In his presentation on the CPM recommendation on the contaminating pests, Kamangira shared the adopted IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and the associated five-year investment plan approved by the CPM that identifies the management of contaminating pests directly and indirectly to protect global plant resources and facilitate safe trade.

Regional activities and raising awareness

Prof. Jean Baptiste Bahama from FAO shared and elaborated on FAO's focus areas of interventions and also plant health support programmes by FAO in management of pest and capacity building.

RPPO activities

Ms Maryben Chiatoh from AU-IAPSC made a presentation on the Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) activities. She elaborated on the vision, mission and the goals of AU-IAPSC and its core Coordination activities as RPPO for Africa.

Topics of interest to the region

Various topics tackled during the workshop included:

1. Locust outbreak in eastern and in Eastern and Southern Africa; capacity development of DL in West Africa by Mr. Shoki AL-DOBAL.
2. Preparedness in effectively handling pests outbreak (including Fusarium wilt TR4, FAW guidelines by Ms. Sara Brunel who presented on Fall Warmy Worms and Fusarium oxysporum.
3. Zambia NPPO by Dr Batiseba TEMBO on Wheat blast (*Triticum aestivum* L).
4. Mozambique NPPO by Mr. Afonso Sitole on Fusarium wilt.
5. Rwanda NPPO by Mr Abera HAILE on Mango mealybug (*Ratrococcus invandens* Williams).
6. Golden Apple Snail (GAS) (*Pomacea canaliculata*) by Dr. Alexander MUVEA.
7. The IPPC ePhyto Solution by Mr Josiah Syanda.
8. National Reporting Obligation by Mr Qingpo YANG.

Conclusion of the workshop/ Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

The chairperson indicated that the next meeting if possible will not be a virtual meeting and countries should volunteer to host the event which will be held in September 2022. Contracting parties did not volunteer and were given a chance to go and consult their countries and give feedback and NPPOs were given time to decide up to January 2022.



**STRENGTHENING PHYTOSANITARY COMPLIANCE, LEGISLATION AND CAPACITY OF AU MEMBER STATES TO MANAGE PLANT HEALTH RISKS
25-29 OCTOBER 2021 DOUALA, CAMEROON**



A group photograph of participants to the review workshop

As part of the process to strengthen AU Member States plant health systems, enhance their capacity to better implement International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMS), carry out pest risk assessment including risk management, and develop effective monitoring programs, AU-IAPSC organized a workshop on capacity building of member states on phytosanitary legislation and international requirements through review, assessment of phytosanitary compliance and capacity to manage phytosanitary risks.

The 4- day workshop was held on October 25-29, 2021 in Douala, Cameroon and attracted member states, partners and various stakeholders. The meeting was chaired by Mr Charles Nying from Cameroon whilst rapporteurs were Raymonda Johnson - Sierra Leone and Angèle Yao – Ivory Coast, with assistance from Nana Sani of AU-IAPSC.

Full report of the workshop can be accessed on: www.auiapsc.org/reports





Opening Session

AU-IAPSC Director Dr. Jean Gerard Mezui M'ella recalled that the face-to-face workshop is being held in a particular context of the coronavirus disease, COVID-19, which seriously disrupts the global balance. He added that the lockdowns, financial and trade restrictions imposed by COVID 19, have had a heavy impact on the economies of countries around the world in general and those of Africa in particular. He emphasized that agriculture is the livelihood of around 60% of the African population and employs on average the same percentage. Despite the progress made by some African countries, ensuring food security and nutrition in line with the SDGs remains a constant challenge. He therefore said the workshop was intended to be a framework for raising awareness on all the activities of the IPPC, particularly in the field of SPS and on the importance of plant health in particular.

Opening Remarks

Opening remarks were delivered by the Secretary General, Prof Mbong Bambot Grace Annih on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon. Prof Mbong commended AU-IAPSC for its relentless drive to continuously engage with Member States and other players in plant health, in the quest to seek joint and common solutions to the challenges we all face.

She emphasized that the workshop is crucial not just for the stakeholders within plant health, but beyond, as the challenges encountered in this generation are common, yet demand diverse and modern solutions; solutions that would ordinarily look strange on the surface and yet viable in practice. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, that need has become even greater and the solutions provided during such meetings ought to be people-centered solutions, if we are to achieve a better Africa.

Workshop objectives and expected outcomes

Mr Flaubert Nana Sani from AU-IAPSC explained to the participants about the workshop objectives and expected outcomes as follows:

Workshop Objectives

- i. Enhance and strengthen the capacities of Member states on plant health legislation and adherence to international requirements for market access and trade facilitation;*
- ii. Enhance AU Member States capacity to implement international standards and improve their plant health systems;*
- iii. Review and evaluation of the status of member states phytosanitary compliance and capacity to manage plant health risks;*
- iv. monitor and evaluate member states to ensure phytosanitary capacity and compliance*





Expected Outcomes

- i. Knowledge gaps and challenges in attaining harmonized and world class plant health systems identified*
- ii. Monitoring and evaluation of Member States phytosanitary capacity initiated*
- iii. Draft workshop report and recommendations*

Plant health legislation and adherence to international requirements for market access and trade facilitation.

