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INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Sixth Session

Rome, 29 March – 2 April 2004

Policy on the Production of Explanatory Documents, Training Guides and Other Supporting Documentation

Agenda Item 11.3 of the Provisional Agenda

1. The Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA) noted the demand for explanatory documents, manuals etc. to help countries implement provisions of the IPPC and International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs).

2. The SPTA discussed the difficulties in developing and endorsing these types of documents. The SPTA noted that such documents should not be regarded as legal interpretations of the IPPC and ISPMs, and therefore no legal status under the IPPC should be attributed to them. In this context it was noted that other organizations such as WTO-SPS produced guidance documents with a disclaimer indicating that they have no legal status. For example, the explanatory material on the WTO web site includes a note stating: "*While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the texts in these introductory pages, they cannot be taken as an official legal interpretation of the agreements*".

3. After considering this issue the SPTA recommended:
   1. That the ICPM endorses a policy that would allow these documents to be developed and distributed by, or under the auspices of, the Secretariat.
   2. That these documents should be reviewed (but not endorsed) by the Standards Committee before publication.
   3. That they would be published under the name of the author acting under the auspices of the Secretariat, with a clear disclaimer that these cannot be taken as an official legal interpretation of the IPPC or its related documents, and are produced for public information purposes only.
   4. That documents be placed on the International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP).

4. The ICPM is invited to:

   Adopt the recommendations of the SPTA on a policy for production of explanatory documents, training guides and similar documents.

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