



## Press Release - 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum

26/08/21

The Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD) Forum proposes to convene its 14<sup>th</sup> annual CPHD meeting on 30 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 in virtual session, for the second consecutive year since the covid pandemic. The meeting, which will be attended by its 32 Member States and Territories along with partner organizations and Universities, will focus on recent developments and emerging issues of plant health, the challenges and the multidisciplinary approach to be adopted by the community in managing pests and invasive species of importance to the region's agriculture health and food safety. This meeting was preceded by several, noteworthy plant health initiatives/webinars such as the Caribbean Pest Diagnostics Network (CPDN) Training Workshop held in December 2020 and April 2021 and the launch of the CPHD New Members Website also in April 2021 and the regional International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) meeting held from 24 – 26 August 2021. The IPPC meeting discussed a number of relevant issues relating to the revision and adjustment of a number of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), Tropical Race 4 (TR4) and regional phytosanitary capacity development activities all of which will be further elaborated at the CPHD meeting.

The forum will provide relevant and timely updates on plant health matters and initiatives being undertaken in the Caribbean region that will impact/ or require the CPHD's membership support and involvement. During the meeting, the plant health officials will have intense discussions aimed at bolstering the ability of member countries to identify, exclude, and respond to pests and diseases that threaten regional agriculture and natural resources and to resolve issues that might impede the trade of Caribbean agricultural products regionally and internationally.

This meeting is of critical importance to the CPHD's strategic work plan on plant health and the continued safeguarding activities for priority pests of great concern to the region. Priority pests including Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4 (TR4), already identified in the region, and continues to be of great concern to the banana (*Musa*) industry, will be highlighted in the reports and achievements of the *Musa*, as well as other priority pests such as *Tuta absoluta*, Citrus Canker, Citrus Leprosis, amongst others. Members of the Grupo Interamericano de Coordinación en Sanidad Vegetal (GISCV) Working Groups on HLB-Citrus Greening, *Tuta absoluta* and Fruit flies are also slated to share updates at the meeting.

Other relevant agenda items include:

- safeguarding initiatives for Priority Pest - Surveillance, Diagnostics, Emergency Response Plans and Table Top Simulations;
- the launch and hand over of the Caribbean Biosecurity Interceptions System (GBIS);
- technical sessions that focus on emerging plant pest, ongoing pest exclusion and safeguarding issues of relevance including The Impact of Climate Change on Plant Pest, Risk Based Sampling (RBS), Sea Cargo Containers, Giant African Land Snails (GALS); and
- a dedicated focus session led by CAHFSA on trade matters.

The Annual Regional Partnership Steering Committee Meeting will also be convened on the second day of the annual meeting, on August 31st, 2021. At this meeting, the CPHD Executive, Technical Working Group (TWG) Chairs and Regional Partners will discuss and mutually agree on a regional work plan.

The CPHD Forum is the Technical Committee to CAHFSA on Agriculture on plant health issues and continues to strive to harmonize plant health safeguarding strategies in the region through the exchange of technical information, the transfer of technologies and methods, the maximization of technical and financial resource use and allocation and the harmonization of plant protection and agricultural trade management approaches. The efforts of this forum continue to strengthen plant protection and have a direct impact on the region's food security and economic prosperity for the Greater Caribbean Region. For more information email the CPHD Secretariat at [secretariat@cphdforum.org](mailto:secretariat@cphdforum.org) or visit the CPHD website <http://www.cphdforum.org/>.