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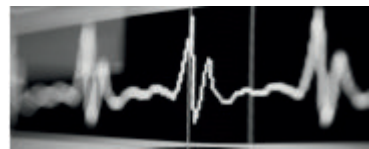
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[Read more](#)

The Outlook

Economic ([jump to](#)).

A thrilling journey through blockchain wonders and tech innovations, all geared toward turbocharging sustainable development. [Read more](#)

Intellectual property links to development: member states discuss specific projects to enhance this link in developing countries. [Read more](#)

Agricultural trade experts tackle the specifics of the cotton sector and its worldwide trade impact. [Read more](#)

The concept of the right to economic development is considered by human rights experts and diplomats with impact on work of international, economic organizations. [Read more](#)

Over two decades of negotiations conclude with a treaty on disclosure of origin of genetic resources, including digital sequence, with implications to patent applications around the globe. [Read more](#)

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

Learn about the critical regulatory changes and technological advancements in automotive lighting from the latest experts' meeting on lighting and light-signaling session. [Read more](#)

International road traffic rules are being updated to reflect advances in automated vehicles and their integration on roads around the globe. This legal instrument focuses on safety and protection of vulnerable road users. [Read more](#)

Standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as cut flowers, are being developed and refined to achieve harmonization across Europe and the rest of the globe. [Read more](#)

Agricultural quality standards and their impact on trade with dried produce are discussed in an effort toward regional and global harmonization. [Read more](#)

Passive safety standards are an intrinsic part of harmonizing road transportation and are considered by relevant experts. [Read more](#)

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

Work on equitable social, economic and technological transformations while maintaining the commitment to sustainable and ecological development - the aim of discussions of quality assurance institutions. [Read more](#)

Telecommunications advisory group to address a global connectivity gap and its link to economic development. [Read more](#)

In an increasingly digital world, the World Summit on the Information Society celebrates 20 years and plays a key, but increasingly challenged role. [Read more](#)

Health ([jump to](#))

The world of global health comes together in a last attempt to finalize pandemic negotiations ahead of its own deadline at the end of May. Aspects of equity, intellectual property and access to benefits carry the most frictions. [Read more](#)

Health experts attempt to coordinate across various pillars of activities of the eye care sector and launch an initiative to that end. [Read more](#)

Global leaders in government, business, civil society and academia meet for a summit to focus on heart diseases and treatments. [Read more](#)

Annual top health gathering considers pressing agenda and steers the global health community into the next years. Top areas this year are universal health coverage, health emergencies preparedness, better health and well-being, and more effective WHO support to countries. [Read more](#)

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

Water is taken up as an integrated resource and experts join for sessions considering progress made, and looking ahead under the relevant international legal instruments. [Read more](#)

Human rights and climate change intersect from two angles - the effects of climate change events on human rights, and the consideration of human rights in developing and carrying out climate change mitigation measures. [Read more](#)

Gearing up to stir the pot of chemical policies, ensuring every element is perfectly aligned for a safer, cleaner future. [Read more](#)

Experts prepare a pivotal, high-level meeting on protecting human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants. [Read more](#)

Economic and agricultural experts consider scientific approaches to safeguarding forests against climate change and as an indispensable component of climate change mitigation. [Read more](#)

Reactive nitrogen, acidification, eutrophication and the effects of air pollution on humans - all considered by experts with the aim to update international rules on air. [Read more](#)

Social ([jump to](#))

Labor experts meet to update the internationally harmonized code on safety and health in forestry work. [Read more](#)

What drives informal employment and what are the labor market outcomes for women after their firstborn child? This and other quality of employment topics are discussed. [Read more](#)

On a mission to challenge multinational companies and promote a new model of globalization that prioritizes people, democracy and social justice, global unions talk revolutionizing worker rights, tackling global challenges and fostering a fairer economic model. [Read more](#)

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

Top scientists are warping the fabric of physics and charting the course of cosmic discoveries. [Read more](#)

Broadcasting leaders gather to see through technology and innovation working together to support radio and the media. [Read more](#)

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

Ahead of its annual top gathering, global health community, together with wider public, is encouraged to “walk the talk” to promote healthy lifestyles. [Read more](#)

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

Countries meet to report on new practices to support convention standards and collectively fight against torture of any kind. [Read more](#)

Several states are scrutinized over their compliance with global standards on rights of the child. [Read more](#)

Countries submit reports on new legislation and programs to address discrimination against women. [Read more](#)

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

Economic

The [UNCTAD](#) Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission, at its [14th session](#), meeting April 29 to May 3, provides a platform for member states and stakeholders to engage in discussions on investment, enterprise, technology and their impact on

sustainable development. It highlights investment facilitation for sustainable development through transparent regulations, streamlined procedures and digital tools, and reviews best practices to support the Sustainable Development Goals. The session will explore the potential of blockchain technologies to accelerate sustainable development, addressing the challenges and capacity-building needs of developing countries.

