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Geneva Insights



October Edition

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International Geneva - A global governance ecosystem of over 40 international organizations, 178 country representations and 700+ non-governmental organizations.

The Outlook

Economic ([jump to](#))

Deputy ministers and other senior officials able to make decisions in international trade policy gather to prioritize for 13th Ministerial Conference. Interest grows if they are able to limit ambition or end up with a Christmas tree. [Read More](#)

Intellectual property again comes under scrutiny as the “TRIPS Waiver” negotiations reinvigorate, this time with further layers of policy space and wider industrialization and tech transfer debates. [Read More](#)

(Industrial) designers around the globe may next year welcome a new treaty streamlining the international system for registering designs if negotiators in Geneva find solutions to political elements starting in early October. [Read More](#)

Country patent policy leads meet to take up new issues facing the international patent system, such as the use of AI in reviewing patents and licensing of medical technologies. And the mothership will release a report on the interplay between patents and trade secrets in medical technologies COVID-19 style. [Read More](#)

Trade and development experts double down on food insecurity and macroeconomic distress by searching for new ways to manage increasing price volatility in the commodities sector. [Read More](#)

oriGIn brings together food and beverage connoisseurs from public and private sectors to talk the value of geographical indications and network at its 2023 Biennial Meeting. [Read More](#)

Building bridges between sustainable finance conservation, social justice and the preservation of human rights is the aim of a new initiative named Building Bridges. [Read More](#)

Communications and Digital ([jump to](#)).

As Chinese innovators look to build the groundbreaking Square Kilometer Array, countries will attempt to shift their focus to compete and be a global leader in the radio astronomy space. [Read More](#)

With world powers struggling to tackle challenges and opportunities posed by AI, international processes are laying the groundwork for a comprehensive and cohesive normative architecture across borders regarding AI. [Read More](#)

With increased calls for regulation spanning across the information and communications landscape, improved regulations for radio are crucial to increasing information access for the unconnected and underconnected. [Read More](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic catapulted the world into a technological revolution, prompting the world to examine how information and communications technologies will impact societies. [Read More](#)

Telecomms experts are getting 5G regulations right to prepare for a future centered around 6G. [Read More](#)

What's on the agenda for cybersecurity in the media? That's up to you. [Read More](#)

Health ([jump to](#)).

Have you been waiting for a key moment in the pandemic preparedness negotiations? It is here with the first draft negotiating text to be released mid-October. [Read More](#)

A future Pathogen X: the World Health Organization attempts to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic global response by discussing medical and non-medical innovations that can help to mitigate future outbreaks. [Read More](#)

Breaking new ground in genomics with an inaugural meeting; join the journey from the very beginning. [Read More](#)

Dive into drug dependence with experts on the subject and get the latest on covered substances. [Read More](#)

Pharmaceutical substances off limits to patenting are discussed as INN stakeholders and expert groups convene. [Read More](#)

Environment and Sustainability ([jump to](#)).

Conservationists from around the globe meet to renew conservation commitments and bring together governmental, corporate and environmental leaders to do just that. [Read More](#)

Clean electricity and energy efficiency experts meet to consider the fundamental changes in power production and grid needed to get to net-zero. [Read More](#)

Statistics matter! And a UN Joint Taskforce on Environmental Statistics and Indications meets to standardize environmental data reporting and to identify where additional data is required. [Read More](#)

Need for policy recommendations ahead of COP-28? Meteorology and climate policy advisors meet to provide those. [Read More](#)

New Global Greenhouse Gas Watch mechanism launched to support climate change decision-making. Meeting in October will seek guidance for the implementation of this monitoring tool. [Read More](#)

Science and Technology ([jump to](#)).

Nuclear physicists will shed light on the achievements and future of CERN projects and large hadron collider scientific operations. [Read More](#)

Nuclear research requires a lot of money. The European and other countries involved in this unique international endeavor will watch closely as CERN finances are scrutinized. [Read More](#)

In an international struggle to lead on AI, machine learning experts will meet to cooperate on the applications of ML practices amid a global push toward increasing AI discussions. [Read More](#)

With the EU reopening discussions concerning the restarting of space launches, and the U.S. examining the possibility of establishing a space task force with Japan and China, the space race rages on. [Read More](#)

Standards and Regulatory ([jump to](#)).

