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## Geneva Insights



September Edition

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*We are pleased to announce the launch of **Geneva Insights**, our latest newsletter offering leading-edge commentary on international Geneva. We'll cover the global governance ecosystem of over 40 international organizations, 178 country representations and 700+ non-governmental organizations.*

*We hope this newsletter helps you stay informed on developments that may impact your business, industry and community. Please enjoy this inaugural edition and for any questions, [contact one of the authors](#).*

## The Outlook

### **Economic** ([jump to](#)).

The WTO opens its doors to stakeholders, academics and trade professionals at its annual Public Forum with numerous sessions on the theme of trade's role in producing a cleaner future. But most participants are coming to Geneva from all around the world to network, mingle and undergo planned or unexpected meet-ups in the organization's glass atrium (which used to be the smokers' corner not that long ago). [Read More](#)

The world of intellectual property will inch closer towards a new international IP treaty, on protection of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and their reflection in patent applications. [Read More](#)

The trade and IP body will attempt an evidence-based discussion on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Waiver expansion and pandemic preparedness in a closed session with a wide variety of speakers. [Read More](#)

With a September 20 deadline, the Office of the United States Trade Representative is seeking public comments regarding Russia and China WTO compliance in preparation for their annual report to Congress. [Read More](#)

Annual ranking of countries for innovation generation and potential will launch and will shed light on the impact of recent and ongoing crises. [Read More](#)

## **Communication and Digital** ([jump to](#))

The European Union's stance against illicit and detrimental online content, projected also by the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act, is poised for ongoing implementation, and updating the regulatory framework, prompting substantial preparation by prominent tech corporations. [Read More](#)

Telecommunications experts will discuss integrating broadcasting and media delivery into the internet. [Read More](#)

Country experts are likely to voice different views during a discussion on misinformation and access to accurate data from radiocommunication broadcasting services. [Read More](#)

The essential role of terrestrial services, their place in digital transformation and their innovation will be discussed by experts. [Read More](#)

In a lead up to the major World Radiocommunication Conference, a workshop will look at spectrum management and other issues outlined for harmonization of spectrum allocations. [Read More](#)

Technical experts will continue their discussions on autonomous networks, redefining the landscape of connectivity and communication and orchestrating seamless interactions among devices and systems. [Read More](#)

## **Health** ([jump to](#))

Pandemic accord discussions will go into a crunch time in autumn, facing a narrowing window before early next year mandated finalization. Meetings in various configurations will be dominated by equity, financing mechanisms, early warnings, as well as continued divergences among countries. [Read More](#)

Non-communicable diseases are coming to the forefront of high-level health discussions after increasingly frequent heatwaves and slow progress towards universal health coverage and relevant sustainable development goals. [Read More](#)

Air quality monitoring and ventilation alert: the first ever Indoor Air Quality Conference links health, respiratory diseases and net-zero. [Read More](#)

International pharma industry and relevant stakeholders will talk about transforming the regulatory ecosystem in Africa amid progress towards an African Medicines Agency operationalization. [Read More](#)

## **Environmental** [\(jump to\)](#)

International protection and regulation of wetlands will meet in its annual session to consider current standards of protection and discuss the status of global wetlands. [Read More](#)

Environmental experts are mandated to review the environmental impact of critical minerals amid their growing importance to clean energy technologies. [Read More](#)

The annual Sustainable Energy Week will focus on resilience, connectivity and critical metals and minerals, within a series of formal and informal sessions to advance standard-setting in the area. [Read More](#)

A mix of organizations will attempt to take a large bite of circular economy debate, trying to make it globally inclusive and circular starting with looking at harmonized system (HS) codes and trade flows. [Read More](#)

## **Science and Technology** [\(jump to\)](#)

Disarmament and meteorology stakeholders will debate outer space and recommendations for its use amid contemporary space race with growing satellite presence and space travel. [Read More](#)

As AI raises a number of questions also on innovation and creativity, both inputs and outputs, IP comes into play and generative AI will be the focus of discussions on the topic. [Read More](#)

## **Standards and Regulatory** [\(jump to\)](#)

Experts on Transport Trends and Economics will discuss the development of major transcontinental transport projects—both rail and motorway, as well as sustainable urban mobility, and the intersection of climate change and transport infrastructure. [Read More](#)

