

**Second Executive Committee Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species
Network, 25 April 2008, National Convention Centre, Hanoi, Vietnam**

Minutes

Present

Larry Yarger (USDA Forest Service) – Chair
Michael Cole (Australia)
Simmathiri Appanah (FAO Regional Office, Bangkok)
Jang Chunqian (China)
K.V. Sankaran (APFISN Coordinator) – Co-Chair
D.B. Dhital (Bhutan) - Invitee
Pham Quang Thu (Vietnam) - Invitee
Grace Tabitha Lim (Malaysia) – Invitee
Marla Downing (USDA Forest Service) - Invitee
Sim Heok Choh (APAFRI) – Observer

The meeting began at 1 pm with the opening remarks by Dr. Appanah. He opined that the network has made good progress and FAO is very pleased with the progress made. He added that since the goals of APFISN are of prime importance to the region, the network has been able to attract a lot of support from different countries. Following the opening remarks, the APFISN Coordinator presented an overview of the network activities during 2007-2008.

The Committee reviewed the overall functioning of the network and made the following observations and recommendations.

Invigoration of the network activities: Larry Yarger felt that there is a need to make the network more inclusive and interactive. Perhaps, it should be possible to do this if the network can implement the action points identified by the participants during the breakout group discussions in the APFISN workshop on risk-based targeted surveillance.

Nomination of a Chairman for the Executive Committee: This issue was discussed in detail and the committee recommended that the Chair may be appointed based on proposals from the member countries. Dr. Appanah suggested that the Chairman of the EC need be a person with strong credentials, influential, able to look beyond the EC and help the network to secure funding. The committee set a time frame of 30 days to nominate the Chairman. Reviewing the overall activities of the network, Dr. Appanah observed that the activities of the network are dependent on too few individuals. The

APFISN Coordinator shoulders most of the responsibilities and he needs to be supported by sharing the job. This calls for commitment and aspiration to do voluntary work. He requested members of the EC to suggest names of volunteers.

Replying to queries on the status of APFISN within FAO, Dr. Appanah said that the network is a totally independent body but the APFC fully supports the work of the network and it can provide credibility to it. He urged the network to present a report of its activities each time during the APFC meeting. Responding to Dr. Appanah's suggestions, Dr. Larry said that a substructure within the network is necessary to help the Coordinator. Dr. Mike said that it is the communications side which really needed support.

As regards future workshop, it was decided that the theme may be forest surveillance and it could be more of a training type as a continuation of the activities identified by the Hanoi workshop. Dr. Mike raised the point of linking APFISN as a key player in Forest Health facilitated by FAO. Dr. Appanah opined that it would be worthy to be a link but be independent and there is no need to expand FIS to forest health.

Stocktaking exercise: It was suggested that the stocktaking reports produced by 13 countries may be compiled and put on the web. For the remaining countries that are yet to prepare a report, it would be easier and manageable to request a report on targeted invasive species.

Proceedings of the workshop: The Coordinator reported that it was not possible to publish the Proceedings of the EWS workshop so far since some of the authors are yet to submit the manuscript. Dr. Appanah suggested that the Proceedings may be prepared for publication within the next 3 months including the available manuscripts. It was also decided that the Proceedings of the Hanoi Workshop may be published informally in CD format and posted on the APFISN web site.

Engaging national focal points: Dr. Mike pointed out that the network need address the question of less active focal points. They need be reminded of their role in the network and if the response is still poor reappointment may be sought. The network coordinator agreed to look into the matter and approach countries requesting replacements/fresh appointments.