A new international treaty is taking shape—the UN Plastic Treaty—seen by many as the biggest international environmental negotiations since the Paris Agreement. October will see zero draft development and specific discussions on plastics in agriculture. [Read More](#)

Protection of plant varieties plays a big role in incentivizing investments to novel breeds and plants impacting food security, crop resilience and yields. The specialized UN agency meets for its annual governing session. [Read More](#)

The UN Business and Human Rights nexus aims to examine ESG standards and the role of investors in upholding human rights. [Read More](#)

A number of harmonization and standard-setting discussions on road transport, infrastructure and vehicles is scheduled for October. All in Europe, but traditionally inspiring or directly influencing standards and regulations worldwide. [Read More](#)

Social ([jump to](#)).

Organizations in Geneva go increasingly from a country to a city level. A UN economic agency will bring together mayors and other municipal actors to look at resilience and strategies to creating more sustainable cities. [Read More](#)

Labor chiefs to discuss and re-recognize the right to strike, to which the U.S. and others may relate nowadays, and to rely on labor statisticians to deliver robust methodologies, data and international standards. [Read More](#)

Youth and Sports ([jump to](#)).

Sports rights market and sports broadcasting to be discussed between leaders in the industry. [Read More](#)

New workstream for broadcasters focusing on younger audiences and their media education. [Read More](#)

Humanitarian and Human Rights ([jump to](#)).

The Human Rights Council will wrap up its marathon session in October with calls going beyond its agenda and a vote on the Russian bid to come back on the select body making news. [Read More](#)

10 years down, many weeks to go! Geneva peace week looks to continue its 10 years of peacebuilding. [Read More](#)

International investment law, GDP and human rights: the UN expert mechanism on the right to development handles it all. [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) Director General (DG) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and all WTO members eye the organization's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) scheduled for February 2024. As the narrative swings from negligible ambition to a long wish list of agreements to be reached, a key moment comes on October 23-24 with a senior officials' meeting (SOM) to set priorities. The DG pushes for attendance by officials who have the right to make top level decisions and can compromise. Over the summer, the DG has been decreasing ambition

knowing members are coming to the table with many ideas, past grievances negotiation remnants as well as new topics to be tackled. Further, the organization's reform is on the table and one of the top priorities. Most recently, some members portray MC13 as a mere stepping stone towards the 14th Ministerial Conference. This is not enough for many, and disagreements are expected to emerge among senior officials. The Director General is to convene ambassadors for early October to prepare the pivotal moment of the SOM.

Trade-related intellectual property (TRIPS) and its infamous waiver discussions in the WTO reinvigorated with a closed thematic session at the end of September and will hit a streak of moments in October: an informal meeting on October 9, a United States International Trade Commission (USITC) report finalization in mid-October and a formal session on October 30-31. In particular, the U.S. domestic process is highly anticipated, but many will be dismayed as the U.S. system is likely to take a long time to deliberate and come up with its clear position, potentially not before the end of the year. There are new layers to the discussion with African Group proposals on policy space and industrialization via tech transfer, including a specific paper on intellectual property.

At the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Preparatory Committee of the Diplomatic Conference to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty (DLT) will meet October 9-11. In July 2022 the WIPO Generally Assembly agreed to convene a Diplomatic Conference to adopt a DLT no later than 2024. As further preparation, a Special Session of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications will take place October 2-6. Negotiations related to this treaty have been ongoing since 2006. The proposed DLT aims to streamline the global system for protecting designs and has an ambition to particularly impact smaller-scale designers in low- and medium-income countries. The DLT is to make it easier for designers to protect their designs both in home markets and abroad. The draft text of the treaty outlines maximum requirements that contracting parties can impose on design applicants and owners with relation to applications for the protection of designs. The negotiations have been ongoing until 2015 when they stalled due to political proposal by the African Group introducing a disclosure of origin language. Since then, the developed countries largely lost interest since the DLT was being increasingly linked to a treaty on genetic resources. In an ultimate linkage last year, the African Group, together with other developing countries and assisted by the EU, forced a decision to push ahead with a treaty. The disclosure element, together with the reflection of technical assistance, remain two parts of the text on which negotiators still need to find a solution. The U.S. and the African Group are heavily invested on both these issues on the opposite sides of the aisle.

