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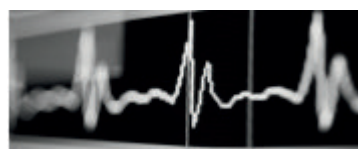
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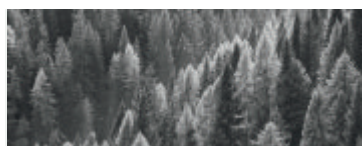
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The Outlook

Economic ([jump to](#)).

Global experts convene in Geneva to strengthen intellectual property enforcement and combat persistent intangible theft challenges. [Read more](#)

75th executive session of UNCTAD's trade and development board: addressing critical issues in development financing for least-developed countries and overhauling international financial architecture. [Read more](#)

MC13: the world of international trade wraps up preparations for a pivotal moment for the multilateral trading system. [Read more](#)

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

TIR on the road to standardize: experts meet to harmonize standard for moving goods and trucks across borders. [Read more](#)

Dialed Down: health and tech experts gather to discuss the effects of videogames and esports, venturing into the regulatory web affecting the technology and entertainment world. [Read more](#)

UNECE Inland Transport Committee's working party focuses on standardization, automation and environmental sustainability in Europe's inland navigation. [Read more](#)

UN Inland Transport Committee's 86th session in Geneva tackles ambitious goal: decarbonizing inland transport by 2050. [Read more](#)

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

In preparation of high-level meeting in May this year, technology experts debate the role and advancements of information society in achieving sustainable development. [Read more](#)

Health ([jump to](#)).

Intellectual property in health emergencies: an insight into managing IP for publicly funded health research. [Read more](#)

Experts and stakeholders to explore strategies for fair pricing to enable access to medicines around the globe. [Read more](#)

Full on marathon negotiations for pandemic instrument negotiators as the self-imposed deadline approaches and substantial differences prevail. [Read more](#)

Attempts to standardize digital COVID-19 certificates will have an impact beyond that pandemic. [Read more](#)

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

Amid intensification of climate change, wetlands stakeholders discuss the science behind wetland conversation and its international implications.

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A range of climate issues and related standardization work is top of the agenda in late February. [Read more](#)

Social ([jump to](#)).

Lines up! Labor and maritime representatives have collaborated to adopt guidelines on the medical examination of fishers and fishing vessel personnel with likely spill-over effect into other professions. [Read more](#)

Experts gather to discuss the state of wages worldwide and what can be done to set and raise living wages. [Read more](#)

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

To the great innovators: international patent law aims to catch up with practice of AI tools embedded in filing, examination and granting. [Read more](#)

Discover AI's use cases in predicting weather and climate events to amplify climate change resiliency. [Read more](#)

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

Getting the youth involved: the UN taps graduate students to participate in career development programs for diplomacy and peace and bring in seasoned diplomats and multilateralists to listen and share their views.

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

UN's bid to reshape global human rights: the economic, social and cultural norms on the brink of transformation. [Read more](#)

Navigating the future of corporate responsibility and human rights. [Read more](#)

Another marathon session discussing human rights across the globe, affecting budgetary allocations, thematically focusing on societal inclusion for persons with disabilities, takes place starting in late February. [Read more](#)

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

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) hosts its 16th session of the Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE) January 31-February 2. It brings together some of today's hottest topics, with a common core. This session examines how customs work can be coupled with artificial intelligence in the process of verifying information and intellectual property (IP) rights. The difficulty of filtering pirated content when online access offers global openness. This echoes the limits of laws, and the extent to which they can be applied to consumers who are sometimes prejudiced by ignorance of information. Similarly, this session focuses on the protection of corporations, whether national or international, from technology leaks. Hence the whole-of-government approach to the enforcement of intellectual property rights, to break down the walls between government agencies by optimizing appropriate collaborations. In a world where embracing digital technology is becoming standard practice, this session explores the key issues involved in ensuring the continuity of sustainable exchanges and the protection of property rights.

The 75th executive session of the Trade and Development Board is held February 12-14. This United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) event focuses on two significant issues to consider: the least-developed countries (LDCs) access to the budgetary leeway needed to ensure the development of human capital and infrastructure; and the (in)sufficiency of existing funding mechanisms and access to financing of the sustainable development of LDCs. This implies an overhaul of the international financial architecture, as well as a strengthening of commitments and the application of innovative methods. The session argues that development financing must be improved in its three main aspects: quantity, quality and accessibility. These points echo the perspectives for international trade in the Latin American and Caribbean region, given the weakness of global demand, falling commodity prices and the increasing interaction between trade and geopolitics. In addition, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reports on the region's progress and challenges in trade facilitation.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) is scheduled for February 26-29 in Abu Dhabi. In the lead up to this pivotal moment, often dubbed a "reform Ministerial," the world of international trade is sprinting to finalize agreements. High on the agenda are fisheries subsidies agreement, moratorium on levying taxes on electronic transmissions, agriculture, development and intellectual property. And, of course, reform—both organization's dispute settlement system, and of its overall functioning. Trade envoys in Geneva are also finalizing how to mandate and launch various debates going forward, including on state intervention and subsidies, trade and climate, or technology transfer. Business side events include Business Forum, TradeTech Forum, Trade and Sustainability Hub. After a seven-year pause, the organization will also welcome two more members, Comoros and Timor-Leste, making the overall count 166.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) bodies dedicated to transport policies meets in early February to discuss implementation of its policies. The TIR Executive

