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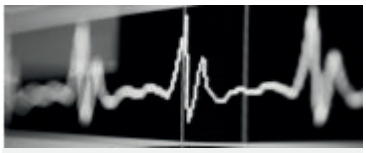

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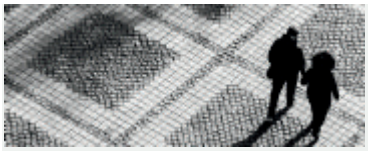

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The Outlook

Economic (jump to)

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Global experts converge to redefine multilateralism and tackle the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Read more

Pioneering leaders and experts join forces to unlock sustainable finance solutions, accelerate climate progress and bridge social divides. Read more

Exploring the role of IP in development: Global stakeholders unite to outline innovative solutions and address emerging challenges like AI. Read more

Experts gather to revolutionize the measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy, unlocking insights for informed policy-making and sustainable growth. Read more

A new era of sustainable investment dawns as global leaders convene to revolutionize international agreements, harnessing economic growth to power a greener, more equitable world. Read more

With the chief executives reappointed in advance, trade envoys continue to shape the future of international commerce and the organization that governs it, as even darker than the current storm clouds form on the horizon. Read more

The world's top problem solvers from politics, business, advocacy and finance gather for some annual snow-covered days in Switzerland – it's the convening power that counts, and it counts. Read more

Standards and Regulatory (jump to)

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Rare occurrences of someone being ran over by an autonomous vehicle may not be as rare in the future. Automated driving is deemed to poses new threats experts attempt to address. Read more

To avoid the negative effects of dangerous chemicals, experts debate new measures to classify these substances. Read more

Another set of challenges with autonomous vehicles stems from software and data. With AI increasingly integrated into vehicles, experts discuss data protection for driving to remain safe. Read more

Communications and Digital (jump to)

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The future of spectrum and satellite regulation takes shape at a pivotal global seminar. Read more

Governance and AI collide in high-level discussions to chart the next era of broadcasting innovation. Read more

Standards redefine sustainability as experts tackle ICT's environmental footprint. Read more

Cutting-edge tech and bold ideas converge to shape the future of media production. Read more

Health (jump to)

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Environment and Sustainability (jump to)

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Bold solutions to protect our planet's lifelines: wetlands won't revive themselves, or will they? Read more

Social (jump to)

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How can there be still such a gap… Diplomats await updated figures on gender disparity in a forthcoming report on Women in Diplomacy. Read more

An alliance of aid organizations convenes experts to discuss methods of enhancing outcomes from foreign aid efforts. Read more

International labor experts meet to discuss decent work in a just transition in the food and beverages industry. Read more

Science and Technology (jump to)

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International experts in nuclear and particle physics determine the future research trajectory of the world's most complex scientific instruments and talk about what the newly elected CEO will do when he takes office. Read more

The preeminent body in global development presents the key policy considerations needed to channel AI for the public good and mitigate its potentially dire risks. Read more

Youth and Sports (jump to)

Young creatives from around the world gather in Geneva to highlight the most pressing issues related to music and cultural preservation. Read more

Humanitarian and Human Rights (jump to)

Spotlighting humanitarian needs, climate shocks and funding gaps—that all comes together at this wintertime with freezing people, climatic disruptions and frozen funds. Read more

Business and human rights have a binding treaty—well, not yet, but state-led negotiations on a binding treaty to regulate corporate human rights practices and enhance global accountability come to the rescue. 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) Council for Trade in Goods (CTG) convenes on December 2-3 to address key topics in global trade, including notifications of regional trade agreements, updates on implementation changes and proposals to integrate Harmonized System updates into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions. The meeting also reviews the extension of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme waiver for rough diamonds and discusses communications from Armenia and Kyrgyzstan on Article XXIV:6 negotiations, shaping discussions on global trade rules and transparency.

The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) hosts an event on December 5, titled "Redefining Multilateralism in a New Geopolitical Era." The event aims to explore the challenges facing multilateralism, including great power competition, violations of international law and political divisions. This conference features expert panel discussions on current diplomatic and negotiation challenges, as well as potential innovations in governance and negotiation strategies. The event brings together renowned experts and practitioners to share insights and experiences, and to discuss ways to adapt multilateral diplomacy to the changing geopolitical landscape.

