

21st General Assembly of the Inter African Phytosanitary Council of the African Union

Dakar, 24 – 28 May 2004

General Report

The 21st General Assembly of the Inter African Phytosanitary Council of the African Union (IAPSC-AU) held from 24-28 May 2004, in the conference hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dakar.

Opening Ceremony

Placed under the Patronage of His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and under the aegis of His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of the African Union, the 21st General Assembly of the Inter African Phytosanitary Council of the African Union (IAPSC-AU) was officially opened by H.E. Habib Sy, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Water, of the Republic of Senegal. He was assisted by the Scientific Secretary of the IAPSC-AU, Dr Nazaire NKOUKA and the GTZ/HAPPA representative, Dr Mathias ZWEIGERT.

The opening session was marked by two speeches:

In his speech, the Representative of the African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture underscored the commitment of African leaders to the rapid implementation of the Detail Programme for the Development of Agriculture in Africa (DPDAA). He spelled out the four pilot programmes of the Commission, namely:

- Reducing food insecurity and poverty;
- Managing the continent's water resources;
- Managing natural resources and protecting the environment;
- Managing land resources.

The IAPSC, through its promotion of crop production and crop productivity, constitutes one of the main structures for the implementation of these programmes.

In his opening speech, His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Water recalled the global context of international trade and the increasingly restrictive requirements that African countries must meet.

He appreciated the choice of multilateral cooperation in the domain of plant protection and concluded that only the complete guarantee of the quality of our agricultural products can constitute a weapon which would enable Africa to reconquer and diversify its share in the international market.

Election of the bureau of the 21st GA of the IAPSC-AU

The following bureau was elected to conduct the proceedings of the 21st General Assembly. The bureau was assisted all through the proceedings by Dr Nazaire Nkouka, Scientific Secretary of the IAPSC-AU.

Chair: Mr N'Déné Lo, Director, Plant Protection Department, Senegal

Vice-Chair: Mr Abdallah Shafie, Director General of International Agricultural Relations, Egypt

General Rapporteur: Mr Amadou Diarra, Permanent Secretary of the Sahel Pesticides Committee (INSAH/CILSS)

Assistant General Rapporteur: Mr Moses Simemba (COMESA)

The documents presented at the Assembly constitute the appendices to this report.

The working programme presented by the Chair was amended and approved by the Assembly.

1st Session

Presentation of report and recommendations of the IAPSC-AU Executive Committee Meeting

Rapporteur: Mr Maurice Noudofinim (Benin)

Two documents were presented to the Executive Committee meeting, namely:

- the Scientific Secretary's report on the marketing strategy of the IAPSC;
- the working programme of the IAPSC at the level of the Interim Commission for Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) and of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (REA) of the African Union.

The presentation of the report of the Executive Committee meeting was followed by very fruitful discussions which can be summed up as follows:

- the existence of an imbalance between West African countries (three), and other countries (one), represented in the Executive Committee,
- replacement of the existing Executive Committee with a Steering Committee whose composition was proposed to the Assembly as follows:
 - Head of the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (African Union);
 - Representative of Regional Economic Communities;
 - Representative of the Commission in charge of Scientific Affairs and Research;
 - An independent Plant Protection Expert;
 - A Representative of the African Association for Grain Trade;
 - The Representative of Financial Donors.

Several delegates expressed the wish that Regional Economic Communities (RECs) be represented in the Steering Committee by sub-regional economic organizations recognized by the African Union.

The following modifications were adopted:

- Representatives of RECs shall have the status of permanent members;
- The following elements shall constitute the other members:
 - IITA
 - IAPPS (International Association for Plant Protection Sciences)
 - African Society of Agronomic Science
 - An independent Plant Protection Expert
 - A Representative of Financial Donors
 - A Representative of the AU (Rural Economy and Agriculture)
 - The IAPSC shall serve as Secretariat of the Committee.

The question of membership and multiplicity of RECs was perceived as a problem, and the Committee accepted that RECs be represented in the Committee by the following organizations:

- COMESA/IGAD Region: **ASARECA**
- ECOWAS/CENSAD/CEEAC Region: **CORAF**
- NORTH AFRICA Region: **Sahara Sahel Observatory**
- SOUTHERN AFRICA Region: **SADC**

With regard to the Communication Network, it was reported that all the countries did not yet have contact points for notification. For those countries in this situation, it was recommended that Internet should be resorted to. *(Further explain this paragraph, which is certainly referring to the WTO paper).*

The choice of training centres was also a subject of long discussions. In this respect, the IAPSC was asked to carry out an inventory of all training centres and their infrastructure, and make proposals to the Steering Committee.