The WIPO Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) will meet October 16-20 in Geneva. This will be a hybrid meeting. Items on the agenda include sharing sessions on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in reviewing patents, licensing of medical technologies related to COVID-19, client-attorney confidentiality and international cooperation in relation to technology transfer. During the meeting, SCP will consider proposals from Brazil, South Africa, Denmark, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Korea, Spain, the Czech Republic, Kenya, Mexico, Singapore, Argentina, Chile, Switzerland and France regarding changes to international patent systems. The SCP will also launch a report at a side event on October 18 discussing the interplay between patents and trade secrets in medical technologies. This literature review is a part of WIPO's COVID-19 Response.

The [14th session](#) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)), Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development is set to take place on October 9-11. This meeting, held annually, was first implemented by the [2008 Accra Accords](#) and sets out to gather leading experts in the commodities industry to participate in panels and discussions regarding developments and obstacles in the industry. This session of the meeting will specifically focus on the impacts of commodity price volatility on macroeconomic indicators and food security, including an exploration of technology-based instruments that can aid in managing price risk. Day 1 will focus on a general overview of the commodities industry across nations. Day 2 will launch into how best to manage price volatility in the commodities sector for developing nations who are economically reliant on these goods. Finally, Day 3 will focus on inclusive diversification and sustainable energy transitions in the commodities sector. Featured speakers at the event include [Ms. Rebeca Grynspan](#), the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, [Ms. Elizabeth Press](#), the Director at the International Renewable Energy Agency, as well as several other sustainability and commodity experts. The final output of the session will be a comprehensive report on effective strategies commodities risk management which will provide countries with a roadmap to creating more sustainable commodities sectors.

The [oriGIn 2023 Biennial Meeting](#) will take place in Geneva from October 5-7. This is a flagship event for the Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (oriGIn) as it continues its non-profit work dedicated to promoting geographical indications as a sustainable development tool for producers and communities. The event will be highlighted by four components: (1) [Thematic Informal Sessions](#), (2) [Statutory General Assembly](#), (3) [International Conference](#) and (4) [GI visits to Gruyère and Bienne](#). The last element is a symbolic piece considering the recent denial of the Gruyère as a protected name in the U.S.

From October 2 to 5, Building Bridges, a joint initiative aimed at promoting the use of sustainable finance to preserve the planet, reduce social inequalities and improve access to human rights, will be holding its annual [Summit](#) and [Action Days](#), where policy and business leaders from around the world will gather to discuss the role of sustainable finance in addressing the twin climate and nature crises, widening social inequalities and how to mobilize capital in unprecedented amounts to build a just, resilient, and sustainable future. The Summit will begin with words from WTO Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on current international economic dynamics and struggles, followed by several panels on how sustainable financing can be leveraged to address such issues. The following Action Days will feature a slew of panel discussions, fishbowl conversations, workshops and research presentations addressing how to foster sustainable economic growth in current economic conditions. Together, these events will present a unique opportunity to discuss economic and geopolitical factors that will define the upcoming year and what can be done in the face of such circumstances to drive global economic growth.

Communications and Digital



The [International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\) Radio Astronomy Working Group](#) is committed to safeguarding the delicate radio frequencies that enable astronomers to explore the universe and collaborating with global stakeholders to mitigate interference from wireless communication and other radiofrequency emitting devices. The Working Group plans to hold a meeting from October 5-11, where it plans to discuss the most pertinent

issues and emerging challenges in the radio astronomy space. Following the convening of Working Party 7D, the experts will look ahead to having a higher-level discussion at the upcoming World Radiocommunications Conference in November.

While the U.S. Congress holds ongoing discussions regarding AI legislation, the White House has released an [AI Bill of Rights Blueprint](#) and the EU has passed the [EU AI Act](#). On international level, [Study Group 13](#) (SG13) is a branch of the ITU that tackles the development of future technologies, such as AI. The Study Group will have a series of meetings from October 23 to November 3, with a meeting on the Advances in Autonomous Networks on October 24. As both the U.S. and EU look to establish more collaborative efforts on AI legislation, the upcoming ITU meetings will signal what the EU's directions toward emerging technologies will be.