From April 29 to May 3, the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) convenes for its 32nd session. WIPO is a self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 193 member states. It is the global forum for intellectual property services, policy and information. CDIP was established in 2007 to develop a program for implementing the 45 Development Agenda recommendations and discuss intellectual property- and development-related issues. The upcoming session will consider and report upon the implementation of Development Agenda recommendations and discuss potential WIPO technical assistance in required areas. According to WIPO's report on CDIP's implementation of the Development Agenda recommendations, "WIPO was fully engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda within its mandate."

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is holding the 41st Round of the Director General's Consultative Framework Mechanism on Cotton Tuesday, May 7. This is a continuation of the cotton conversation, which revolves around 1) the multilateral negotiations to address distorting subsidies and trade barriers for cotton and 2) development assistance provided to cotton production and its value chain. This consultative framework is a unique body looking at specific issues faced by the cotton sector, and as such is an important moment for cotton-producing countries, concentrated to only several regions of the world.

The 25th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development meets from May 13 to 17. The Working Group was established by both the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council in 1998 to further progress on the implementation of the right to development. This session features dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development. The Working Group session considers the relationship between the right to development and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the contribution of the right to development toward combatting discrimination. In the Geneva diplomatic environment, discussions by human rights experts on economic topics tend to spill over to debates held by international economic organizations.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Diplomatic Conference to Conclude and International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources convenes from May 13 to 24. Genetic resources include medicinal plants, agricultural crops and animal breeds. The aim of the basic proposal is to adjust the patent system with regard to genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, and to prevent from being granted erroneously for inventions that are not novel with regard to genetic resources and traditional knowledge. It also aims at harmonizing disclosure practices and related sanctions for erroneous disclosure of genetic resources. Notes on each article of the Treaty from the September 2023 Special Session on the Treaty have been published separately as an informational document. This Treaty is likely to impact the biotechnology, life sciences and innovative pharmaceuticals industries due to its impact on patent applications.

The [UNECE](#) hosts its [90th session of the Working Party on Lighting and Light-Signaling](#), on April 29 to May 3. The [session](#) explores advancements and regulatory developments in vehicle lighting and light-signaling, with a particular focus on the simplification of existing UN Regulations, updates on light source specifications and installation regulations across different vehicle categories. The session also delves into the evolution of UN Global Technical Regulations and their application to emerging technologies, including the discussion of electromagnetic compatibility and the integration of autonomous vehicle signaling requirements.

The Group of Experts on drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in traffic ([LIAV GE](#)), meets on May 2-3 for its [8th session](#). It has been established in 2021 with a critical mandate to draft a legal framework that aims to update and complement the [1949](#) and [1968](#) Conventions on Road Traffic. The new legal instrument is expected to facilitate the safe integration of automated vehicles into international traffic, ensuring that road safety and the protection of vulnerable road users is maintained at the highest level. This specialized group has already extended its two-year mandate. The selection criteria for representatives to serve on this group are stringent, requiring nominees to have significant professional experience in areas such as road safety, traffic law and transport policy. Once the group has a result, it presents the finalized draft of the new legal instrument to the [Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety \(WP.1\)](#), which then reviews it for consideration and subsequent decision making. The group aims to achieve progress as its next session is scheduled in seven months' time.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)) 72nd session of the specialized section on [Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables \(GE.1\)](#), meets May 6-8. It is a key forum for discussing global standards in the fresh industry. The group discusses Harmonized System (HS) codes for fresh fruits and vegetables. Previous discussions highlighted the need for more detailed trade data, as certain fruit types are currently grouped together under broad HS codes. Sustainability and the reduction of food loss and waste are also on the agenda, reflecting the industry's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 12. A working group, led by Sweden, presents its progress in reviewing the UNECE standards for fresh produce to identify clauses that could help reduce wastage in the supply chain. The group also develops new standards, such as the proposed standard for sweet potatoes, and reviews existing standards, including headed cabbages, courgettes, garlic, leafy vegetables and table grapes, as well as cut flowers, standards of which have not been updated since 1994.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)) [71st session](#) of the Specialized Section of Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2) meeting May 15-17 is poised to be a significant event, focusing on the refinement and development of agricultural quality standards and their impact on trade, sustainable food systems and the continual improvement of standards for a variety of dry and dried produce. One of the key topics is the application of UNECE standards and their integration with legislative frameworks in member countries. This follows a survey conducted by the secretariat in early 2023, and subsequent discussions have led to the formation of a small group, including the International Nuts and Dried Fruit Council (INC), tasked with documenting the impact of these standards. In line with [Sustainable](#)

