



8TH ANNUAL MEETING

Facing Global Crises Together: Better International Rulemaking for Better Results

13-14 September 2021

Virtual meetings

SUMMARY NOTE

The Eighth Annual Meeting of International Organisations (IOs) on 13-14 September 2021, co-hosted by the OECD and UNCITRAL, brought together 42 IOs – 23 represented at Leader’s level, delegates from the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC), permanent delegations to the OECD as well as academics of the “Academic friends of the IO Partnership”. Over two days, participants met virtually in two high level sessions, an academic afternoon co-hosted with the American Society of International Law (ASIL), and brainstorming sessions at working level. The meeting was moderated by Nicola Bonucci, IO Partnership facilitator.

MORNING SESSIONS: INTERNATIONAL ACTORS UNITED TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENTS IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The Eighth Annual meeting was opened by **Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General (OECD)**, **Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel (UN)**, and **Anna Joubin-Bret, Secretary (UNCITRAL)**. Their remarks highlighted the importance of concerted action by the international community in response to common challenges, as exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic or climate change, and the need for IOs to strive for inclusive, impactful and agile international rulemaking to ensure better results for their members. Secretary-General Cormann stressed the OECD’s commitment to this endeavour, particularly by collaboratively adopting innovative approaches in international rulemaking while, at the same time, maintaining the trust of governments and citizens. Given many uncertainties in today’s fast changing world, united efforts are all the more important to support sustainable development and to protect the most vulnerable of the international community, as pointed out by **Under-Secretary-General de Serpa Soares** Secretary **Joubin-Bret** reiterated the high potential of the IO Partnership to support responding to common challenges by means of its “scout mindset” as a non-political space where peers can share experiences approaches and develop solutions to support governments and citizens.

Secretary-General Cormann launched two key reports of the IO Partnership, that together aim to foster better and more effective international co-operation among governments with the support of a more effective rules-based international order. The [OECD Best Practice Principles on International Regulatory Co-operation](#) provide guidance to governments on co-operating in their rulemaking, particularly through international organisations. The [Compendium of International Organisations Practices](#) (IO Compendium) brings together the experiences of some 50 IOs helping the user to understand international rulemaking practices and governance arrangements, and to improve international instruments through several key principles. **Katharine Morgan, President (ASTM International)** launched the [OECD Case Study on ASTM International](#) that provides insights from the engine room of a unique standard-setting body with over 30 000 individual members.



Rethinking and modernising international rulemaking to design better policies for the 21st Century

Heads of the IO Partnership Focal points, including **Monique Eloit, Director-General (OIE)**, **Sergio Mujica, Secretary-General (ISO)**, **Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary-General (WCO)**, **Martin Milton, Director (BIPM)**, and **Francisco Lima Mena, Secretary-General (SIECA)** welcomed the IO Compendium as the concrete fruit of collaboration within the IO partnership over 8 years. Speakers described it as an essential tool to support cooperation among IOs and to help accelerate changes towards ensuring the transparency, quality and impact of their international instruments, and thus support better their members in using international norms and standards to address their policy priorities. SIECA announced it would host a launch of the Spanish translation of the IO Compendium for the Latin American region.

Overall, speakers mentioned the IO Compendium had already enriched their strategic planning to better implement their mandate (e.g. OIE, 7th strategic plan and development of OIE Observatory), while others noted it will be used in upcoming reflections (e.g. UN office of legal affairs, in working groups on implementation of Sustainable development goals, and in endeavours on monitoring and evaluation). It was also described as current and timely, reflecting recent lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as on increased co-ordination that has proved essential throughout the crisis (OIE-WHO-FAO Tripartite approach; WCO-WHO collaboration to identify critical medicines and vaccines and safeguard their supply chains).

Speakers highlighted the support that the IO Compendium offered to overcome challenges that many IOs still shared, such as:

- **Striving for more agile and flexible international instruments** that are more adaptive to increasingly digitalised economies and provide responses for the immense flow of data;
- **Enhancing transparency and accountability** of international rulemaking to respond to citizens' increasing willingness to be involved in decision-making;
- **Increasing impact of international instruments** to ensure IO constituencies gain tangible benefits;
- **Co-ordinating more among IOs and working more inclusively with a diversity of stakeholders**, reflecting better the actors de facto playing an important role in the global economy.

Protecting people and the planet in times of crisis: how to increase resilience of international rulemaking?

During a High-Level Webinar, eight leaders of IOs exchanged lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to increase resilience of international rulemaking in times of crisis. The panellists, including **Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary (BRS Conventions)**, **Ivonne Higuero, Secretary-General (CITES)**, **Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Executive-Director (APEC)**, **Jagan Chapagain, Secretary-General (IFRC)**, **Pau Roca Basco, Director-General (OIV)**, **Philippe Metzger, General-Secretary (IEC)**, **Xiao Jianhua, President (IAF)**, and **Kevin Dancey, Chief Executive Officer (IFAC)** discussed how the IOs can better support governments to protect people in times of crisis and how the IO Compendium can be used in that regard.

In their remarks, the panellists noted the following:

- **The emergency state of the world during the on-going global health crisis reveals many shortcomings of international co-operation and sheds light on the obsolescence of many instruments.** Due to a lack of adequate international instruments for effective united action, initial responses to the COVID-19 pandemic were based on outdated domestic laws and fragmented emergency management, inhibiting efficient action, in particular humanitarian assistance for vulnerable communities and causing unnecessary costs. IOs therefore tailored their activities to deliver emergency support to their members through research and data collection, policy advice and the development of emergency guidance documents.



