

U.S. comments on AHEG Revised Draft Intersessional Roadmap

We sincerely appreciate the efforts of the Secretariat to take Member viewpoints into consideration and present a revised draft intersessional roadmap for review and comment. It is very helpful for the Secretariat to clarify that the purpose of the intersessional work outlined in the roadmap is informational. Our comments reference the version released on 17 June 2020.

We encourage the Secretariat to provide ample time for Members to prepare for webinars, including distributing logistical information, sharing relevant materials, and explaining the structure (e.g., live presentations, recorded presentations and opportunities for dialogue) at least two weeks in advance. We also offer that it could be preferable to have one longer session of the webinars rather than multiple sessions to facilitate exchange among all Members on a topic. We also urge the Secretariat to allow for ample time between webinars to ensure adequate time for reflection and comment, and suggest aiming for at least two weeks between webinars when possible. We encourage the Secretariat to choose an online platform that will facilitate open and transparent interactions among participants.

We support the proposed stocktaking and analysis of effectiveness webinars to collect and share information as they may facilitate discussions at a future AHEG meeting. We are interested in seeing how the methodology on analysis of effectiveness has been revised based on Member feedback prior to the next webinar.

Regarding the upcoming response options webinars of June 30 and July 7, the United States suggests using this as an opportunity to share more information about the response options highlighted in Member submissions. The webinars on potential response options present an opportunity for Members to better understand each other, but should not result in the development of a “a draft meeting report on the progress, identifying various elements for further discussion.” As the intersessional work of the AHEG is informational, it does not constitute a formal meeting necessitating a report or identifying key discussion areas. We could see value in the Secretariat developing and posting a compilation of potential response options proposed by Members.

The United States is also interested in understanding the purpose of Member’s commenting on the potential response options, as this type of substantive discussion is usually carried out in person. We are concerned that this could be a time-intensive exercise with little benefit given the limitations of virtual or written engagement. We urge the Secretariat and Bureau to focus efforts on the information exchange to support fulfilling the suggestions outline in the AHEG-3 meeting report.

We also support revisiting intersessional activities and this roadmap in late summer in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.