

Dear friends,

Greetings to you.

This communication is intended to discuss the issues related to the forthcoming Annual Meeting at Rio (June 27-29, 2011).

With best regards,

Joseph L. Mathew

Chair, HTAi DC ISG

31 May 2011

1. Welcome to all new members

A warm welcome to all new members of the ISG. These include the following:

- i.* Petr Hajek
- ii.* Emmanuel Odame
- iii.* Arash Rashidian
- iv.* Don Juzwishin
- v.* Alejandra
- vi.* Lora
- vii.* Victoria Wurcel

2. VIII HTAi Annual Meeting 2011

The Scientific Programme for the 2011 Annual Meeting at Rio de Janeiro from June 27-29, 2011 has been finalized.

The following panel sessions are relevant to developing country issues; please feel free to point to other sessions as well.

- HTA capacity building in developing countries- exploration of different models.
- HTA capacity building - exploration of different models of national guidelines development and implementation
- HTA E-6 project: improving HTA in 6 emerging countries

3. DC ISG Annual Meeting 2011

The Annual face-to-face meeting of the DC ISG members is proposed to be during the Lunch Break on Tuesday 28th June (1300-1430) in the Turmalina Room. The agenda is proposed to be as follows:

Agenda for DC ISG Annual Meeting 2011

- A. Review of actions/ activities during the past year (July 2010 to June 2011)
- B. Outline of Plan for the next year (July 2011 to June 2012).
- C. Election/ Selection of the ISG Chair
- D. Role of the ISG for the IX Annual Meeting at Bilbao, 2012.
- E. Unresolved issues (see below)

The following issues have remained unresolved since the last communication; hence I am listing them again.

4. Future of the DC ISG

Our ISG has been in existence for a little over two years, and been fairly active in terms of trying to further the goals of HTAi. At this moment, I'd like us to consider some of the following issues that could affect our overall role and contribution.

(A) DC ISG Workplan:

Our ISG's workplan was developed and finalized in consultation with the ISG members after the 2008 HTAi Annual Meeting; and subsequently posted on the ISG webspace. We need to take a re-look at the workplan to study whether it needs modifications/ refinements/ additions/ deletions etc. to be both useful as well as practically feasible. I request you to please take a look and share your feedback on it.

(B) DC ISG Structure:

At the present moment, our ISG focuses broadly on issues relevant to developing countries. As a mechanism to sensitize HTAi leadership and membership about the issues and challenges involved, I would think that we have been quite successful as evidenced by (i) inclusion of content in HTAi Annual Meetings in Plenary presentations, panel sessions and selection of papers, (ii) Special Sessions during the Annual Meetings, (iii) discussions on DC issues at HTAi Board meetings, (iv) publication of content relevant to DCs in IJTAHC, (v) enhanced participation of DC citizens at Annual Meetings and enhanced funding for Travel Grants, (vi) development of Regional HTA meetings to focus on issues specific to developing country needs in specific geographic regions, (vii) memorandum of Understanding between HTAi and WHO,

(viii) greater dialogue between developing and developed country members, and (ix) preliminary discussion with stakeholders in various African countries.

Given that we have made significant progress towards putting a spot-light on developing country needs/issues, I am wondering whether we now ought to take this to the next level. One of the challenges is that while developing countries share many common issues, it is inappropriate to club all countries together. One way out could be to focus on specific geographic regions (e.g South American countries, Eastern Europe countries, Asian countries, African countries etc) separately, to better understand the specific needs and challenges. Another way out could be to work across continents, but categorizing countries as 'never heard of HTA', interested in HTA, developing HTA, etc. The latter approach would help us to define needs that could be common across geographic regions. I would value your feedback on whether it would be useful for the DC ISG to work at two levels viz broadly across developing countries, and narrowly in terms described above. If this concept appears useful, we would need to work out how best to achieve it.

(C) How to measure success (or lack of it)?

Given that all DC ISG members are busy people with multiple professional commitments and still do their best to carry on with ISG work to further HTAi goals, we need to evolve a mechanism/system to evaluate whether our work is useful (or otherwise). In other words, what short term and long term outcomes should we use, to decide whether we are on track (or not) to achieve whatever we decide to do as per our workplan. A related issue would be to decide how/when to abandon a particular line of action in favour of another.