The Building Bridges Summit hosts its fifth edition from December 9-12, featuring the Building Bridges Summit and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) FI Global Roundtable. The Summit convenes expert-led discussions on sustainable finance, climate change and social inequalities, with speakers including former heads of state, renowned impact investors and leading climate scientists. The Action Days offer 65+ crowd-sourced events, including panel discussions, workshops and trainings, while the UNEP FI Global Roundtable focuses on accelerating practical approaches to sustainable finance and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) holds its Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) from December 9-13, bringing together representatives from member states, international organizations and civil society to discuss the implementation of the Development Agenda Recommendations, WIPO's technical assistance in cooperation for development, and intellectual property (IP) and development, including the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on IP and development.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) hosts the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy from December 11-12, bringing together experts from national statistical offices, government ministries, international organizations and the private sector to discuss progress in measuring e-

commerce and the digital economy, including the value of e-commerce, non-survey-based measurement methods and developing capacities for measuring the digital economy.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) hosts the High-level International Investment Agreements Conference 2024 on December 12, focusing on mainstreaming sustainable development in international investment agreements (IIAs). The conference aims to address new and emerging issues such as environmental protection, climate change, labor rights, public health and the encouragement of responsible and inclusive investment, aligning international investment governance with global priorities and supporting sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council convenes on December 16-17 to address several critical issues, including restoring the organization's dispute settlement system, integrating the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement into the WTO Agreement and discussing the extension of the moratorium on customs duties for electronic transmissions, aiming to modernize trade frameworks and promote global digital economy growth.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) hosts its Annual Meeting from January 20-24, bringing together global leaders from government, business, civil society and academia to tackle pressing global and regional challenges. Key agenda items include responding to geopolitical shocks and crises, stimulating economic growth to improve living standards and stewarding a just and inclusive energy transition to address climate change and ensure a sustainable future.

Standards and Regulatory

The Working Party on Passive Safety holds its 76th session from December 2-6. Over the five days, experts consider the adoption of amendments to United Nations Global Technical Regulations Nos. 13,14 and 20 which address hydrogen and fuel cell vehicles, safety belts and electrical vehicle safety respectively. Other important considerations of the meeting include regulations on child restraint systems, electric power trained vehicles and pedestrian safety.

The Inland Transportation Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe meets for the ninth time from December 2-5 to discuss actions taken since the May 2024 session. Specifically, the agenda includes discussion of the review of the existing international legal instruments on road traffic. Experts also resume discussion related to the definitions of "Driver" as well as more general road safety in light of increasing automated driving.

The Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals meet for its 47th session from December 4-6 to consider recommendations made by the Sub-

Committee at its previous sessions. Among these are recommendations to develop a list of chemicals classified in accordance with the Globally Harmonized System and to publish reports on the status of implementation. The meeting also focuses on the development of guidance on the application of the Globally Harmonized System.

From January 20-24, the Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles meets for its 21st session. Topics range from general discussions of artificial intelligence (AI) in vehicles to more specific and technical concerns over electronic stability control and electromechanical braking. Experts also consider United Nations Regulation No. 79, which addresses steering equipment and advanced driver assistance systems. Finally, the risks of cybersecurity and data protection in connected vehicles is addressed.

Communications and Digital

From December 2-3, ITU Study Group 5 (SG5) reviews key topics in terrestrial services. Canada presents an overview of the group's structure and activities, while Brazil proposes terms of reference for Working Parties alongside revisions to a previous ITU-R recommendation. The Russian Federation offers amendments to the structure outlined in Annex 2 of Document 5/26. Interested parties can register here.

From December 2-6, the ITU World Radiocommunication Seminar 2024 (WRS-24) addresses the effective use of radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits. The seminar begins with plenary sessions December 2-3, open to all participants, and focuses on the application of ITU Radio Regulations. From December 4-6, specialized terrestrial and space workshops bring together ITU Member States, academia and ITU-R sector members to dive deeper into technical and regulatory practices. Interested parties can register here.

The 93rd EBU General Assembly (GA) takes place December 5-6, which coincides with the second edition of the AI Summit. Day 1 focuses on governance topics, including the election of nine members to the EBU Executive Board for 2025–2026 and a presentation of the EBU Compass, developed during summer breakout discussions. Day 2 features artificial intelligence (AI) themed sessions open to all EBU members in the morning, with high-level discussions continuing throughout the day. The event also includes an evening reception on December 5, providing opportunities for networking among delegates. Interested parties can register here.