The [ITU's Radio Regulation Board](#) (RRB) meets up to four times a year, where it addresses and applies the provisions of Radio Regulations. The RRB holds its next meeting October 23-27. The ITU's RRB stands as an indispensable guardian of the world's radio frequencies, safeguarding their orderly and equitable allocation to foster international cooperation and innovation. The next members of the Board will be elected at the upcoming ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 2026, which will be crucial to determining the ITU's policy in the future.

The [ITU's Study Group on Digital Transformation](#) looks to add to the international debate on information and communication technologies impacting societies by holding a set of meetings under its study group on digital transformation (ITU-D SG2) from October 30 to November 3. Smart cities, cybercrimes and financial services are some of the topics tabled for this session, and these discussions will contribute to shaping emerging legislation across the ITU's member states. The U.S. and the EU are leading efforts in this space, evidenced by Congress' push to strengthen data protection and online safety, and the EU's passing of the Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA), there is a massive shift in focus witnessed on a global scale.

The future of innovation in technology will be centered around 6G technologies, prompting lawmakers around the world to begin to devise ways to regulate its deployment with minimal impact to society. But first, the ITU-convened [Joint Coordination Activity on the International Mobile Telecommunications-2020 and Beyond](#) (JCA-IMT2020) is continuing to discuss and determine improved regulations for 5G networks, devices and services. JCA-IMT2020 is committed to fostering conversations that develop the legislation that countries use to govern for the present and the future. 5G powers the most prevalent technologies today, and these study groups analyze the impact of standards, interoperability and the potential impacts to the social and physical economies.

Starting on October 11, the [European Broadcasting Union \(EBU\)](#) will host a [two-day seminar](#) on cybersecurity in the media, focusing particularly on public service media outlets. The EBU's Media Cybersecurity initiative aims to foster collaboration among several media actors to coordinate defenses against cyberattacks, intellectual property vulnerabilities and the spread of misinformation. On the first day of the seminar, attendees will hear discussions on current cybersecurity risks, including journalists' security on social media, artificial

intelligence (AI), and updates on the [EU's NIS2 Directive](#) and [Cybersecurity Resilience Act](#). Anais Kessous of CBC/Radio Canada, Dan Patterson of ZDNet, Gerben Dierick of VRT and other leading security experts will host these sessions. The seminar's second day will challenge attendees with a less familiar format: the unconference. Without a predetermined agenda, these sessions are designed to encourage active participation and dynamic conversations. Registered attendees can propose topics for the unconference prior to the seminar [here](#). The EBU hopes that this unconventional format will facilitate the exchange of recent technologies and best practices for mitigating the media industry's shared cybersecurity risks.

Health

Following [three high level meetings on health](#) in September in New York, including on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR) with its [Political declaration](#) accepted, and with suggestions of extending the overly ambitious timeframe squashed by the G20 leaders reconfirming the May 2024 deadline in their [Declaration](#), the pandemic accord negotiations have a new momentum going into October. While scientific and research cooperation (Article 9) and logistics network (Article 13) have achieved meeting of minds, frictions remain on prevention and one health (Article 4&5), tech transfer (Article 11) and access and benefit sharing (Article 12). We expect the [INB](#) Bureau to live up to its commitment and circulate the first negotiating text by October 16. This text is expected to be fit for text-based negotiations and a major development from past texts which were conceptual and the drafters were keen not to move to text-based before concepts are clarified. The negotiators also expect the EU to finalize its new proposal for access and benefit sharing after its [original proposal](#) of March 2023 has not been taken up by many around the negotiating table. In parallel, the [negotiations](#) on the update of the International Health Regulations (IHR) are ongoing. They are kept separate to an extent, but all agree that the interlinkages are very strong and anything negotiated in the pandemic negotiations will be reflected in the IHR outcome and vice-versa.