Member states presentations:

Prior to country presentations, Alphonsine Louhouari of Congo proposed that a presentation outline be sent to the Member States in order to have homogeneous presentations. The proposal was seconded and approved. Presentations were thereafter received from the participating member state National Plant Protection Organizations which included, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tunisia and Zambia.

Discussion

Following the presentations by participating member states, a number of general challenges and constrains were identified that hampered implementation of plant health legislation and adherence to international requirements for market access and trade facilitation, including:

- Outdated legislation with the need for revision
- Lack of funding
- Inadequate structured NPPO
- Weak research system in some NPPOs
- Insufficient compliance to standards and requirements
- Interceptions of products at the market
- NPPOs need to be self automonus and center of excellence
- Member states needs upgraded diagnostic laboratory fully equipped
- Recruitment of expertise and phytosanitary officers
- Capacity building and infrastructure
- Electronic certification

Asummaryofthememberstatepresentations was compiled.

Implementation of phytosanitary capacity evaluations, Case Study-1 by Ms Alphonsine Louhouari

Ms Alphonsine highlighted the process when Member States want to conduct the PCE process. The process begins with a request sent by the country to the IPPC for access to use the FAO-PCE Tool. It was made clear that the PCE tool is a modular online software interactive tool consisting of thirteen semi-structured questionnaire modules at 3 levels:

- i. Phytosanitary system level: country profile, legislation, environmental forces;*





ii. NPPO management level: NPPO's mission and strategy, NPPO's structure and processes, NPPO's resources

iii. Phytosanitary core activity level: pest diagnostic capacity, surveillance and pest reporting, pest eradication, import regulation, pest risk analysis, pest free areas, export certification, re-export and transit

The modules are selected and applied in total or clusters according to the preferences of the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO). She emphasized that IPPC provides the technical expert and can assist in funding member states to conduct their PCE. She further explained that the PCE tool is to help Member States identify the weakness in their plant health system and assist in strengthening their plant health system and implementation of standards.

Discussion on Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE)

The discussion focused on who runs the PCE, funding of the PCE and steps of PCE. It was confirmed that the process is led by the staff of the NPPO with the involvement of actors outside the NPPO, in particular the representatives of the public authorities concerned, the representatives of research institutes, universities, the agro-food industry; or associations of importers / exporters.

The PCE is implemented for a period of between six months and a year. However, The IPPC Secretariat recommends performing a full PCE every 3-4 years. The PCE can be done in whole or in part, and as often as needed. The IPPC Secretariat can help fund a PCE with the help of its funding partners up to USD 80,000. It invites countries to allocate resources for planning, identifying stakeholders and organizing workshops with a view to bringing the PCE process to completion.

Implementation of phytosanitary capacity evaluations-case study2– Raymonda Johnson

In the case of Sierra Leone, Raymonda Johnson spoke about the situation of Sierra Leone NPPO before the PCE was conducted and the transformation after conducting the PCE. She confirmed that Sierra Leone has conducted only three of the thirteen modules including:

- Environmental forces assessment (module 3),
- NPPO mission and strategy (module 4) and
- Export certification, re-export and transit (module 13).

She listed some main weaknesses identified and highlighted on some challenges such as; insufficient funds; inadequate quarantine facilities and human resources.





Member states were motivated to conduct the PCE and AU-IAPSC encouraged to sensitize policy makers on the importance of PCE during the AU ministerial meetings. The Director AU-IAPSC welcomed the newly elected NPPO Directors of Burkina Faso and Nigeria to the family. Sierra Leone also informed the meeting about the passing away of one Mr Moses (Nigeria) who recently represented Africa in the IPPC Standards Committee; a moment of silence was observed in his remembrance.

Breakout sessions and discussions

Participants were divided into two break out groups:

Group 1 – Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Congo; Cote d’Ivoire; RDC; Tchad; Tunisia

Group 2 – Botswana; Kenya; Malawi; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Uganda; Zambia

Breakout sessions focused on: Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE); Pest Risk Analysis (PRA); Updates on invasive species and Laboratory Diagnostic Networking. In relation to these broad topics, the following questions were to be addressed:

1. Has PCE been conducted in respective member states?
2. Countries achievement after PCE;
3. What support would require member states in order to conduct PCE in their countries?
4. Other tools that can be employed to evaluate, monitor and evaluate the capacity of an NPPO;

5. Do NPPOs have the capacity to conduct PRA?
6. How does PRA help in the management of plant health risk?
7. Is PRA aiding in updating country pest lists?
8. Proposals on how laboratory diagnostic networking can be done and / or strengthened between member states towards management of plant health risks.