2nd Session

Presentation of the IAPSC activity report covering the period 2002-2004, by Dr Nazaire Nkouka, IAPSC Scientific Secretary

Rapporteur: South Africa

The IAPSC Scientific Secretary presented an exhaustive document covering the period 2002-2004. The following salient points were subject of discussions by participants:

- certain activities were not implemented due to lack of financial resources;
- training activities on sanitary and phytosanitary standards, including risk analyses, were carried out;
- fears were raised on the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards;
- member countries expressed their needs in the following areas:

- training;
- damage caused by locusts, granivorous birds and fruit flies;
- proliferation of the water hyacinth;
- upsurge in certain cassava diseases.

It was agreed that absolute priority be given to training in the working programme of the IAPSC, and that the programmes of IAPSC Regional Training Centres at IBADAN (Nigeria), CAIRO (Egypt), MUGUGA (Kenya) and AGRHYMET (Niger) be revised while waiting for other centres to be assessed in the Central and Southern African sub-regions.

3rd Session

Presentation of paper on African agriculture, international phytosanitary standards, and market access, by Dr Olembó, Assistant Scientific Secretary.

Rapporteur: South Africa

Dr Olembó's paper gave rise to many questions, the most pertinent of which included the following:

- insufficiency of human resources in this domain in the various member countries;
- difficulties of market access through the accreditation of laboratories, traceability and the implementation of Pest Risk Analysis/Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (PRA/HACCP);
- insufficient training of farmers in the safe use of pesticides;
- strict control of pesticide residues;
- absence of a viable pest list;
- low participation of Africans in WTO meetings on sanitary and phytosanitary standards, and in *Codex Alimentarius* meetings;
- pest risks associated with food aid;
- fear linked to genetically modified organisms.

The Assembly approved the setting up of two working groups charged with ensuring the implementation of the quarantine work programme, as well as the management of phytosanitary files, including International Phytosanitary Standards:

- A Specialized Working Group on phytosanitary standards with a programme of work as formulated in the document.
- A Working Group on information and capacity-building and on training in Pest Risk Analysis (PRA).

After discussions, both reports were approved by the Assembly.

4th Session

Presentations by various observers

Rapporteur: Senegal

During this session, four presentations were made, namely:

- The AU Special Office for the promotion of agricultural research and development in semi-arid zones of Africa (the SemiArid Food Grain and Research Development Project - SAFGRAD);
- The IITA (International Institute for Tropical Agriculture);
- The WATH (West Africa Trade Hub);
- The REARB (African Network of Research on Beetles).

The AU Special Office for the promotion of agricultural research and development in semi-arid zones of Africa (SAFGRAD):

This presentation was made by Dr Mamadou Ouattara.

SAFGRAD is a project jointly set up in 1977 by the OAU and financial donors to coordinate research on food grains and agricultural development in semi-arid regions of Africa.

The new vision of SAFGRAD, still relevant in the semi-arid zones, comprises two main themes:

- Food security;
- Fight against poverty.

SAFGRAD's present mandate is to promote coordination and cooperation in the domains of agricultural research, technology transfer and management of natural resources in view of enhancing food security and sustainable agricultural development both in the rural and suburban areas of the semi-arid zones of Africa.

This new vision of SAFGRAD shall essentially be focused on:

- New pillars (AU vision and a strategic plan of action);
- New partnership implications (REA, AU Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, NEPAD/AU Secretariat);
- New government structures.

IITA (International Institute for Tropical Agriculture)

- This presentation was made by Dr Maria Ayodele.

IITA presented the state of implementation of the recommendation of Commission II of the 20th General Assembly held in Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire), on Pest Risk Analysis (PRA). "It had been recommended that the IAPSC-OAU, in collaboration with the IITA and sub-regional organizations, should develop research programmes and seek funding for the reinforcement of capacities in the area of PRA, vegetable species, and pest identification".

The IAPSC and IITA drew up a preliminary document and identified the following objectives:

- quarantine, crop protection, health of seeds and vegetable species, and training of staff;
- support to pest risks databanks in each sub-region;
- developing identification manuals;
- producing phytosanitary treatment manuals

- designing technical manuals for laboratories;
- developing tools for standards, monitoring and identification;
- providing “kits” for trainees.

The preliminary document was submitted to the Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD) and to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). CIDA expressed interest in the document and asked IITA to conduct a study on the subject. The study was entitled “*Impact of sanitary and phytosanitary problems on the safe trade in plant and animal products in ECOWAS Member States*”.