On October 23-24, the WHO will host a [Global Research and Innovation Forum](#) to reflect on progress made since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and discuss strategies on how to build resilient structures against future outbreaks and pandemics. The two-day forum will opportune leading healthcare professionals to discuss existing research on healthcare emergency readiness and will lend an opportunity to formulate effective responses and applications that could protect against a future Pathogen X. While the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer considered a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) by the WHO, learning from the rapid development of medical and non-medical pandemic responses has emphasized the importance of planning for and mitigating future outbreaks.

The first meeting of the [Technical Advisory Group on Genomics](#) (TAG-G) is scheduled for October 5-6. TAG-G, [established](#) in September 2023, serves the purpose of providing technical advice to the WHO on genomics and supporting efforts to enhance access to genomic knowledge and technologies, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. The Advisory Group is comprised of 15 experts, who must provide technical guidance, recommend priority activities, support the WHO to bring attention to regional and sub-regional opportunities and experiences in genomics, and report annually to the WHO Secretariat on progress in accelerating access to genomics for global health. During this

inaugural meeting, the 15 TAG-G members will be introduced, and discussions will revolve around current and future genomics-related activities.

The 46th Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) will meet from October 16-20. On October 16, there will be a [public information session](#) where individuals and organizations can participate virtually, providing data and insights on substances under review by the committee. Registration is required, with a deadline of October 2 for requesting an oral presentation slot. The session aims to facilitate discussions and presentations related to substances on the ECDD agenda, with a focus on relevant, timely and concise contributions from stakeholders.

A [consultation for the International Nonproprietary Names \(INNs\)](#) for Pharmaceutical Substances stakeholders will precede the 77th INN Consultation at WHO HQ in Geneva on October 17. INNs are globally acknowledged names used to identify pharmaceutical substances or active pharmaceutical ingredients. These names are unique, universally recognized and not subject to proprietary ownership, also known as generic names. This session aims to enhance communication between the INN Expert Group and stakeholders by allowing them to present arguments on pending requests or policy matters.

Environment and Sustainability



From October 11-13, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) will hold its second [IUCN Leaders Forum](#). The IUCN is a discrete organization with 1,400 members and a portfolio of nearly \$1 billion in projects that acts as a “political nurse” for global environmental legislation. This year, the IUCN forum’s theme, “Global Goals for Nature: Tracking Progress, Financing Success,” will center the discussions around the private sector’s involvement in attaining the IUCN’s goals to protect and restore nature as established at COP15. In addition, the forum will offer global leaders the platform to agree on mechanisms for global measuring, monitoring and reporting, as well as a chance to discuss how to help governments and the private sector fulfil their financing obligations.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe’s (UNECE) [Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems](#) and [Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency](#) will meet on October 3-4 and 5-6, respectively. Noting the fundamental changes required to achieve net-zero emissions globally by 2050, the meeting of the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems intends to discuss policies and actions that support the achievement of net-zero emissions power systems. Additionally, the group will seek to provide policy recommendations on how to improve the reliability and cybersecurity of smart integrated energy systems. Meanwhile, the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency’s meeting will focus on improving energy efficiency standards for industries and buildings in order to make recommendations on how to create more resilient and decarbonized energy systems.

The UNECE’s [Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators](#) will meet on October 16. The Joint Task Force is charged with assisting nations with their efforts to apply share environmental information system principles and methodologies and to analyze and communicate environmental data. Thus, the meeting will allow the task force to share the

latest developments in the use of environmental data, to identify data needs for policymaking and to provide updates to intergovernmental agencies that rely on environmental data.

The World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) [Climate Policy Advisors](#), the body that provides strategic advice on WMO contributions to the WMO Policy Advisory Committee to support their climate policy decision making, will meet virtually on October 4. The meeting will focus on the WMO's contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement implementation and sustainable development goals. Additionally, the meeting will provide an opportunity for the Climate Policy Advisors to draft policy briefs and key messages for COP28.

The [World Meteorological Organization](#) (WMO) is hosting a workshop on October 3-5 titled "Observations within the Global Greenhouse Watch." The workshop seeks to develop guidance for Member countries and partner organizations to support the implementation of the Global Greenhouse Gas Watch (GGGW). The GGGW was [established](#) at the nineteenth World Meteorological Congress earlier this year to serve as an internationally coordinated greenhouse gas monitoring infrastructure. The GGGW is intended to provide actionable information to the UNFCCC and other stakeholders to strengthen the GHG information basis for climate change decisions making.