## **Social** [\(jump to\)](#)

The international world of labor will review a total of 10 standards pertaining to maternity protection and protection of youth, all to be seen in the larger context of the emerging Global Coalition for Social Justice. [Read More](#)

## **Humanitarian and Human Rights** [\(jump to\)](#)

The Human Rights Council continues its record-breaking length of five weeks with discussions ranging from country reports, through homelessness and modern slavery, to topical and emerging Human Rights such as the Russian aggression or impact of new technologies on human rights around the globe. [Read More](#)

The Human Rights community will engage on economic, social and cultural rights. We expect attempts by countries such as China to move these rights

to the forefront of the human rights discussions and juxtapose the collective and individualistic approaches to human rights. [Read More](#)

*Questions? As you read the below, please do not hesitate to [contact one of the authors](#) for more information.*

## Economic

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Public Forum is set to take place on September 12-15, and is titled “[It is Time for Action](#).” Held annually, this is the WTO’s way to open its doors to the outside world, hold sessions with stakeholders from all walks of life and network among those many coming from all around the world. This year, the forum will focus on the role trade plays in developing a more sustainable world. The forum will have three [subthemes](#): the role of the service sector in sustainable trade, inclusive policies for the advancement of green trade and digitalization as a tool for the greening of supply chains. Featured speakers at the forum will range from Ecuadorian Minister of Foreign Trade Daniel Legarda to Volvo Group Chief Sustainability Officer Karin Svensson to many more career environment professionals, nongovernmental organization (NGO) officials and foreign ministers. As the global market recovers post-pandemic, the forum will offer insight into the ways trade can create a more resilient economy.

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At the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the [Preparatory Committee](#) on the Diplomatic Conference will meet from September 11-13, 2023 to agree on a treaty on genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. This committee meeting will establish the [modalities of the conference](#), as well as approve the “[basic proposal](#)” for the administrative and final provisions of the treaty. One week prior, the relevant negotiating body will meet to attempt to narrow the existing gaps in substantive positions. This is the last formal meeting ahead of a [Diplomatic Conference](#) tasked with concluding an international treaty on the topic, which is scheduled for the first half of 2024. The objectives of this WIPO treaty are to enhance the patent system with regard to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and to prevent patents from being granted erroneously for inventions that are not novel or inventive with regards to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. Several countries are raising concerns with the treaty regarding introducing additional complexity and uncertainty to patent applications and granting processes. The United States and Japan did not block but disassociated themselves from the convening decision in July 2022. The U.S. will be seeking views from stakeholders on the matter through its usual domestic processes. Considering the U.S. position in the negotiations so far, this will be a key moment for stakeholders to share their positions.

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Following its pre-summer deliberations and a general call for evidence-based discussions, the WTO Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council will hold an informal thematic session to explore COVID-19 lessons learned in the context of pandemic preparedness and ongoing negotiations on the expansion of the TRIPS Waiver to diagnostics and therapeutics. This workshop will be closed to the public and will not be recorded. The agenda is still being developed, but it is likely to contain five panels consisting of data

collection and analysis with speakers, for example, from UNICEF and Airfinity; discussion by intergovernmental organizations and initiatives with WIPO and the World Health Organization (WHO), Medicines Patent Pool and possibly South Centre; and an academic panel with possible speakers Suerie Moon of the Graduate Institute and Ellen 't Hoen of Medicines Law and Policy. The day will also see a panel of civil society, and a panel of industry representatives from both developers such as Pfizer and manufacturers such as Ferozsons.

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The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) seeks public comments on both the [Russian](#) and [Chinese](#) WTO implementation report and has issued a notice of a public hearing for both. The USTR's deadline for these public comments is September 20, ahead of public hearings scheduled for October 4 for China and October 12 for Russia. The public comments can be made [here](#). The reports are annual USTR submissions to Congress detailing the countries' compliance to the obligations under the WTO and are required to be submitted on or about December 11 of each year. Russia has been a WTO [member](#) since August 2012, but threatened to leave the organization after losing sanctions imposed by number of countries in response to its invasion of Ukraine. China has been a WTO [member](#) since December 2001 and remains in good standing; however, there have been number of disputes arising and calls in the U.S. to remove China's permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status.