The summary report from the breakout sessions can be accessed in the full report on www.auiapsc.org/publications

Field visit to Douala airport and sea port plant health inspection service

The purpose of this field visit was to appreciate practical approach for inspection and phytosanitary certificate activities as carried out by Cameroon for an operation of a national export certification system. It also allowed for sharing of best practices in prescribing standard operating procedures to ensure valid and credible phytosanitary certification for export of consignments of plants/plant products and other regulated articles in meeting the phytosanitary requirements of importing country and thereby fulfilling the international obligations enshrined under the International plant Protection Convention and WTO-SPS Agreement. Participants visited Douala International Airport,





where they were hosted by the Head and Controllers of the inspection services unit of the phytosanitary Police Post for import and export freight services. At the Douala Port, they visited the different services including the one-stop-shop for foreign trade, export post for logs and lumber including other export products. Participants were briefed with the procedures for processing and stamping wood packaging material and woods used for international trade in compliance with the ISPM 15. Standard Operating Procedures for Export Inspection and Phytosanitary Certification of Plants/ Plant Products & other Regulated.

Recommendations:

The following are the recommendations that

were proposed and adopted following the four days of presentations, discussions and deliberations:

Member State Recommendations:

1. Revise phytosanitary legislation in accordance with international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs);
2. Allocate substantial operating budgets for NPPOs; supervise the conduct of the PCE by making financial and technical resources available; List the phytosanitary diagnostic laboratories and communicate them to IAPSC;
3. Sign collaboration protocols with phytosanitary diagnostic laboratories in accordance with the standard;



Member States representatives and IAPSC staff touring the Douala Port to appreciate certification regulations and procedures.





AU-IAPSC Recommendations:

4. Set up a PRA unit within the NPPO;
 5. Establish or update the list of quarantine pests;
 6. Register staff for various online training courses on phytosanitary issues (PRA, surveillance, etc.);
 7. Train staff in the field of plant protection (online / face-to-face);
 8. Review and / or update and adopt phytosanitary inspection guides and manuals;
 9. Collaborate with other countries for the sharing of information and experience;
 10. Strengthen the capacity of IPPC `s contact points and editors for the online commenting system and the National Reporting Obligation;
 11. The list of phytosanitary diagnostic laboratories should be used to facilitate networking between member states and IAPSC.
1. Advocate to IPPC secretariat for PCE to be conducted in member states
 2. Collaborate with CABI to provide member counties with PRA tools;
 3. Organise training of member states on PRA in Kenya and in Tunisia;
 4. Put in place a network of phytosanitary laboratories;
 5. Create a website on the management and exchange on phytosanitary issues;
 6. To encourage and support Member States to conduct the PCE;
 7. To share the plant health strategy for Africa with member states upon adoption by the 4th STC;
 8. To promote implementation of ISPMs and /or harmonize Regional and continental protocols for testing's and verifications in the reference laboratories;
 9. To assist member states to update their pest and quarantine pest list;
 10. To promote member states to implement ephyto.



Phytosanitary police at Douala International Airport briefing Member States on inspection, import and export regulations.





A SPECIAL VISIT BY HER EXCELLENCY COMMISSIONER OF DARBE TO AU-IAPSC OFFICES, 25 OCTOBER 2021 YAOUNDE, CAMEROON



Commissioner for DARBE, Her Excellency Josepha Sacko with some of AU-IAPSC staff during her visit.

On this day, we were delighted to welcome our Commissioner of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy & Sustainable Environment (DARBE), Her Excellency Madame Ambassador Josefa Sacko in our Yaoundé office.

Addressing part of the staff available at the time of her brief visit, Ambassador Sacko commended AU-IAPSC for its diligence in coordinating plant health activities across Africa. Ambassador Sacko has supported AU-IAPSC in all its activities, attending capacity building meetings and engaging with various Member States.

Most importantly, she has continuously provided strategic guidance and direction to the fulfilment of the mandate in the management of plant health activities around the continent.

Under her leadership, DARBE leads the efforts to promote sustainable environmental management and agricultural development by boosting Member States' rural economy development and agricultural transformation by supporting the adoption of measures; strategies; policies and programmes on agriculture.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANT HEALTH STRATEGY FOR AFRICA: 2021



In December 2021, the 4th ordinary session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (Ardwe), adopted the Plant Health Strategy for Africa (PHSA). The Plant Health Strategy will serve as a harmonized framework that will deal with any plant health risks that might undermine effective realization of goals and objectives of Africa's development frameworks and strategies (such as the SPS policy framework and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)).

Globalization and increased agricultural trade result in an accelerated potential for the introduction and spread of plant pests; thereby adding pressure on national SPS regulatory systems responsible for protecting human, animal and plant life or health.

Having adopted the strategy, the STC requested the African Union Commission (AUC) and development partners to mobilize the necessary resources to facilitate the implementation and domestication of the strategy at national, regional and continental levels.

The AUC was further requested to develop Continental Guidelines for harmonization of pesticides registration to improve plant health on the continent. Furthermore, an appeal was made to AUC and AUDA-NEPAD to develop an implementation plan that will include clear targets and milestones; a detailed coordination mechanism and; a strategy to enhance ownership and buy-in by all stakeholders.

