

Re: EEC|CCNY WtERT Conference Postponement

September 21, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We unfortunately must postpone the upcoming 2020 EEC|WTERT Biennial Conference that is scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. Currently there is no firm new date but it is anticipated that the conference will occur in the Fall of 2021. We have delayed this decision for as long as possible to incorporate the most updated current information and projections related to the pandemic.

Unfortunately New York City is currently operating on a limited schedule with 25% in-door dining permitted and most hotels closed until December of 2020. Furthermore, The City College of New York, where the conference is scheduled to be held, is conducting classes mostly via remote format and has requested limiting on-campus events as much as possible. In addition, we are aware that most private companies are not permitting or heavily limiting travel for non-critical business purposes. We were optimistic early in the summer that NYC would be more open, as evidenced back then that Broadway was planning to open near September 4<sup>th</sup>, however those expectations never materialized.

We received enough abstracts, combined with invited presenters, to have a conference that would have been slightly more expanded than the previous two held at CCNY in 2016 and 2018. We seriously considered moving to an on-line format to allow the invited speakers and those who submitted abstracts to present their findings and thoughts. Yet after careful consideration that included participating, monitoring and soliciting feedback on a virtual event, it has been determined that it would not be effective. An important factor in this determination is the international participation that our conference normally enjoys. For example, in 2018 there were a total of 12 countries represented that spanned several time zones (Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Korea, Sudan, UK and US). Additionally, an important component of our conference is the person-to-person interaction that allows attendees to make new connections and collaborations that normally would not occur in other settings. That interaction cannot happen in a virtual environment and the spontaneous discussions on the scientific topics also cannot occur via an on-line format.

Therefore, please keep our conference on your mind; we will be sending reminders and announcements as we develop more clarity. Stay safe we look forward to seeing you next year.

Sincerely, Anjeza Arapi, Snehes Ail, Marco J. Castaldi