Awareness raising: Website: The network coordinator informed the Committee members of the launching of a new website for the network – <http://www.apfism.net>. This is being updated by including newsletters, fact sheets, country reports, workshop reports, names of member countries, focal points, information on new threats etc. Dr. Sim suggested the address of the network website may be included on all newsletters. Several members felt that a 'forum facility' may be included in the website for members to post their observations, comments, queries and to share ideas. The network coordinator agreed to do this in a month's time. *Newsletter:* Based on a suggestion from Dr. Mike, it was decided the focal points in each country may be requested to make special efforts to distribute the newsletters more widely. Dr. Sim suggested that all the newsletters may be compiled on CD for wider distribution even though the previous newsletters are available

on the network website archive. *Fact sheets:* The network coordinator clarified that the most important pests in the region were selected to produce the first series of fact sheets. Dr. Larry suggested that the country focal points may be encouraged to produce pest fact sheets or the network coordinator may try collecting information from the focal points on target pests for their country and edit the information to produce new pest fact sheets. *Book- Invasive Plants in the Asia Pacific region:* Dr. Mike suggested that other weed experts in the region may be consulted before finalizing the contents of the book and that the member countries of APFISN may be listed in the book. Dr. Larry agreed to examine whether the logo of USDA Forest Service can be included on the cover of the book. Dr. Appanah agreed that the book can be published by FAO Regional Office in Bangkok for free and wider distribution among the member countries and others.

Future workshops and training programmes: The network coordinator enquired with Dr. Mike the availability of Australian funds for conducting the next workshop of APFISN. Dr. Mike said that some money may be available that needs to be spent by the end of 2008. If the money is available, perhaps the network can conduct a training workshop on target pests in December 2008. Dr. Mike has agreed to follow up the proposal submitted by APFISN for funding. As regards future workshops, it was decided to request South Korea to support a workshop outside the country so that all member countries can participate. It was also decided that the network may invite North Korea and Russia to join the network.

The Committee entrusted the network coordinator to clarify whether full sponsorship will be available for the APFISN participants to participate in the training workshop on invasive species to be held in Wuhan in China in October 2008. Dr. Larry agreed that the USDA Forest Service will support another workshop of APFISN in 2009. The venue may be decided later. The topic of the workshop may be “Prioritizing pests for the Asia-Pacific region”.

Linking to other networks: The Executive Committee (EC) entrusted the network coordinator to tie up with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Dr. Mike agreed to follow up links with International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Overall functioning of the network: Dr. Appanah observed that the products of the network like newsletter, fact sheets, websites are all of good quality. But, the network should concentrate more on scaling up communication with the member countries to instill a sense of ownership. The duties of the network coordinator may be shared to lessen his burden— e.g., fund raising may be done by a group of people through strategizing and identifying areas that need funding, help may be made available for preparing proposals for funding etc. Dr. Mike suggested formation of Working Groups (WG) to share tasks. Initially names of people who may head each WG may be approved and they may invite more members to join the group by publicizing it on the ‘website forum’. The Working Groups identified by the EC were:

1. Communication - Dr. Grace Lim (Malaysia) may head the group and invite members. She will act in consultation with the network coordinator.

2. Fund sourcing and proposal writing – Drs. Larry Yarger (USDA Forest Service) Mike Cole (Australia), Takeshi Toma (Japan) and Ms. Lee (South Korea) are nominated as members of the WG.
3. Technical – Further scoping may be done by the network coordinator
4. Coordination – Network Coordinator

Dr. Appanah informed that the Chinese colleagues have proposed to set up a FIS network for China, parallel to APFISN but focusing on the Chinese FIS. Attempts need be made to link APFISN to this network.

Future plans: An operational plan for 2008-2009 prepared by the network coordinator was considered by the Committee and it was decided that the responsibilities may be divided among different working groups.

Funds to run the secretariat of APFISN: The network coordinator presented a budget statement which indicated that during April 2007 to March 2008 KFRI had spent an amount of US\$ 7000 to run the secretariat and for various other activities of the network as against US\$ 5000 transferred to KFRI by USDA Forest Service in April 2007. He requested USDA Forest Service to provide US\$ 5000 plus the short fall of US\$ 2000 for expenditure during 2008-2009. Larry Yarger agreed to examine the request and the availability of these funds for KFRI.

The meeting was closed at 5.30 pm.