Board meets for its 100th session during this time period as it, and its subsidiary entities, meet to discuss the application of the TIR procedure at the national and international levels. On February 6-9, the Working Party on Customs, the United Nations (U.N.) entity charged with monitoring border crossing, hosts a session focused on the collaborative work it does with the Inland Transport Committee among other border transport related updates. On February 5-6, the Technical Implementation Body holds its sixth session as it receives progress reports in the implementation of eTIR systems and eTIR specifications. And on February 8, the TIR Administrative Committee, the highest administrative organization representing all 78 Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention, meets to review the activities and administration of the TIR Executive Board and provide guidance for all work to be undertaken under the TIR revision process.

With the sustained rise in video game usage showing no signs of slowing down, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and World Health Organization (WHO) convene its third workshop on “Safe Listening in Video Gaming and Esports” to develop a global standard for safe listening in video gaming and esports activities. Organized in response to public health concerns, this workshop expands upon the guidelines for safe listening in devices and in venues previously crafted by the WHO. As firm guidelines continue to be established and further technological needs arise, the results of this workshop will add another staple to the ever-changing regulatory framework for technology, which will help inform all that comes down the pike in the future.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Inland Transport Committee holds a meeting of its Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation from February 14-16. The Committee, which handles matters pertaining to Europe’s inland waterways and the rules that govern them, will use February’s meeting to discuss the codes for the use of Europe’s waterways, the automation of inland navigation, and river-sea transport and shipping. The Working Party will also strategize on methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from inland transport as it seeks to popularize inland water transportation as an environmentally friendly alternative to air, rail and road travel.

The 86th session of the Inland Transport Committee takes place in Geneva from February 20-23. The focus of this session is “Decarbonizing inland transport by 2050.” The Inland Transport Committee is the United Nations (U.N.) vehicle to address the global and regional needs for inland transport and is also the highest transportation policy-making body of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Communications and Digital



The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council Working Group on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) gathers on February 1 to discuss its activities related to WSIS process, ahead of its high-level forum in May 2024, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, preparation to the Overall Review on the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes beyond 2025, and more. This Working Group meets twice per year and maintains a strong responsibility over the work of ITU

membership in reaching its long-term goals, which will become more pertinent as we approach the second half of the decade.

Health

The [World Intellectual Property Organization](#) (WIPO) presents their findings from a discussion paper on “IP and Access to Publicly Funded Research Results in Health Emergencies.” The [event](#) takes place on February 6 from 3:00 p.m. (CET) at the WIPO Headquarters in Geneva and is also available to view online upon [registration](#). The discussion paper focuses on government policies, regulation and the practical management of publicly funded research results, particularly how intellectual property (IP) generated from such research is managed to align with public policy goals. It also explores IP management policies and practices adopted by publicly funded international research & development (R&D) projects and proposes best practices for future health emergencies.

The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) is organizing the [2024 Fair Pricing Forum](#), a virtual event scheduled for February 6-8. This forum, the fourth of its kind, aims to improve access to medicines and health products through fair pricing. The forum is in response to the World Health Assembly’s [Resolution WHA 72.8](#) of 2019, which called for biennial convening of the Fair Pricing Forum to discuss the affordability and transparency of prices and costs related to health products. The three main objectives of the forum: (i) Share experiences regarding efforts to enhance market transparency across the pharmaceutical value chains; (ii) Assess health system challenges in ensuring access to affordable health products; and (iii) Discuss policies and strategies for improving the affordability of essential medicines and health products, considering current trends and previous forum themes. The forum’s [program](#) and [registration](#).

The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) [Intergovernmental Negotiating Body](#) (INB) tasked with drafting the Pandemic Instrument meets for a marathon eighth session February 19-March 1. With ongoing differences in positions among member states, this session is to signal whether a full negotiated instrument is possible by the self-imposed deadline of May 2024. With number of friction points, including on research & development, access and benefit-sharing, intellectual property protection, or supply chain and logistics, as well as current geopolitical climate, some member states have already broken the ranks and suggested delaying the finalization of the negotiations to a later stage.

The [International Telecommunications Union](#) (ITU) has scheduled the sixth meeting of the Joint Coordination Activity on Digital COVID-19 Certificates ([JCA-DCC](#)) for February 23. This meeting is set to be held in conjunction with the meeting of ITU-T Study Group 17 as it coordinates standardization work on digital COVID-19 Certificates between relevant ITU-T Study Groups, external organizations and forums to foster the use of compatible data architectures for sharing data, and promoting interoperability, agility and safety for users, and all relevant stakeholders involved.