Science and Technology



The Scientific Policy Committee (SPC) of [CERN](#), the European Organization for Nuclear Research, will hold its [335th session](#) on October 2-3. The meeting will focus on assessing the achievements of the current CERN projects and making recommendations for the future of these projects. Day 1 will include presentations from [a variety of scientific committees](#), the [non-LHC \(Large Hadron Collider\) projects](#) and from the broader [Accelerator Complex](#). Day 2 will focus on an Environment Report, the NextGen Triggers project and the [four major LHC experiments](#) currently being undertaken by CERN. Featured speakers include Dr. H. Montgomery, the Chair of the [SPC](#), particle physicist [Joachim Mnich](#) and [Fabiola Gianotti](#), the Director-General of CERN, among others. This committee meeting will provide important insight into the long-term value and feasibility of the projects on which the European nuclear community is currently focusing.

The [387th meeting](#) of the [CERN Finance Committee](#) will occur on October 4. This session will review the current finances of CERN and decide on the organization's budgetary matters for 2024 and beyond. The [Audit Committee](#) and [Pension Fund Governing Board](#) will both provide informational presentations for the committee. Other topics of interest include a report of the current CERN building sites, recommendations on the finances of the NextGen Trigger Project and an update on the current status of the [CERN accelerators](#). The latter part of the meeting will consist of a series of votes on a variety of propositions for new and renewed contracts and collaborations to acquire different services for CERN. Finally, the Committee will provide feedback on the [Future Circular Collider's \(FCC\) Feasibility Study](#). This meeting will set the tone for the future of CERN's budgetary matters, directing the priorities of the organization. While usually apolitical, CERN is an organization with one of the largest

budgets of all, totaling 1.4 billion USD annually, and its Council and Finance Committee are closely watched by its key contributors, the member states.

On October 27, the [Joint Coordination Activity on Machine Learning](#) (JCA-ML) will meet in Geneva under the auspices of the ITU. This meeting will discuss the applications of ML, and further global cooperation on transparency on the usage of AI. A variety of resources, such as development organization consortia and forums, as well as academics studying ML applications will be present and available at the meeting to disperse global information and practices to telecommunication industry leaders. The JCA-ML was established by the SG13 (future networks and emerging network technologies) division in July 2022 to coordinate the ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T). The JCA-ML is chaired by Mr. Kangchan Lee (ETRI, Republic of Korea) and the vice-chair is Mr. Marco Carugi (Huawei, China). This body meets regularly and is a good example of the ITU's openness to private sector views. This is subject to long-term cooperation with this U.N. agency that is increasingly taking the lead on international AI debates.

The [ITU's Study Group on Science Services](#) (SG7) includes the primary Working Parties on space and satellite-based technologies, and these working groups are dedicated to examining the upcoming difficulties that the area will face. The study group will hold a meeting on October 12, where it will discuss burgeoning issues regarding frequency standard emissions, space radio communication applications, remote sensing systems and radio astronomy.

Standards and Regulatory



As part of the process of developing a new U.N. treaty tackling plastic pollution, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization will meet in early October to discuss solutions for plastics use in agriculture and to inform members about the potential legally binding treaty under development. With the [initial agreement in Nairobi in 2022](#), the process has an agreed mandate since this June and is moving into developing a zero draft by November 2023. Given the extensive use of plastics in agriculture, the U.N. [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) has turned its attention to evaluating the impacts on human health and environmental health. Thus, the FAO will hold a second briefing on the role of plastics in agriculture on October 3, 2023. This briefing is intended to provide a forum to discuss solutions to address plastic use and waste in agriculture and to inform participants about the outcomes of the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC-2) held earlier this year. Additionally, the briefing will discuss the [possible treaty](#) on plastics use in agriculture that is currently under development by the INC Chair ahead of the [third INC meeting](#) due to be held in November.