This study enabled CIDA to make appropriate decisions on a future strategy which would produce a tangible impact. CIDA intends to use the study as an indicator for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa.

A questionnaire has been distributed to ECOWAS Member States to collect general information on sanitary and phytosanitary activities which shall then be analysed.

WATH (West Africa Trade Hub)

The Hub was presented by Mr Kofi Clement HUMADO.

The West Africa Trade Hub (WATH) is one of three structures created as a result of the AGOA agreement. It is based in Accra (Ghana), and is part of the USAID regional programme for West Africa. WATH works essentially on two fronts:

- AGOA business opportunities;
- Sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Its major aim is to support trade initiatives in West Africa. A number of experiences are being carried out on dried mangoes and on products transformed from cassava and cashew nuts.

African Network of Research on Beetles (REARB)

The Network was presented by Mrs Isabelle Adolé GLITHO.

REARB is a network that was set up in 1993 with support from the IAPSC. The network pursues the following major objectives:

- Develop biotechnologies for the protection of vegetable stocks;
- Implement collaborative research programmes;
- Produce publications.

The network is mainly preoccupied with protecting stocks while ensuring consumer health and preserving bio control auxiliaries. The network also trains students (DEA, DESS, PhD) in collaboration with the University of Lomé in Togo.

Results have shown their efficiency on external, rather than on the hidden aspects. This is the reason why these essential oils have to be used in combination with parasites (bio control). These pest control methods encourage the utilisation of the biodiversity of our countries and contribute in reducing the problem of weevils faced by farmers.

Each speaker presented his/her institution and its contribution in the search for solutions to the problems faced by Africans in the area of pest control, training and access to the international market.

The Assembly expressed satisfaction with the contribution of the observers whose presentations provided new information on activities being carried out and on possible partnership opportunities.

Discussions on the exposés presented by the observers mainly involved clarifications and comments on some of the issues raised. Several speakers noted the relevance of the discussions.

Among the points raised, the following recommendations are worth noting:

- a greater involvement of researchers from Mali and other countries in the network for research on beetles;
- search for assistance in the implementation of standards required for exporting African agricultural products.

Special presentation by Egypt

The presentation was made by Mr Abdallah Shafie. The exposé raised a number of concerns from the Assembly. He mentioned the existence of about 32 bio control projects successfully carried out in his country:

- on cotton, with the use of virus clones from clover;
- control of the water hyacinth using a weevil whose mass production has been mastered;
- control of the date palm weevil using pheromone traps.

The working principle is that at the end of each project, the know-how is sold to a firm for mass production.

During discussions on this Egyptian experience, a number of questions and comments were raised. Many participants wanted more information on the biological control of the water hyacinth and the mass production of weevils.

Exposé of the World Trade Organization on the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

This exposé was presented by Mrs Stanton Gretchen.

The Agreement on the implementation of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures defines the fundamental rules of food safety and animal health standards, as well as the preservation of plants.

The FAO interim Commission on phytosanitary measures allows countries to establish their own standards, but specifies that regulations should be based on scientific principles.

Mrs Gretchen extensively developed the different aspects of the Agreement, including the following:

- obligations of the Agreement;

- need for harmonization;
- technical assistance;
- preferential treatment;
- future prospects.

Discussions mainly dwelled on the following points:

- difficulties in justifying scientific standards;
- difficulties in accepting equivalences;
- difficulties in recognizing pest-free zones;
- notification of measures taken;
- low participation rate of developing countries in standards formulating meetings;
- difficulties faced by African countries in conforming to international standards;
- need for regional coordination.

FAO Interim Commission on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Mr DC Norwell presented a report on the activities of the Committee of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and other relevant WTO activities in 2003. this report highlighted the following aspects:

- specific trade problems;
- equivalence problems;
- regionalization;
- monitoring the use of international standards;
- technical assistance;
- WTO dispute settlement procedure;
- Major disagreements related to SPS.

Discussions dwelled on the following basic points:

- identification and updating of national focal points;
- poor circulation of information on pests and regulations;
- plant protection organizations not being members of the WTO;
- notion of “Appropriate Protection Level”.

The Assembly commended the speakers for the quality and relevance of the subject in relation to the theme of the Assembly.