Development Goal 12, the session reviews advancements in preventing food loss and waste. The development of new standards is also on the agenda, including a new standard for whole dried rosehip, almonds, walnuts, dried tomatoes and dates.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) 75th session of the Working Party on Passive Safety takes place from May 27 - 31. The session addresses a variety of topics, including seatbelts, pedestrian safety and facilitating the exchange of views on vehicle automation. It is conducted by the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations within the UNECE Inland Transport Committee, which carries geographical impact well beyond Europe.

Communications and Digital



The UNCTAD expert meeting on May 9-10 aims to advance our understanding of the role of quality assurance institutions in supporting the development of countries' industrial and innovation base. Within UNCTAD's Division of Technology and Logistics, the Technology and Innovation Policy Research Section conducts policy-oriented analytical work on the impact of innovation and new and emerging technologies on sustainable development, with a particular focus on the opportunities and challenges facing developing countries. After the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries are now facing the repercussions of the war in Ukraine. The toughest choices are being made in developing countries, where this conjuncture of crises threatens hard-won development gains. But faster economic growth requires much more energy, which, if derived from fossil fuels, would send millions of tons of carbon into the atmosphere. However, developing countries need not follow historic paths of carbon-fueled growth - if the global community commits itself to equitable social, economic and technological transformations guided by the goals of sustainable development.

The 31st meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) takes place at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) from May 20 - 23. The event is organized for telecommunications experts and stakeholders to discuss the progress and implementation of key initiatives in telecommunications development. The primary focus of this TDAG meeting is the assessment of the alignment between the implementation of the Kigali Action Plan (KAP) and the ITU's Strategic Plan. The meeting also features presentations on the progress made at the Regional Development Forums held since the last TDAG meeting. The meeting addresses preparations for the upcoming World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2025 (WTDC-25). Please see the full meeting agenda [here](#) and register for the event [here](#).

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 Forum is scheduled for May 27-31, and provides a platform for multistakeholder discussions to assess the achievements and identify key trends, challenges and opportunities since the adoption of the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action in 2003. The WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event is co-organized by four major UN agencies—International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Please register to participate in-person [here](#) and remotely [here](#). Please note, accreditation is required to attend in person.

The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) negotiators meet early May in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body ([INB](#)) in a final effort to finalize the Pandemic accord, aimed at preventing, preparing for and responding to future pandemics. The negotiations have been heated and several friction points prevail despite the co-chairs, from the Netherlands and South Africa, moving towards a “least common denominator” [draft text](#) in April. The spectrum of approaches from various delegations is wide, but under time pressure and political guidance, delegations are moving closer to each other with a view to have an agreement. The key friction points remain to be intellectual property, systems to ensure access to benefits and pandemic countermeasures as well as financing of the various tools to be set up. In parallel, international health regulations, a legally binding process in times of international health emergency, are being updated. In this process, the newly drafted definitions of pandemic (emergency) and language on equity are remaining difficult to agree upon. This process will also continue under negotiations during May.

Uncorrected refractive error has been the leading cause of vision impairment in child and adult populations, yet only 36% of people with this condition have received access to an appropriate pair of spectacles. Due to this large unmet need and the existence of a highly cost-effective intervention, World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) Member States have endorsed the first-ever global target for refractive error at the seventy-fourth World Health Assembly. The global target has been a 40-percentage-point increase in effective coverage of refractive error by 2030. To support Member States the WHO [SPECS 2030 initiative](#) holds an [inaugural meeting](#) of the Global SPECS Network on May 14 - 15. Here, the initiative aims to inform participants on progress, including an introduction to new technical resources to support implementation of the initiative; present and receive feedback on the draft workplans of the Global SPECS Network workstreams; and discuss opportunities and prioritize next steps for Global SPECS Network members and the Secretariat.