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The WIPO will be releasing its annual report on global innovation, providing a well-awaited outlook on how the global economy is recovering from recent years' challenges and what can be expected ahead. On September 27, WIPO will be [launching](#) its Global Innovation Index (GII). The GII is published annually and ranks the innovation performance of some 131 countries and economies around the world, based on 80+ indicators, with the [2022 report](#) having made such analysis through the lens of a continuing COVID-19 pandemic, war and global supply chain and energy disruptions. With such factors still remaining present in today's global economy, this report is to shed light on how impactful they have been, as well as what should be expected moving forward.

## Communication and Digital

On September 18, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) will host a [joint meeting](#) between the Platform Regulation Group and the Content Regulation Group. This meeting will deal with procedural issues, such as electing Chairs of each group, as well as a discussion of updates to the Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA), and an update on other platform and content regulation initiatives. The DMA establishes a set of criteria for large online platforms to be considered a "gatekeeper," and the DSA looks to scale competition and foster innovation for digital services. Both pieces of legislation aim to establish a safe space for consumers and an equally competitive space for businesses. The ongoing implementation of these pieces of legislation could influence other countries to introduce comprehensive regulations on digital platforms and tech companies.

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As nations unite to fortify broadband accessibility, integrating the internet into the very fabric of broadcasting and delivery media worldwide is something that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is focused on. The ITU's Working Party 6B (WP 6B) plans to

host a [series of meetings](#) from September 4-7, in which they will discuss activities related to broadcast service assembly and access. With countries increasingly understanding the importance of ensuring that communities across the world have sufficient broadband access, this study group is vital to analyzing how the internet can be integrated into delivery media and the broadcasting ecosystem.

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Underscoring the pivotal worldwide significance of broadcasting, particularly radiocommunication broadcasting, as an indispensable medium for relaying vital information effectively, addressing challenges like misinformation and restricted access to accurate data is vital to the ITU mission. ITU's Study Group 6 has been dedicated to studying radiocommunication broadcasting, and more specifically, how broadcasting and radio can be used to disseminate crucial information. The study group will be hosting a [meeting](#) on September 8. Misinformation and a lack of transparency and access to information have become rampant, leading the study group to prioritize radiocommunication broadcasting services as the primary source for information dissemination.

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Terrestrial services are the forefront of digital transformation and innovation, and Study Group 5 (SG 5) of the ITU studies the importance of systems and networks that operate terrestrial services and their innovation. The study group is hosting a [meeting](#) on September 25-26. This comes following a 2022 ITU [report](#) that outlines the resilience of television distribution networks that are comprised of terrestrial TV broadcasting transmitters with large coverage areas in times of crisis. These services play a crucial role in wireless communication, maritime and aviation services and broadcasting, which is something that the ITU has laid out.

As efforts to modernize the communication landscape are deeply dependent on spectrum management and other radiocommunication issues, the ITU is focused on preparing to discuss solutions to these issues. From September 27-29, the ITU will host its third Inter-regional workshop centered around preparing for this year's World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC). The workshop aims to provide participants with an increased understanding of the solutions proposed to the [agenda](#) that the WRC has outlined. The WRC is vital to spectrum management and allows countries to come together to establish global harmonization of spectrum allocations. With technology continuously innovating and improving, ensuring that emerging technologies have the necessary spectrum to operate efficiently is important.

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The ITU Focus Group on Autonomous Networks will hold a [virtual meeting](#) on September 28, which will then be followed by a ["Build-a-Thon Workshop"](#). These two meetings will be important to understanding new challenges to the development and deployment of autonomous networks, and how these autonomous networks can revolutionize different sectors. Despite autonomous networks being an emerging field, disseminating information on how they can play a role in society will be crucial to establishing more use cases for autonomous networks.

## Health

Following the International Negotiating Body's (INB) sixth meeting in July, the INB will



