

Regional Expert Consultation for Europe and Central Asia on plant health and protection

Budapest, Hungary, 12-14 December 2017

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Background

At its 155th session held in Rome from 5 to 9 December 2016, the FAO Council endorsed a draft Resolution on the proclamation of 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). With the full endorsement of the FAO Council a positive decision by the FAO Conference on the IYPH appears quite likely. It is also an encouraging signal that the awareness about the role of plant health in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is growing.

A key factor in any strategy to eliminate hunger and rural poverty must be the protection of plants and forests from pests and diseases. Productivity of crops grown for human consumption is increasingly at risk due to the increasing incidence of pests, especially emerging weeds, pathogens and pests. There are estimates that the potential losses caused by pests can be as high as 50%, globally.

In particular, pests which have been introduced into new ecosystems can have devastating effects on food security and the environment. Invasive species are species that are non-native to a particular ecosystem and whose introduction causes, or is likely to cause, sociocultural, economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health.

However, common pests that might be present and widespread, may often reach damaging levels or behave abundantly to the point where they threaten plant health and productivity. Mass outbreaks of pests as rapid spread of a plant disease (epiphytotics) or a pest (calamity) can seriously affect agricultural production, forest and the rest of the nature.

Concerns arisen from complete spectre of pest list of particular host plant and the management strategies to reduce their impact may be needed. Therefore it is important to identify methods and tools, including models currently used by countries to monitor, predict and manage emerging pests and diseases. While in the last decades the pest risks have been increasing globally, national efforts to combat these risks are surprisingly decreasing and resources committed to plant health are reduced.

The expert consultation should involve the best experts in the region including experts from National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs), plant protection departments/divisions private sector and academia involved in prevention of pest introduction and management. It is expected that the expert consultation will provide a forum to raise the national, regional and global awareness about plant health.

This consultation will address concerns related to common and emerging pest species, especially those with invasive nature, which spread in the region, while ensuring continues development and coordination of international plant health policies under the IPPC. It will help to establish mutual understanding of advanced plant protection and provide a platform for initiating future synergies in phytomedicine among plant protection sectors.

Invited experts would be expected to provide an overview of national situation and new developments as well as identify the main issues that need to be considered. With a better awareness of the benefits of plant health it should be possible to strengthen national, regional and international collaboration.

Objective

The overall objective of the workshop is raising awareness and mobilizing action of Member countries to identify new plant health risks and manage pest outbreaks and already distributed pest by new development approaches in plant health and plant protection. The expert consultation aims to identify ways for and actions to promote building networks and partnership through cross-sectoral dialogue, more coordinated planning, involvement of private sector and farmers, and opportunities to strengthen the evidence base for decision making in plant protection sectors.

Expected outputs

- An increased understanding implications of new development approaches in plant health and plant protection
- Experiences and lessons on strengthening capacities of the national phytosanitary control services in the region
- Capacity development for better coordination with partners involving stakeholders and different sectors in plant protection system for better mobilizing additional funding as well as involving private sector and civil society in dialogue, planning and implementation of actions on the ground

Expected outcomes

- Raised awareness among participants, on the new development approaches in plant health and plant protection
- Enhanced understanding of the role of plant protection departments/divisions, private sector and academia in prevention of pest introduction and management
- Identified ways for mobilizing additional funding and strong partnership with private sector and civil society in dialogue, planning and implementation of actions on the ground, and better understanding of possible FAO support
- Increased understanding of implications and opportunities for networking and further regional projects and activities
- Elaboration of recommendations and establishment of the technical working group for review/collection of information on plant protection and plant health concerned in countries of the European and Central Asian region
- Prioritize key regional actions and discuss concepts of new projects

Participants

Around 40 high-level governmental officials from 15 countries from REU region representing plant protection and phytosanitary sectors, Heads of National Plant Protection Organizations, Official IPPC Contact Points , International Associations, FAO HQ and REU technical officers.

Location and dates

Budapest, Hungary, 12-14 December 2017.