- **Recovering from the pandemic, IOs are being offered a meaningful opportunity to rethink their practices for more innovation-friendly and solution-oriented international instruments that can help governments to effectively prevent from future global, multifaceted crises, particularly those caused by climate change.** Panellists emphasised the role of law and policy that underpin all aspects of preparedness for crises and allow the implementation of emergency matters on the ground. IOs can thus support governments to prepare for future crises by promoting strong international rulemaking while building on their experiences in adapting to exceptional circumstances. Embracing digital technologies, gathering relevant data, and involving diverse stakeholders with more inclusive and transparent rulemaking will be key to make international instruments more resilient.

ACADEMIC AFTERNOON: THE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL ECOSYSTEM: FROM COEXISTENCE TO COORDINATION?

The academic afternoon brought together experts from diverse communities, including academics, international organisations, and the private sector. In their opening remarks, **Ayelet Berman, Co-Chair of ASIL's International Organisations Interest Group**, and **Gita Kothari, Deputy Legal Director (OECD)** stressed IOs' efforts to adapt their practices and governance structures to the complex and constantly changing international ecosystem that brings new policy challenges every day.

International actors united for innovation-friendly international instruments

A first panel, including **Shin-yi Peng, Professor of Law (National Tsing Hua University)**, **Michael Fitzpatrick, Director of Global Strategy & Innovation for Google Global Affairs**, **Uday Nagaraju, Founder (AI Policy Labs)**, and **Anna Mansfield, Deputy Legal Counsel (WIPO)**, discussed the opportunities and challenges that innovation presents to IOs in their rulemaking.

In their remarks, the panellists noted the following:

- **The panel highlighted the potential of innovative technology to improve regulation, and international instruments in particular.** The world's "datafication" provides an opportunity for policy makers and regulators to make more efficient rules by means of innovation-friendly regulatory tools such as "data driven indicators". Such tools could for example feed AI based trade negotiations in the framework of the WTO. However, for efficient international regulatory co-operation data not only needs to be collected, but also be interoperable, machine readable, and open. The panellists stated that in exceptional circumstances, regulators tend to move from a "safety-first approach" to a "needs-based approach" (e.g. regarding vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic). Yet, innovation can only flourish if citizens feel protected through cautious, human-centred regulatory approaches.
- **While there are some associated risks with digital technology, IOs can help to overcome them striving for global regulatory coherence.** Data privacy and data security pose considerable challenges for policy makers. With the help of IOs, however, regulatory policy of digital technology can be transformed to anticipated regulation preventing future harms instead of only regulating in the aftermath. IOs can provide fora for pilot projects, regulatory sandboxes, training platforms, or skill building in that regard, and, at the same time, enhance the ability of different stakeholders to engage in a public and transparent discussion by the use of online tools. For instance, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) is adapting their instruments to harness innovation in their member countries enabling transfer of intellectual knowhow and trademarks as efficient as possible.



How can diverse international actors coordinate to deliver best on the needs of citizens across the globe?

A second panel, including **Gabrielle Marceau**, Senior Counsellor at WTO and Professor at Université de Genève, **Jean Philippe Dop**, Deputy Director (OIE), **Nejla Saula**, Sous-Sherpa and Head of Sherpa Office and Global Governance (OECD), **Bob Diderich**, Head of Health and Safety Division (OECD), and **Jan Wouters**, Professor (KU Leuven), discussed the benefits and challenges that come with the increasing diversity of actors in global governance and how co-ordination can be more efficient.

In their remarks, the panellists noted the following:

- **The increasing efforts of different international actors to co-ordinate in multiple policy fields, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.** For instance, COVAX, a global risk-sharing mechanism for pooled procurement and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, brings together the expertise of different international actors including intergovernmental organisations, private sector partners, or civil society organisations. Similarly, IOs' collaborative work became an essential part in the G20 framework and its outputs, such as the *Brisbane Gender Target*. The panel also highlighted the *One Health Approach* and the *Inter-organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals* as established mechanisms among diverse international actors for initiating, facilitating and coordinating international action.
- **The traditional approach to international co-operation is outdated.** Delivering effectively on fast emerging needs of citizens across the globe, policy makers have to cope with a “chaotic system” with different actors in multilateralism reflected on multiple levels of governance. Going forward, the “renewability” of the traditional approach to international co-operation to adapt its procedures and governance structures to a new fast-paced environment will be critical. The United Nations Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda*, issued on the 10th September, was highlighted as an attempt to a more networked and more inclusive multilateralism going beyond pure intergovernmentalism, for example by strengthening dialogue with parliaments and civil society.

Elsa Pilichowski, Director for Public Governance (OECD) and **Anna Joubin-Bret**, UNCITRAL delivered closing remarks on the first day. Their remarks noted the complementarities and common objectives pursued by rulemaking at the national and international levels that become particularly evident in times of crisis, and highlighted that better international rulemaking aimed first and foremost to feed into better domestic rulemaking. They thus underlined the importance of IOs to deliver for their membership and support governments to regain trust in public institutions. Recalling the diversity of the international ecosystem and the increasing importance of other actors beyond traditional intergovernmental organisations, they concluded on the need to move from coexistence to co-ordination for the greater common management of global goods.



Next steps

- **September 2021:** The IO Partnership Secretariat will share the revised **scoping note** with the IO Partners and ask them to indicate their level of interest in concrete outputs in the biennium 2022-23 (deadline: 11 October).
- **October 2021-November 2021:** Based on the received feedback on the scoping note, the IO Partnership Secretariat will share a draft **action plan for the biennium 2022-23** for comments.
- **Early 2022:** The IO Partnership Action Plan for 2022-23 will be launched and work on the first outputs initiated.