The ninth edition of the [World Heart Summit](#) takes place on May 24-26, just ahead of the [77th World Health Assembly](#). Stakeholders across government, business, civil society and academia gather to tackle the most pressing global challenges in cardiovascular health. Prior to the summit, there is a series of events for community, leadership and volunteers to attend from May 22-24. The summit covers a variety of topics including the nexus between environmental change and cardiovascular health; universal health coverage and health financing for cardiovascular disease (CVD); addressing social determinants for cardiovascular health; AI in cardiovascular health; CVD and mental health; the triple threat of CVD, climate change and ultra-processed foods; and navigating cardiovascular health priorities at the UN High-Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases in 2025.

The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) hosts the [77th World Health Assembly](#) (WHA) May 27 to June 1. The WHA brings together top health representatives from around the globe to discuss global health issues and to set the WHO's agenda for the upcoming year. The WHA is organized into three main committees addressing four key pillars: universal health coverage, health emergencies preparedness, better health and well-being and more effective WHO support to countries. Each committee reviews matters from previous Executive Board sessions and discusses the progress on various health strategies, such as the technical

strategy for malaria, the Immunization Agenda 2030 and the road map for achieving Sustainable Development Goals in maternal and child health. The WHA also discusses operational topics like sustainable financing for WHO, NGO collaboration, amendments to financial regulations and staff rules and efforts to ensure efficient and effective support to countries. Formal proceedings are accessible [online](#) and follow an [agenda](#).

Environment and Sustainability

The 19th [joint meeting](#) of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)), is scheduled for May 6-8. The primary goals of this joint meeting are to: (i) Review the implementation of the Water Convention program of work for 2022-2024 and evaluate the progress towards the global opening of the Convention; (ii) Discuss the draft program of work for 2025-2027, which will be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention for adoption at its 10th session (scheduled for October 23-25, 2024); and (iii) Start preparations for the 10th session of the Meeting of the Parties. The meeting is followed by a meeting of the Bureau of the Water Convention to consider progress made by experts.

On May 14, the [Geneva Environment Network](#), together with other organizations, holds a session on [Human Rights and Climate Change](#). The premise of the session is that intensification of climate change-related extreme and slow-onset events constitutes one of the greatest threats to human rights. The session aims to look at both angles of the intersection of human rights and climate change - the effects of climate change on human rights and the need to consider human rights when developing and carrying out climate change mitigation measures. This event is open to the public; registration is available [here](#).

On May 15, the Bureau of the Rotterdam Convention holds the [12th meeting](#) to shape the strategic agenda for the biennial Conference of the Parties in 2025. These sessions focus on reviewing and adopting the program of work and budget for the next cycle, evaluating chemicals based on recommendations from the [Chemical Review Committee](#) and establishing robust participation guidelines. These discussions are essential for advancing the implementation of the Convention and setting the stage for meaningful decisions during the main conference, fulfilling the mandates and responsibilities outlined in Article 18 of the Convention.

The [Stockholm Convention Bureau meets](#) on May 16 to start preparations for the 2025 Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, which aims to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants. The goal of [the high-level segment](#) is to provide a platform to exchange experiences and provide political leadership for a renewed commitment to convention implementation. This enables them to provide guidance on all issues under negotiation and on a number of decisions on convention-specific and common issues, as well as to raise public awareness of the outcomes of the Conferences of the Parties and of how [the Basel](#), [Rotterdam](#) and [Stockholm Conventions](#) contribute to tackling the triple global crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss.

The [45th session of the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics, and Management](#) meets on May 22-24 to focus on the multifaceted issues surrounding forests and their management within the context of current global challenges. [This session](#) addresses developing concerns, shares research findings and collaborates on strategies that have an impact on forests and forestry practices. The session focuses on the relationship between climate change and forests. This includes effects on forest health, the frequency of events such as wildfires or pest outbreaks, ongoing and future research initiatives and the anticipated effects on forest services and products. This session also undertakes a review of the [Integrated Programme of Work \(IPoW\)](#), which guides the collaborative efforts between the [UN Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\)](#) and the [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#). The Working Party discusses activities outside of the scope of the IPoW, highlighting the [breadth of work](#) being conducted by the two organizations.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)) [Working Group on Strategies and Review \(WGSR\)](#) plays a pivotal role in the international efforts to combat air pollution under the framework of the UNECE Air Convention. This group serves as the main negotiating platform where policy decisions are shaped, scientific findings are deliberated and strategic actions are set in motion. The [62nd session](#) of the WGSR, meeting on May 27-31, considers substantive topics such as reactive nitrogen, integrated assessment modeling, as well as considers international cooperation efforts on air pollution. The session also considers scenarios for reducing health and ecosystem risks and develops guidance for governments and policymakers on how different approaches can lead to improved air quality and better health outcomes. The session also addresses the revision of the [Gothenburg Protocol](#), which is a vital component of the Air Convention aiming to curb acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone.