The [Council of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants](#) (UPOV) will meet on October 27 in Geneva. UPOV's mission is to provide and promote plant variety protection, as well as encourage the development of new varieties of plants. To that end, UPOV negotiates and enacts standards in this specific area. This annual governing session will [report](#) on UPOV developments proposed for adoption by the Council over the past year, approve work programs for the Administrative and Legal Committee, the Technical Committee and the Technical Working Parties, and overview financial statements and

performance reports from 2022 regarding Council matters. The session will work to elect new Chairpersons for the Technical Working Parties for Agricultural Crops (TWA), Fruit Crops (TWF), Testing Methods and Techniques (TWM), Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees (TWO) and Vegetables (TWV).

The [United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) will meet October 2-6 for the [36th session](#) since its establishment in 2011 by the U.N. Human Rights Council. The group will discuss, assess, and recommend new and continued best practices for implementing the [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#). The Working Group will further its consideration of these topics in the context of the U.N. [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), which was adopted in 2015. Consistent with the Sustainable Development Agenda's focus on human health and wellbeing, climate change proactivity and social progress, the Working Group expressed its intent to examine environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards and the role of investors in human rights. These topics, among others, are essential to the U.N.'s broader efforts to promote sustainable practices within businesses, States, and other stakeholders.

The UNECE will be hosting a slew of meetings addressing issues such as customs questions affecting transport, general safety provisions, lighting and light-signaling, road transport and the transport of perishable foodstuffs.

First, UNECE's TIR Administrative Committee will [meet on October 11](#) to elect members to the TIR Executive Board, hear a report by the Chair of the TIR Executive Board, establish a program of work for the TIR Executive Board for 2023-2024 and further administrative tasks. This Executive Board will advance the goals of the Customs Convention of the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975), which has 78 Contracting Parties, including the European Union. This agenda will establish said goals for the following year.

The UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport will hold its [164th Session](#) on October 10-13, where it will consider activities of UNECE for European bodies and other U.N. organizations in its interest, its alignment with the Inland Transport Committee Strategy, several matters relating to the TIR Convention, 1975, and more. Such decisions are likely to address various cross-border transport policies for persons, luggage and more.

On October 10-13, the UNECE Working Party on General Safety Provisions will hold its [126th session](#), where it is set to discuss various measures to harmonize vehicle regulations, such as regulations on buses and coaches, safety glazing regulations, amendments to external projections regulations and various equipment-based regulations such as those for speedometers, mechanical couplings and more. Harmonization on such scale will certainly hold international implications as vehicle manufacturing innovation continues to increase.

The UNECE Working Party on Road Transport will [meet](#) from October 17-19 to establish its provisional agenda for its 118th Session, which will include efforts to support new technologies and innovation in inland transport, promote sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility, facilitate international road transport, and address further activities within its interests. As the U.S. continues to implement infrastructure projects authorized by the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), efforts described above will be among those to keep an eye on as projects materialize.

Lastly, the UNECE Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs will [meet](#) from October 24 to 27 to establish the provisional agenda for its 80th Session, which is slated to

include potential activities with bodies such as the Inland Transport Committee and Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, as well as an update on the status and implementation of the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP) and proposals to the agreement.

Social

The UNECE is set to have its [Urban Resilience Week](#) which will take place on October 2-6. The focus of the week will be innovative approaches to urban planning and design as it brings together public officials and subject experts from around the UNECE region. The week will be highlighted by two consecutive events. The first event is the [3rd Forum of Mayors](#) taking place on October 2-3 with the focus being “Urban Regeneration towards 2030” with 50 mayors and deputy mayors hailing from nearly every single European nation. The second event is the [84th session of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management](#) taking place on October 4-6. There will additionally be two side events with focuses on [Voluntary Local Reviews](#) and [Inclusive Responses and Recovery](#). The week’s events will be an excellent opportunity to form relationships and gain information related to promoting urban resilience.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) will be holding its [International Conference of Labour Statistics \(ICLS\)](#) from October 11-20, marking 100 years since the event first took place in 1923. The ICLS, which is hosted by the ILO every five years, makes recommendations on selected topics of labor statistics in the form of resolutions and guidelines, which are then approved by the Governing Body of the ILO before becoming part of the set of international standards on labor statistics. These standards usually relate to concepts, definitions, classifications and other methodological procedures which are agreed as representing ‘best practice’ in the respective areas. Additionally, the ILO will be holding the 349th Session of its Governing Body from October 30 to November 9, at which point it is expected to consider a framework that would recognize the [right to strike](#) under Convention 87, an international agreement protecting the right to organize by ILO members. With the United Auto Workers strike in the U.S., and with employees and businesses being split on this issue in Europe, any decision made should be expected to hold significant weight on the international stage. In addition, the ILO is likely to launch, this time properly, the “Global Coalition for Social Justice” at the Governing Body of the ILO. This is a flagship initiative of the organization’s Director General [Huongbo](#) that enjoys strong backing from China, favorable views from the U.S. administration, but reservations from India and the EU still finding its take.

