



**Press Release – Session one of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum (CPHD) Ends**

**Identifying Priorities and Developing a Strategic Plant Health Plan for the Caribbean Region**

12 August 2020

Session one of the first virtual two day meeting of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual CPHD Forum ended today with the body agreeing in principle for the CPHD Executive to review all listed documents, analyze all information and prepare a five year draft Strategic Plan to be presented for consideration and adoption by the CPHD governing body at Session two of the annual meeting tentatively scheduled for October 2020.

The decision to develop the five year strategic plan to guide the work of the CPHD as it enters its thirteenth year in existence and second year as the Technical Committee to the Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) CAHFSA, was based on the wealth of discussion emanating from the reports and recommendations from the Technical Working Groups (TWG) and Partner Organizations that would support and shape the specific work plans of the TWGs and support the work of the RPPO. With CAHFSA now fully operationalized as the RPPO, bringing greater opportunities for access to more technical and financial resources from external international plant health entities, there is the need to have a harmonized strategic plan to guide the activities of the regional plant health organizations.

Much of the discussion also influencing the strategic work plan revolved around plant health priority pests of great concern to the region including Tropical Race 4 (TR4), which continues to be of great concern to the region's banana industry as highlighted in the report and achievements of the Musa TWG, Citrus Canker and Citrus Leprosis, Fruit Fly and other priority pests.

The meeting agreed that in the process of the developing the strategic plan the following should be reviewed:

- The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Strategic framework for 2020 – 2030 to ensure that the requirements of the IPPC and its International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) are met;
- The CAHFSA work plan;
- The seven priority areas identified at the CPHD December 2019 evaluation meeting;
- Relevant information from the CPHD evaluation exercise;
- Identified priority of the National Plant protection Organizations; and
- Results of various SWOT, GAP and Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation analyses in the region.

The strategic plan once approved by the body of members of the CPHD at the October 2020 meeting will be taken to the COTED for endorsement by the Ministers of Agriculture.

Other milestone achievements coming out of the CPHD meeting included the signing of a Caribbean Plant Diagnostic Network (CPDN), Memorandum of Understanding between CPHD and the University of Florida (UFL). The CPDN is an internet-based lab information system that facilitates digital upload of samples for rapid diagnosis and pest identification.



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Through this new agreement free rapid access to distance digital diagnostics is provided to all 32 Member countries through the CPDN within twenty-four hours and the development of e-learning distance diagnostic and identification systems at the University. The CPHD together with the CPDN – a Sub-Technical Working Group of the Safeguarding TWG also coordinated and negotiated the removal of a 2000 USD annual fee per country during a two-year assessment phase on the basis of enhancing partnerships and mutual benefits.

Another achievement was the development of a protocol for the importation of cut-flowers into the region and guidelines for the establishment of inspection facilities at ports of entry in all CARICOM Member States by the Safeguarding TWG. These documents were shared with CPHD members and Partner Organizations for final comments before adoption.

For more information email the CPHD Secretariat at [secretariat@cphdforum.org](mailto:secretariat@cphdforum.org) or visit the CPHD website <http://www.cphdforum.org/>.