Social



On May 13-17, the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) gathers experts on forestry work to [update the 1998 ILO code](#) of practice on safety and health in forestry work. In the ILO's usual tripartite format, representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations from different countries and regions meet to update recommendations, by consensus, for policy and action in the sectors. These recommendations then serve as a basis for the development of national policies and programs and provide guidance at the international and state level.

From May 14 - 16, the UN Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)) [Group of Experts on Quality of Employment](#) meets to discuss critical topics, including the measurement of quality of employment, new forms of employment, administrative and other data sources and progress of work. The formation of the Group of Experts on the Quality of Employment was driven by the critical recognition of job quality as a multifaceted concern for communities, policy makers, governments and researchers. For the measurement of quality of employment, four papers using data from Sweden, Mexico and Poland are considered. These papers primarily highlight the [driving forces of informal employment](#) and [labor market outcomes](#) for women after their firstborn child.

[IndustriALL Global Union](#), representing 50 million workers in various sectors globally like

mining, energy and manufacturing, convenes its [Executive Committee Meeting](#) on May 23 - 24. These meetings are pivotal in advancing the organization's mission to challenge multinational companies and promote a new model of globalization that prioritizes people, democracy and social justice. The sessions aim to strengthen union power, increase membership, ensure workplace safety and enhance women's participation and rights across industries worldwide.

Science and Technology

The [Scientific Policy Committee](#) (SPC) holds its [339th Meeting](#) on May 13, as one of its four routine annual sessions. Established by the European Organization for Nuclear Research ([CERN](#)) Council in 1954, the committee includes distinguished European physicists and advises on research priorities, evaluates annual scientific goals and provides guidance on management and staffing issues at CERN.

HORIZONS is the [EBU's](#) flagship [event](#) on media distribution, products and platform technology. It is an opportunity to discover a panel of the EBU Media Intelligence Service's latest analyses on the distribution and platform landscape for public service media, or how to ensure the sustainability of media distribution. Understanding how to leverage 5G for production and broadcast, phygital combines the live experience with a live and exclusive local digital service. This two-day event brings together decision-makers and experts from public service media, private broadcasting, technology suppliers and service providers across all domains, including broadcast, broadband and online platforms.

Youth and Sports


The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) hosts the fifth edition of the [Walk the Talk: Health for All Challenge](#) on May 26 in Geneva. The event kickstarts the 77th World Health Assembly. The challenge invites attendees to [move through](#) either a 3-km or 4.2 km route. Walk the Talk aims to celebrate the importance of healthy lifestyles and demonstrate measures to safely conduct public events. More than 7,000 participants joined the [2023 event](#), which promoted solidarity in physical and mental health. The organization also [encourages](#) collaborative events across the world, with past events being held in New York, Doha and virtually.

Humanitarian & Human Rights

The Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment meets for its [79th session](#) from April 15 - May 10. Under Article 19 of the Convention, States parties will be submitting reports on the measures they have taken to implement the statutes of the Convention. The Committee will consider reports from Austria, Azerbaijan, Finland, Honduras, Liechtenstein and North Macedonia. Namibia's Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children for Namibia is set to be discussed by the Convention.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child will hold its [96th session](#) on May 6 - 24. The meeting brings up eight State reports to consider compliance with the Convention. Bhutan, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Guatemala, Mali, Namibia and Paraguay have submitted for this session. Additionally, Panama has submitted a report for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography, covering Panama's response from 2002-2018.

The [88th session](#) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women meets May 13 - 31. Under Article 18, States submit reports on measures adopted to implement Committee provisions and reduce discrimination against women. Eight reports from the States of Brazil, Estonia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Montenegro, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda and Singapore are considered. Some highlights from these reports include [Kuwait's](#) implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in 2020 to protect family members from abuse, as well as adjustments to citizenship, allowing Kuwaiti women to pass on citizenship to their children in specific cases. Additionally, [Rwanda](#) has implemented laws prohibiting workplace discrimination as punishable under the law, repealed discriminatory articles in the Civil Code and implementation of media campaigns and programs targeting men and boys to promote gender equality.



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