From these exposés, the following recommendations can be retained:

- need to update focal points;
- need to set up a task/working group on sanitary and phytosanitary problems;
- need for Africa to have a specialized network on SPS issues;
- reinforcing participation of Africans in SPS meetings;
- need to include participation of sub-regional economic organizations in WTO meetings;
- need to update national legislations to conform to SPS regulations;
- need to include the African Union as observer in WTO meetings;
- participation of African experts in technical working groups;

- need to ratify the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) to enable its entry into force in 2005.

Presentation of regional reports and other current subjects

The following six regional reports were presented:

- CEMAC (Central African Economic and Monetary Community),
- CPAC (Central African Pesticides Homologation Committee),
- COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa),
- SADC (Southern African Development Community),
- CEEAC (Economic Community of Central African States),
- CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel).

Each regional report presented the geographic, socioeconomic and political data of its zone. The reports highlighted the comparative advantages and shortcomings of phytosanitary aspects as well as difficulties encountered in implementing sanitary and phytosanitary standards in their various regions.

With regard to the above presentations, the Assembly hereby recommends as follows:

- the reinforcement of agricultural production for international trade and plant protection;
- the harmonization of phytosanitary regulations and regulations governing the use of pesticides;
- the creation of agricultural data bases;
- the improvement of communication on a regional as well as continental scale;
- the concretization of working ties with the IPPC, the Codex Alimentarius and the IAPSC.

Presentation of the draft Decree on the control of the import, utilization and dissemination of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), by Mrs Gassama (Senegal)

GMOs, which are products obtained through gene transfer technology, are raising questions on the real and/or potential risks of their impact on human or animal health and on the environment, as well as other ethical problems. The Carthagena Protocol aims at ensuring an adequate level of protection for the safe transfer, handling and use of GMOs.

The document defines the legal and regulatory biosafety framework which implies an appropriate procedure for risk assessment, monitoring GMOs, and other simple follow-up procedures.

Memo on the Common Organization Against Locusts and Bird Parasites (OCLALAV) – Presented by Mr Diallo.

OCLALAV was created in 1965. It is made up of 10 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. It is essentially involved in the following activities:

- gathering, analysing and distributing information on the desert locusts, granivorous birds and other migrant pests;

- providing technical support in training, organization of control campaigns, identification and search for solution to operational problems;
- collecting and disseminating results of tests on traditional control methods;
- monitoring of national stocks of phytosanitary products.

The document also underlines the problems that OCLALAV has been facing since it underwent restructuring in 1989 and stresses on the preservation of this institution.

6th Session

Work in Commissions

Commission I: Documentation and other factors likely to facilitate the implementation of international phytosanitary standards in Africa.

- Chair: IAPSC
- Rapporteur: Zimbabwe

The Commission examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and fears linked to Pest Risk Analysis.

At the end of its discussions, the commission made the following recommendations:

All countries are required to base their phytosanitary decisions on a PRA in order to enable its adoption. The IAPSC Secretariat is requested to facilitate and coordinate these activities with International Institutions and commercial partners.

The IAPSC, in collaboration with the IITA and Regional Economic Communities, should develop research programmes and seek funding for the reinforcement of capacities in the area of PRA and pest identification.

The IAPSC should make professional training a priority at the national, sub-regional and regional level.

With regard to monitoring, the commission also examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and fears. The commission recognizes the monitoring of pests as the basis of efficient and effective risk analysis.

The Commission recommends as follows:

- training of phytosanitary inspectors;
- that use be made of the existing expertise in Africa;
- that farmers field schools be encouraged as a contribution to pest monitoring activities;
- that communication and exchange of routine information among colleagues of different countries be encouraged.

Regarding pest distribution and data bases, the commission examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and fears.

The commission recognizes the importance of reliable national data on the outbreak and distribution of pests, and calls on National Plant Protection Services to work towards the acquisition of these data in collaboration with the IAPSC.

The commission recommends:

- that available sources of information be identified and validated;
- that use be made of local expertise in the domain of pest identification.

With regard to the reporting/notification system, the commission recommends:

- that the IAPSC seek and find the funds and resources necessary for the acquisition, management and distribution of information, including an Internet Website;
- that countries should make use of available information on pests in collaboration with the FAO and commercial partners;
- that the IAPSC should gather and process national information pest distribution and provide this information to member countries.

Commission II: Information distribution strategy and institutional framework required for the implementation of international phytosanitary standards in Africa.

Chair: Egypt

Rapporteur: Ghana

The theme assigned to the commission was discussed under the following aspects:

- Political framework (Legislation and Regulations),
- Information exchange,
- The African Plant Protection Convention,
- Notification.