Youth & Sports

The 33rd European Broadcasting Union [Sports Assembly](#), occurring from October 4-5, will provide a platform for sports media executives and leading experts to explore the challenges faced by the industry and dialogue on potential solutions. This biannual assembly will be inclusive of panel discussions, presentations, interactive sessions and networking opportunities with leaders in the sports media industry.

Ensuring that younger audiences receive fair, appropriate access to quality information is

becoming increasingly important. On October 13, the European Broadcasting Union will host a community event titled “[Kids Content: Focus on News for Kids](#)” which will allow attendees to learn about the ins-and-outs of kids news content. The session will include ample information on potential strategies to tailor content to children and feature case studies that detail best practices.


Humanitarian & Human Rights

The [54th Session of the Human Rights Council](#) continues to provide the international community with a platform to discuss a range of pressing human rights issues. This session, which began on September 11, is scheduled to end on October 13. Some see this as a proliferation of marathon sessions that only allow protracted debates and proposals on topics beyond prepared agenda. In addition to the outlined human rights situations included in the agenda, the international community has urged the body to renew the mandate of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia and there will likely be further discussion on racism and gender issues which have both been highly controversial topics for the body. Controversially, Russia is seeking to rejoin the Council, following the country’s ouster in April 2022. Human rights groups have opposed the reelection of Russia to the body, but it is possible that the country may garner enough support by reported promising grain and other commodities for votes of developing countries. There has also been discussion on a potential resolution from China on economic, social and cultural rights. This is not China’s first attempt, but this time it makes diplomatic efforts across the aisle to succeed. This consequential Session progresses and is likely to continue to invoke conversation and discussion that will have a direct impact on the promotion of human rights globally.

Beginning on October 30, a variety of organizations and international partners will gather for the tenth annual [Geneva Peace Week \(GPW\)](#). GPW allows leaders to exchange ideas, challenges, objectives, and solutions related to international peacebuilding. For its 10th anniversary, GPW has designated its theme as, “Building Trust, Building Peace: An Agenda for the Future.” Hoping to build on the technological, economic, and scientific advances of the last decade, GPW leaders aim to address contemporary threats to peace, such as climate change, internal violence, and polarization. A series of discussions, workshops, policy briefings and events will allow participants to engage with one another on these topics. GPW’s 2023 meeting will feature three thematic tracks: “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies,” “addressing climate change through just transitions” and “harnessing technologies to build a better future.” These objectives coupled with reflections on GPW’s ten years of progress will make for a memorable and meaningful celebration of the organization’s peacebuilding efforts.

The [United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development \(EMRTD\)](#) will gather for its [8th session](#) from October 30 to November 1. As a subsidiary body of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the EMRTD holds two three-day sessions each year, which States, UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions, and other interested parties are invited to observe. The United Nations defines the right to development as the right of all peoples to “participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political, development.” The EMRTD conducts thematic studies and gathers insights from international visits to help achieve this objective. Currently, the EMRTD is working to complete a [study](#) on equal opportunities for women in

contributing to development processes. At its earlier 2023 meeting, the EMRTD produced its findings on international investment law, inequality, and the role of GDP in sustainable development. Consistent with previous meetings, the agenda is likely to include debate, consideration of thematic studies and focused discussions.



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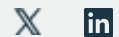


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