

Codex Webinar – 28th July 2020

Top tips for intervening in virtual meetings.

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These tips are based on observations made during the numerous informal and formal virtual meetings and webinars convened by the Codex Secretariat in recent months

Part 1: Observations on virtual meetings — what we have seen and why virtual is different from physical

- The energy of isolation is completely different to the live plenary
- Time spent together is precious, so let's not waste it
- We struggle to focus for long periods staring at a screen
- We are seeing interventions that are:
 - Too long, too vague, too rambling
 - We are shortening agendas and we need to continue to aim for less
 - Do we even need a full meeting? Are there other options?
- Taking the floor is like a performance and if you aim to influence your audience you have an obligation to prepare and practice

Part 2: Preparation — Ideas for planning

- Consider the agenda, your country or your organization's objectives and priorities
- Think about:
 - How many times realistically can you take the floor in a short virtual session. How can you be remembered?
 - Which agenda items are really important for you?
 - If there are several items where you wish to make an intervention plan for other like-minded delegations to lead, then show your support
 - Do you have concrete proposals?
 - Are you supporting a position in a paper, a recommendation?
 - Are you opposing something?
- What are your key points?
 - One point per intervention works well — it provides focus and clarity for those following
 - Use the chat to show support — it is a great new interactive feature of virtual meetings

Part 3: The Intervention — Tips for delivery

- Language and interpretation
 - Make your message easy to understand and simple for interpreters to express if you want to reach a wide audience
 - Keep your camera on both for the interpreters and for a more engaging experience. Give us that human connection
- Time your intervention — when negotiating it may be strategic to appear early or later in the debate
- Check and practice your presence on screen: camera, framing - be a news reader
 - Any other microphone will be better than the built-in mic on your computer.

Here is one way to structure your intervention:

If you can't do this in 30 seconds on camera (and practice at home) then you may not come across as you would like in the live meeting.

- a) Opening — this is the bottom line, the statement you want everyone to hear and remember
- b) 2-3 supporting points — the strongest arguments adding a little detail to the opening
- c) The close — your chance to share a conclusion
- d) Call to action — how can the audience further engage (this could be through your paper, a CRD or just by making yourself available).

REMEMBER

Plan, practice, present.

Prepare yourself, your content and your new virtual environment.