Political framework (Legislation and Regulations)

The commission recommends as follows:

- that in the absence of local expertise, assistance should be sought from a neighbouring country, or through a Technical Cooperation Programme with the FAO;
- that for the up-dating of national legislations, new developments, especially GMOs, should be taken into consideration;
- that a working group be set up to review the standards developed by countries;
- that Member countries should ratify or accept the new International Plant Protection Convention of the FAO.

Information exchange

The commission recommends as follows:

- that ways and means be found to provide the Council of Ministers with the most recent information on the phytosanitary situation on the continent;
- that plant protection structures be provided with the facilities that can enable them to better generate and distribute pertinent information on pests.

The African Plant Protection Convention

Due to the on-going restructuring of the AU, the IAPSC should adapt the African Plant Protection Convention to these changes.

To this end, the commission calls on Member countries to ratify the new Convention.

Notification

The commission recommends that Member states should update their focal points in order to facilitate notification on standards. The location of the national focal point depends on the administrative structure of each country.

Additional recommendation

- The commission recommends that all documents of discussions/revision/and adoption for IAPSC General Assemblies be handed to participants in the appropriate languages at least 30 days before the meeting.

Recommendation on the strengthening of the Committee for the Common Homologation of Pesticides in Central Africa (CPAC), by the IAPSC.

Participants at the 21st General Assembly of the IAPSC – AU recommend as follows:

- to the IAPSC: to host the Secretariat of the CPAC;
- to CEMAC: to provide the IAPSC with the necessary means for the running of the CPAC.

Recommendation on the creation of quality laboratories for the training of plant protection staff.

Participants at the 21st General Assembly of the IAPSC – AU recommend as follows:

- that the IAPSC-AU, pan African Institutions and International Institutions should set up and equip quality laboratories for the training of plant protection workers and for analysing pesticides residue in plant and animal products.

Specific recommendation on training

Participants at the 21st General Assembly of the IAPSC – AU recommend as follows:

- that the IAPSC-AU should organize, in 2004, a meeting of phytosanitary training officials to brainstorm on the setting up of training modules that integrate the new concepts of plant protection;
- that the IAPSC and pan African Institutions provide financial support to institutions specialized in plant protection training;
- that partnership ties be reinforced between the IAPSC and PP/COMEC.

Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony was presided over by the Director of Cabinet of the Minister Delegate in charge of Livestock at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Water, assisted by the

Director of the Senegalese Department of Plant Protection and the Scientific Secretary of the IAPSC.

The General Rapporteur presented the main points of discussions and recommendations of the 21st IAPSC General Assembly.

Three motions of thanks followed the General Rapporteur's presentation.

In his closing speech, the Director of Cabinet of the Minister Delegate in charge of Livestock at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Water emphasized on the new challenges of the moment, particularly the improvement of market access for African agricultural products in the 21st century through the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

He noted that the re-centring of the Inter African Phytosanitary Council through the creation of a Pilot Committee in place of the Executive Council, and the opening up of this Committee to agricultural institutions constitute a welcome development. Furthermore, he continued, the greater involvement of the African Union, Regional Communities and Donors appreciably enhance the efficiency of the IAPSC.

Africa, he continued, possesses real potentials to meet the challenges involved in implementing the sanitary and phytosanitary standards required for our products. He noted with interest the recommendations relating to the reinforcement of capacities through training and making farmers aware of the need for urgent action to obtain a standard quality for their products. He promised to be the ambassador of the participants of the 21st General Assembly to the President of the Republic of Senegal for a solution to the problems raised.

The Director of Cabinet of the Minister Delegate in charge of Livestock at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Water concluded his speech by thanking all the specialized International Institutions, development partners, observers, the Scientific Secretariat of the IAPSC and all the participants at the 21st General Assembly.

Appendices

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- Report and Recommendations of the IAPSC Executive Committee Meeting
- Summary of proceedings
 - Presentation of activity report by the IAPSC Scientific Secretary covering the period from 2002 – 2004; Dr Nazaire NKOUKA
 - Exposé by Dr Sarah OLEMBO, Assistant Scientific Secretary, on African agriculture, international phytosanitary standards, and market access
 - Exposés by various observers
 - Presentation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures
 - The FAO Interim Commission on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
 - Presentation of regional reports and other current subjects
- Working Commissions
 - Commission I: Documentation and other factors likely to facilitate the implementation of international phytosanitary standards in Africa.
 - Commission II: Information distribution strategy and institutional framework required for the implementation of international phytosanitary standards in Africa.
- Closing Speech