continue negotiations on the [draft pandemic accord](#) in drafting sessions from September 4-6. July's sessions saw the body progress on equity articles and pandemic prevention and preparedness despite divergences between developed and developing countries on intellectual property (IP) and genome sequence sharing, as well as medical resource distribution or access to benefits. Additionally, the INB and the Working Group on amendments to the International Health Regulations (WGIHR) held their first joint session where negotiators moved closer to developing a working definition of pandemic and a declaration mechanism. These efforts advanced despite developed countries' opposition to demands of developing countries for the International Health Regulations to implement proposals outlined in the INB's draft accord. The United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPPR) is set to meet on September 20 in New York and adopt a political declaration, of which a [draft](#) is being negotiated. Key friction points are still the conditionality between pathogen sharing and access to benefits prioritized by a number of developing countries and opposed by the United States and others, as well as geopolitical elements related to sanctions. The WGIHR and INB will continue to engage, separately and together, in relatively contentious negotiations to develop a comprehensive, equitable pandemic identification and response framework as their respective January and March/May 2024 deadlines approach. Despite growing voices of the timeline being impossible to manage a full agreement, there is a strong and influential group of individuals and countries that refuse to give up on the politically backed window of opportunity. The INB continues to focus on prevention and preparedness (Art 4 & 5), R&D (Art 9), resilience (Art 11), access and benefit sharing (Art 12), and supply chain and logistics (Art 13). The WGIHR continues to focus on equity (Art 13A) and financing mechanisms for equity (Art 44), as well as trigger mechanisms for a pandemic. Going forward, the [WHO meetings schedule](#) suggests several formal and informal sessions in September and beyond. However, and more importantly, a frenzy of contacts and behind-the-scenes negotiations will take place.

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During the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA78), heads of state and government will gather for a [meeting](#) on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and the Global NCD Compact. This is part of a multi-year aim to accelerate progress towards relevant sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030. The event on September 14 will mark the launch of the Global Mapping Report, showcasing how countries are implementing multisectoral actions across government sectors and engaging with diverse stakeholders, including United Nations (U.N.) agencies and programs, civil society organizations, and the private sector for the prevention and control of NCDs. This comes at a time of heightened attention to NCDs during the summer heatwaves in many parts of the world and their links to NCDs, and warnings by climate experts that the world will experience these more frequently.

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The Geneva Health Forum and the WHO are holding the first [Indoor Air Conference](#) on September 20 as issues of indoor air quality (IAQ) increasingly garner global attention. This gathering serves as a dynamic call to action to distill pandemic lessons, specifically underscoring the pivotal role of ventilation in mitigating the spread of respiratory diseases. The conference's core objective is to advocate for monitoring and enhancing IAQ in buildings, citing its relevance to infectious diseases and overall well-being, emphasizing the government or organizational responsibility in public buildings, aligning IAQ improvements with net-zero goals, and highlighting practical experiences like air quality monitoring and technological solutions for cleaner air.

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The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations, in collaboration with various stakeholders, will hold a [five-day virtual conference](#) bringing together manufacturers and regulators. The conference will focus on exploring future directions as the continent progresses towards the operationalization of the African Medicines Agency, which is seen as a major process in terms of improving timely access to safe and efficacious medicines on the continent.

## Environmental

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will hold its [62nd meeting](#) from September 4-8, 2023, where it will discuss strengthening institutional support for wetlands, update wetland inventories and draft a workplan for the Secretariat for 2023 through 2025. Finally, the Standing Committee will share reports on the status of wetlands and on its regional initiatives. This annual session serves as a key body governing the international protection and designation of wetlands.

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A [resolution](#) adopted at the fifth U.N. Environment Assembly in March 2022 requested the convening of regional consultations on minerals and metals, followed by a global intergovernmental meeting to discuss those findings. Thus, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is holding an [in-person global consultation](#) on minerals and metals from September 7-8 to develop proposals to enhance the environmental sustainability of mineral and metal mining. This meeting comes as minerals and metals have taken on added significance in the clean energy and technology transition.

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The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) [Sustainable Energy Week](#) is taking place in Geneva from September 11-15. This year's theme, "Building Resilient Energy Systems," serves as a call to action for nations across the UNECE region to accelerate the buildout of efficient, renewable energy technologies and to develop regionally connected infrastructure. The Group of Experts on Renewable Energy will hold its [10th annual meeting](#) during Sustainable Energy Week, during which they will track progress in the uptake of renewable energy and discuss how to increase the adoption of renewable energy. The [Committee on Sustainable Energy](#) will also meet during this time to discuss critical raw materials, improving energy connectivity and increasing energy resilience. Finally, the European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP) will meet to review emissions data and establish a workplan to limit air pollution.