From December 11-12, the ITU and European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) hosts the "ITU-ETSI Symposium on ICT Sustainability: Standards Driving Environmental Innovation." The symposium brings together industry leaders, policy-makers, and researchers to discuss the role of standards in minimizing environmental impact, enhancing energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable ICT practices. Topics include lifecycle assessments, environmental impact reporting and adapting ICT products to climate change. The event also aims to educate participants on leveraging sustainability standards for policies and regulations, showcase cutting-edge innovations and foster networking opportunities. Interested parties can register here.

From January 28-30, the Production Technology Seminar 2025 (PTS 2025) brings together key industry players to discuss emerging trends in media production technology. Sessions cover a wide range of topics, which include transforming into software-first, cloud-supported organizations, leveraging generative artificial intelligence (AI) for content production and developing a European large language model (LLM). Attendees also explore new media infrastructure paradigms, trust-building tools like Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity standards (C2PA) and updates on Big Tech's two-year outlook. Interested parties can register here.

Health

The 12th meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) for a World Health Organization (WHO) instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response resumes on December 2 and concludes on December 5. Substantive negotiations focus on addressing key unresolved issues and finalizing a new international agreement to enhance global pandemic preparedness and response, building on lessons from COVID-19. The November iteration showed differences in positions and likely spill over of the negotiations into 2025. Thus, this session will be more about strategizing for next months that see an uncertain outlook rather than finalizing the treaty.

The 18th meeting of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Strategic and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) for Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) takes place on December 5–6. Key topics for discussion include follow-up on prior recommendations, the One Health approach, gender and equity considerations, climate change impacts on NTDs and multi-disease elimination. STAG-NTD, the principal advisory body to WHO on NTD policies and strategies, reports directly to the Director-General and provides guidance on global NTD control, elimination and eradication efforts.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Product Development for Vaccines Advisory Committee (PDVAC) Meeting takes place from December 9-12. PDVAC provides external advice to WHO on priority infectious disease pathogens, vaccine and monoclonal antibody development approaches, and related manufacturing and delivery technologies. The meeting includes discussions on target pathogen prioritization, technology platforms, preferred product characteristics, technical roadmaps and product development pathways.

The World Health Organization (WHO) holds the Overcoming Political Challenges to Transforming Mental Health Systems webinar on December 10. The WHO explores progress, achievements and challenges in countries involved in its Special Initiative for Mental Health, focusing on how political processes influence mental health system transformation. Experts share findings, reflect on experiences and discuss pathways to sustainable mental health reform.

The trilateral cooperation between the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have a

long-standing mechanism to tackle issues at the intersection of their remits. The mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on the rise and with a political culmination on the topic coming up next year, the trilateral organizes a Symposium on December 13 to discuss the causalities and remedies of the evolving NCDs situation.

The expert workshop on new developments in ensuring access to medicines, vaccines, and other health products takes place on January 21. Organized by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the workshop responds to Human Rights Council resolution 50/13 and focuses on the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. This is the third in a series of workshops aimed at contributing to a comprehensive report to be presented at the Council's 59th session.

The 154th session of the Executive Board takes place from January 22-27. The Executive Board, composed of 34 technically qualified members elected for three-year terms, implements the decisions and policies of the World Health Assembly and advises and facilitates its work. The session includes discussions on key health priorities such as universal health coverage, infection prevention, immunization, neglected tropical diseases, and antimicrobial resistance. Other topics include the World Health Organization's (WHO) work in health emergencies, social determinants of health, climate change, and maternal and child health. The session also addresses budget, governance and staffing matters.

Environment and Sustainability

The UNCTAD Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Trade, Climate and Sustainable Development meets on December 5 to explore how trade enhances climate commitments and supports sustainable growth in developing countries. The meeting introduces draft guidelines under the COP29 Presidency Baku Initiative on Climate Finance, Investment and Trade (BICFIT) Dialogue. These guidelines help policy-makers integrate trade into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0) for the 2025 iteration, aligning with the Paris Agreement's long-term climate goals. Participants review how trade-related measures such as tariffs, subsidies and technical regulations enable the energy transition.

The Executive Body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) meets on December 9-10 for its 44th session, focusing on evaluating progress in key areas such as science, policy, compliance, capacity-building and communication to reduce transboundary air pollution. The Executive Body reviews the successes and challenges of the past year and determines the path forward for 2025 and beyond, drawing on the latest findings from the 10th joint session of the Steering Body to the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP) and the Working Group on Effects in September.

