



PRESS RELEASE
25 August 2020

BAF Attends International Plant Protection Convention Regional Workshop Virtually

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) in fulfilling its international obligations is attending the 2020 International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Regional Workshop via virtual presence. The annual event has been organised via virtual presence by IPPC for member countries due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Being the Fijian official IPPC contact point, BAF confirmed its participation for the regional workshop and registered for the week long programme which commenced on Friday 22 August, 2020 together with officials from Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji.

The objectives for this year's regional workshop encompass developing capacity in critical areas relating to IPPC. It includes providing platform for analysis of draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), formulating productive comments using the examples of draft ISPMs, providing recommendations for consultation, building phytosanitary capacity and elevating awareness on all activities related to the IPPC. Last but not the least the workshop will allow South West Pacific participants the opportunity to exchange experiences and find common solutions to issues at the regional level through the e-platform.

The year 2020 is particularly important for awareness raising as it is also the International Year on Plant Health (IYPH). The 2020 IPPC Regional Workshop intends to give special importance to the regional awareness raising activities promoting the importance of Plant Health and highlight the regional initiatives, which will leave a legacy beyond 2020.

The Chief Guest during the opening session (Friday) was the Acting Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Mr Vinesh Kumar. He reiterated the messages from various international resource personnel on the importance of protecting plants that are equivalent to sustenance of life on this planet. Many important and economic plant species are under becoming under threat due to climate change and various movements of global pests and diseases aided by human activities. 16. The year 2020 is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, and boost economic development.

BAF's Acting CEO, Mr Surend Pratap stated that protecting plants from pests and diseases is far more cost effective than dealing with full-blown plant health emergencies. Protection of plants allows for food, nutrition and income security for all citizens. Plant pests and diseases are often impossible to eradicate once they have established themselves and

managing them is time consuming and expensive. Prevention is critical to avoiding the devastating impact of pests and diseases on agriculture, livelihoods and food security and many of us have an important role to play.

The Regional Workshop will end on Friday 28 August, 2020.

For more information, please contact the BAF, Public Relations Officer, Ms. Khusboo Singh on 8911433 or email: khusboo_s@baf.com.fj