Environment and Sustainability

The [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#) is holding a [meeting](#) of its Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) in Geneva from February 5-8. The STRP, whose task is to provide scientific and technical guidance to help achieve Ramsar's goal of conserving wetlands, plans to use the meeting to take stock of the progress made under their [2023-2025 workplan](#) and develop next-steps for delivery of outputs included in the workplan. Topics of discussion for the conference include developing tools for the assessment and monitoring of wetlands; analyzing climate change-related pressures on wetlands; and discussing the wise use and management of global wetland ecosystems.

The [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe](#) (UNECE) is holding numerous workshops on environmental issues in late February. February 26-27, the [Global Workshop on Droughts in Transboundary Basins](#) will meet to bring together water, agriculture, climate and environment communities to discuss lessons and practices for addressing droughts. Such work is intended to help mitigate food insecurity. On February 28, the 14th meeting of the UNECE [Task Force on Water and Climate](#) will gather experts from governmental authorities, the private sector, and non- and inter-governmental organizations to discuss plans for the implementation of activities under the Water Convention. The Task Force handles activities related to adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins.

Social

Between February 12-16, experts from the [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) and the [International Maritime Organization](#) (IMO) [convene](#) to approve [draft guidelines](#) on the medical examinations of fishers and fishing vessel personnel. Among other things, the guidelines will include language on vision standards, hearing standards, physical capability requirements, and fitness criteria for medication use. These guidelines are set to apply globally and potentially serve as a benchmark for similar guidelines in other professions.

The [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) [gathers](#) from February 19-23 for experts to discuss wage policies, including living wages. The experts are to discuss key principles of wage-setting processes, current initiatives in wage-setting processes worldwide, a review of the available definitions of a living wage and more. This meeting will mark another milestone in the dynamic term of ILO Director General Gilbert Houngbo and will likely inform the many global efforts to address living wage standards.

Science and Technology

As the global push to codify rules for artificial intelligence (AI) ramps up, intellectual property remains at the forefront of lawmakers' minds when devising regulatory standards. Coinciding with this, the [World Intellectual Property Organization](#) (WIPO) holds the [17th session](#) of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Working Group on February 19-21, in which they discuss PCT operations, and give a report out of the technical and procedural developments that have occurred. They also examine the functioning of patent prosecution highway and possibilities presented by full text processing of international patent applications. Read the full agenda [here](#).

As the United States continues to conduct hearings and forums in an effort to understand the implications of artificial intelligence's (AI) use cases across sectors, the [International Telecommunications Union \(ITU\)](#) AI for Good Neural Network will be hosting an [event](#) that will provide an overview of the work that the National Science Foundation (NSF) AI Institute for Research on Trustworthy AI in Weather, Climate and Coastal Oceanography ([AI2ES](#)) has done. Moreover, the discussion will be held by Professor Amy McGovern to highlight NSF's work to both bolster the AI skilled workforce for environmental sciences and also create AI systems that predict high-weather phenomena.

Youth and Sports

On February 19, through the Knowledge Learning Commons, the United Nations (U.N.) holds its first [Annual Student Meeting on Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace](#). This event, hosted by the U.N. Library and Archives, aims to provide a platform for knowledge creation, exchange and connection between graduate students, international civil servants, the diplomatic community, practitioners and young leaders to explore effective and inclusive multilateralism for today and the future. With a focus on graduate students, this program shows potential to develop into a strong workforce development pipeline for diplomacy and public policy.


Humanitarian and Human Rights

The [United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) will conduct its [75th session](#) from February 12-March 1. Key [agenda](#) items include discussing the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Emphasis will be on reviewing state reports under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant and enhancing relations with other U.N. bodies. This crucial session will assess state party reports and communications under the Covenant's Optional Protocol, reflecting the committee's commitment to upholding global human rights standards.

The [Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#), established by the Human Rights Council, is set to meet for the [37th session](#) from February 5-9. The Working Group, composed of five independent experts with balanced geographical representation, plays a critical role in guiding countries' deliberations and thinking regarding the role of transnational corporations in upholding human rights around the globe. The Working Group offers a diverse array of skills and experiences, focusing on enhancing business respect for human rights across various countries, issues and sectors, thus shaping global dialogues and cooperation on business-related human rights challenges.

The [United Nation Human Rights Council](#) is hosting its [55th regular session](#) from February 26-April 4 this spring. Again, a marathon session, the theme is "Good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities." Numerous human rights resolutions will be debated and voted on during the session, affecting allocation of the organization's budget. The session will additionally receive several reports on the human rights statuses in countries such as Myanmar, Sudan, Nicaragua and more. With currently

multiple human rights hot spots, the session is likely to carry a lot of significance for a number of governments, politicians and senior officials. The session will be streaming live on [UN TV](#).



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Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:



Jan Walter
[Email](#)
Geneva
+41 22.888.2042



Alan Yanovich
[Email](#)
Geneva
+41 22.888.2034

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