As the world faces an escalating climate emergency, UNCTAD convenes the Global Commodities Forum on December 9–10. This conference focuses on how agricultural, mineral, and energy commodity sectors, especially in developing countries, adapt to and thrive amidst growing climate risks. The Forum brings together leading voices from the public and private sectors, international organizations and academia to address the urgent

challenges and untapped opportunities posed by the climate crisis and energy transition. The theme of the 10th session is “Commodities amid the climate emergency: Sustainable production, trade, and value addition.”

The 64th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands takes place on January 20-24 to address the urgent challenges facing wetlands globally. The committee focuses on updating wetlands inventories, enhancing collaboration with international environmental frameworks and advancing education and youth participation through the Convention on Wetlands’ Programme on communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) initiatives. Amid the climate crisis and growing threats to these vital ecosystems, the discussions aim to strengthen the Ramsar Convention’s impact and outline a path for sustainable wetland conservation and management.

Social

From December 2-6, the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) convenes for their 49th session. The group negotiates international legal instruments to protect traditional knowledge, culture, and genetic resources through intellectual property law. The session expands the number of accredited institutions and examines gaps in the protection of indigenous knowledge.

On December 4, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, representatives will publish the 2024 Women in Diplomacy Index. Prior editions of the index in 2022 show female ambassadorship accounting for 21.6% of the global share. Experts and foreign ministries look to the report for updates on the current state of gender disparity in the diplomatic world.

From December 5-6, the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance convenes for its 5th general assembly. The CHS is a global alliance of humanitarian and development organizations committed to enhancing outcomes from aid organizations. The general assembly session hears from experts in human rights, refugees and sexual exploitation. The session announces board election results and sets strategic initiatives for the coming year.

From January 27-31, the International Labour Organization (ISO) convenes to promote decent work and a just transition in the food and beverages industry. The session focuses on policies and strategies to promote skills development and lifelong learning within the industry, with the aim of adopting conclusions and recommendations for future action.

Science and Technology

On December 3, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) shares its insights and advice on legislating in the age of artificial intelligence (AI) through the launch of its Guidelines for AI

in Parliaments. The Guidelines reveal to international lawmakers the keys to crafting AI legislation that both governs the rapidly advancing technology responsibly and harnesses it for legislative innovation. The insights emerge from the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament (CIP), a collaboration of global parliaments dedicated to advising on the strategic utilization of digital tools by lawmaking bodies across the world.

The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) holds a meeting of its governance council from December 9-13 to determine the scientific strategy and financing of its unmatched research technologies in nuclear and particle physics. The Council, which has domain over instruments such as the world-renowned Large Hadron Collider (LHC), determines how best to deepen humanity's understanding of matter in the coming years. The meeting occurs shortly after the Council's announcement of global particle physics leader Mark Thomson as CERN's new leader, beginning in 2026. Thomson commits to the continued development of a new, groundbreaking US$17 billion supercollider.

On December 13, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in collaboration with the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), hosts a presentation outlining how best to govern artificial intelligence (AI) for the public good. The session advocates for international collaboration and strategic policy-making for global leaders concerned with ensuring that the benefits derived from AI are equitable, safe, ethical and robust.

Youth and Sports

On December 10, distinguished music researchers and musicians, as well as public, financial and diplomatic figures, convene in Geneva for the annual Worldwide Music Conference. Attendees identify key tasks for the preservation and development of musical culture and create the Statement—a document listing these tasks and calling on the international community to join efforts in addressing them. At the conference, issues related to music creation, education, research, preservation of musical heritage, diversity and equality of national traditions, among other areas, are discussed.

Humanitarian & Human Rights

The Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) 2025 Launch, hosted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on December 4 in Geneva, focuses on the critical humanitarian needs driven by armed conflicts and climate shocks. The event highlights the erosion of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL), its impact on civilians and the funding gaps threatening aid delivery. Key discussions include upholding IHL, strengthening accountability and mobilizing resources to support vulnerable communities. Please find the GHO program here and register here.

The 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) on a legally binding instrument to regulate transnational corporations and other business enterprises in international human rights law takes place December 16-20 in Geneva. Discussions will focus

on the updated draft legally binding instrument, addressing key provisions through state-led negotiations and stakeholder contributions. The session includes deliberations on articles 4-24, informal consultations, and the adoption of conclusions, aiming to enhance accountability and align corporate practices with international human rights standards. Please find the updated draft legally binding instrument here and the draft program here. Please register for the event here.

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