



## Webinar series

### International Digital Governance: the view from Geneva

Tuesday, 21 and Tuesday, 28 September 2021 (10:00 CET/13:30 IST)

**Platform:** Webex platform of the Embassy of Switzerland (sessions recorded)

**Context:** The foundation for the present-day global governance architecture was laid with the first assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva just over a hundred years ago. Today, no fewer than 41 international organisations, several UN agencies, more than 750 international NGOs, universities and think tanks call Geneva home. Geneva has also written history in the digital world. For example, the internet as we know it today has its roots in Geneva, when Tim Berners Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989, while he was working at the CERN. With global governance going digital, and several organisations active in the area of digital governance being based in Geneva, what role can and should Geneva play to address both opportunities as well as challenges of our digital age?

**Objective:** With the above in mind, we propose a series of two webinars, with the objective of positioning Geneva as the place for digital diplomacy, by firstly addressing the institutional framework and then presenting some concrete examples of the different issues being addressed or discussed in Geneva on the governance of digital health. Swiss and Indian viewpoints on both the issues will also be presented.

#### **Webinar 1: International Digital Governance (75 minutes)** **Tuesday, 21 September 2021, 10:00 CET/13:30 IST**

Foreign policies of any government aim to promote its interests and values, which do not change with the emergence of new technologies nor the progress of digitalisation. This means that they are promoted and defended not only in the physical space, but also in the digital space. While digital governance cuts across all traditional fields of diplomacy and foreign policy, the speed and impact of digitalisation – as well as the multitude of actors involved therein – have brought about new questions and topics, for example regarding self-determination in the digital space. Foreign Ministries are following developments by arming themselves with tools to meet challenges. In Switzerland's Foreign Policy Strategy 2020-2023, the the Federal Council defined 'digitalisation as a new thematic priority of its foreign policy' and the Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–2024, which has as its objectives, digital self-determination, promoting dialogues around global digital governance, including with stakeholders from private sector, academia and civil society. As a multistakeholder hub, International Geneva plays an important role for such international cooperation. For example, the Geneva Dialogue on Responsible Behaviour in Cyberspace, in which several global players with roots in India are also participating, is shaping digital security principles with the private sector. Starting from a presence on social media, India's Ministry of External Affairs has a Cyber Diplomacy Division and a New and Emerging Strategic Technologies Division, responsible for policy making and defining India's position in multilateral fora.

- *Opening remarks (5 minutes)*  
[H.E. Dr Ralf Heckner](#), Ambassador of Switzerland to India and Bhutan
- *Setting the scene - overview of International Digital Governance and the role of Geneva (10 minutes)*  
[Professor Jovan Kurbalija](#), Director, DiploFoundation & Head, Geneva Internet Platform
- *Conversation panel (45 minutes)*  
**Moderator:** [Mr. Apar Gupta](#), Executive Director, Internet Freedom Foundation

Speakers:

- [Mr. Arindrajit Basu](#), Research Lead, Centre for Internet & Society, India

- [Mr. Anirudh Burman](#), Fellow and Associate Research Director, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace India
  - [Mr. Rajesh Dhuddu](#), Vice President and Practice Leader, Blockchain and Cybersecurity, Tech Mahindra
  - [Mr. Benedikt Wechsler](#), Ambassador and Head of the Digital Division, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
  - [Mrs. Lene Wendland](#), Chief, Business & Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- *Moderated Q&A (15 minutes)*

**Registration:** Click [here](#)

**Webinar 2: Governance for Digital Health (75 minutes)**  
**Tuesday, 28 September 2021, 10:00 CET/13:30 IST**

With increasing digitalisation, it is no accident that digital health is also in focus in Geneva. The World Health Organisation had urged member States “to consider drawing up a long-term strategic plan for developing and implementing eHealth services...to develop the infrastructure for information and communication technologies for health...to promote equitable, affordable and universal access to their benefits” as far ago as 2005. Switzerland adopted a Swiss Health Foreign Policy in 2019, the guiding principle of which is Switzerland’s commitment to “finding solutions to global health challenges both within the relevant international organisations and in direct cooperation with other countries. Amongst the areas for priority action are Sustainable healthcare and digitalisation and Governance in the global health regime. As the current Chair of the WHO Executive Board, India is looking, amongst others, at ways of strengthening multilateral frameworks with the objective of promoting new crisis-management protocols and procedures for the inter-connected world. The global ecosystem of digital health technologies is also something in which India has a strong interest.

- *Opening remarks (5 minutes)*  
[H.E. Dr Ralf Heckner](#), Ambassador of Switzerland to India and Bhutan
- *Setting the scene - Leveraging global research in digital health: the view from Geneva (10 minutes)*  
[Dr Amandeep Gill](#), CEO and Project Director, Digital Health & AI Research Collaborative (I-DAIR)
- *Conversation panel (45 minutes)*  
**Moderator:** [Prof. K. Srinath Reddy](#), President, Public Health Foundation of India

Speakers:

- [Mr. Lav Agarwal](#), Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India
  - [Ms. Louise Agersnap](#), Acting Director, Department of Digital Health and Innovation, World Health Organisation
  - [Professor Balram Bhargava](#), Secretary, Department of Health Research and Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research
  - [Dr. Caroline Perrin](#), Coordination, Geneva Hub for Global Digital Health; Division of eHealth and Telemedicine, Geneva University Hospitals; Department of Radiology and Medical Informatics, Geneva University
  - [Ms Erika Placella](#), Deputy Head of Division, "Global Programme Health" Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- *Q&A (15 minutes)*

**Registration:** Click [here](#)