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UNECE, Foundation Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), World Customs Organization and Chatham House will [host a meeting](#) on September 15 to discuss how [harmonized system \(HS\) codes](#), the standardized method of classifying traded products, can be utilized to establish an inclusive circular economy. The session will examine the efficacy of international trade flows and practices in supporting a transition to a global circular economy that addresses climate change and biodiversity loss as well as industrial resilience. Additionally, the session will explore alternative and experimental trade measures to expedite the global transition to a circular economy.

## Science and Technology





As the countries seek to establish their satellite presence in a contemporary space race, both the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDR) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) will be holding events to inform the security measures that should be paired with such efforts. On September 13-14, UNIDR will be hosting its [Outer Space Security Conference 2023](#), which will provide a forum for diplomats, military personnel, industry stakeholders and academics to consider challenges and solutions related to security in outer space. As advancements in space travel continue to accelerate, especially in the private sector, coordination on best practices will be important for stakeholders to understand how to best approach their work. Furthermore, the United States's pending reauthorization of its Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is expected to support the ever-growing satellite and drone industry, which presents the need for ample security of such assets—a topic which this event will be able to thoughtfully contribute to. The WMO will be holding its eighth [Meeting of the Expert Team on Space Systems and Utilization](#) (ET-SSU-8) from September 19-21. This meeting will discuss several measures regarding the use and protection of satellites, including recommendations on requirements for satellite observations and their applications, as well as the enhancement of satellite data products and requirements. As the satellite industry continues to grow at a rapid pace, early decisions on key matters as such may prove to be key formulations of this maturing industry.

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WIPO will hold its eighth Conversation on artificial intelligence (AI) and intellectual property (IP) on September 20-21. [This iteration](#) will focus on generative AI. The last WIPO AI & IP Conversation attracted 4,000+ attendees and this year's topic is likely to bring in similar or higher numbers. The session will start up with discussing regulatory processes and will continue exploring IP aspects of generative AI, including innovation, creativity, authorship, ownership, as well as looking at challenges such as access to training data. This eighth Conversation takes place with a backdrop of the organization and its member states struggling to define next steps and how to bring the knowledge collected over the years into use.

## Standards and Regulatory



UNECE [Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics](#) will meet September 4-6, 2023. The provisional agenda includes an inter-regional workshop on multimodal transport corridor management. Discussions will also include the development of transport networks and links, such as the Euro-Asian Transport Links and Trans-European Motorway projects. An update on the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory focusing on current transport infrastructure data will be provided. Additional topics of discussion include the impact of climate change on transport, inland transport security measures and sustainable urban mobility strategies. The meeting will also review and monitor emerging issues and sustainable development goals related to transport.

## Social



The International Labour Organization (ILO) has a slew of decisions to make in September, many of which could foreshadow its broader work in developing a Global Coalition for Social Justice. The ILO's Standards Review Mechanisms Tripartite Working Group will be holding a [meeting](#) from September 11-16, where it will review three instruments concerning maternity protection and seven instruments concerning protection of children and young persons working at night. Additional measures concerning social security will also be considered. While such procedures may be seen as rudimentary, ILO proceedings moving forward are likely to carry more weight now that the organization is embarking on forming its [recently announced Global Coalition for Social Justice](#), a priority of Director General Gilbert Hounbo.

## Humanitarian and Human Rights

The international community seeks to discuss a range of issues from homelessness as a cause and consequence of contemporary forms of slavery to the impact of militarization on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the impact of some new technologies on the enjoyment of human rights during the [54th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council](#) (HRC) scheduled from September 11 to October 13, 2023. This body of 47 states responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights globally discusses a plethora of pressing, current issues related to international human rights. Those outlined on the agenda include human rights situations that require the HRC's attention, universal periodic reviews of individual countries and follow-up on the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, among others.

Meeting from September 25 to October 13, the [74th session of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (ICESCR) will provide a platform for country representatives to discuss the Covenant's future engagement with the United Nations and elect new leadership. The ICESCR focuses on the advancement of economic, social and cultural rights of all individuals in ICESCR member countries. During the upcoming session, discussions will surround substantive issues arising from the implementation of the ICESCR and consideration of communications under the Optional Protocol to the Covenant, among other topics. The topic being a favorite of China and its allies, one may expect some highlights of collective approach to considering human rights versus a focus on individuals, as well as to promote social and cultural rights in this context.



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## Questions?

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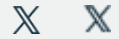


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