

Human Rights Council

Panel discussion on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights

Concept note as of 31 May 2019

Date and venue: Friday, 7 June 2019, 3 p.m. - 5 p.m., Palais des Nations, Room XXV, Geneva

Objectives: The panel discussion aims:

- to identify opportunities for States, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to develop a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach towards the issue of new and emerging digital technologies and human rights;
- to identify how best to facilitate more comprehensive research and discussions on the intersection between new and emerging digital technologies and human rights, building on the ongoing discussions on specific themes or technologies;
- to exchange views with regard to enhancing mutual understanding and interaction between human rights and tech communities and between governments and the private sector;
- to identify the roles the UN human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, have in shaping the approach towards developing a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach towards the issue of new and emerging digital technologies and human rights;

Opening statement: H.E. Ji-ah Paik, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea

Moderator: Ms. Katharina Pabel, former Chairperson of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee and Professor of Public Law at the University of Linz

Panellists:

- Mr. Changrok Soh, member of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee and Professor at the Korea University Graduate School of International Studies
- Ms. Peggy Hicks, Director of Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Ms. Renata Avila, Director of the Smart Citizen Foundation
- Mr. Jonathan Andrew, Research Fellow at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights
- Ms. Isabel de Sola, Senior Adviser High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation
- An expert from the Tech Industry

Outcome: A summary report on the discussions held and recommendations made during the panel discussion will be prepared.

Background: New and emerging digital technologies continue to cause or contribute toward significant change in the transformation of society, and may therefore constitute powerful tools in their capacity to make significant positive contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights. At the same time, these rapid developments also raise serious questions as to the potential risks posed by negative impacts on human rights, and how appropriate responses to the challenges can be undertaken. The panel discussion is part of an initiative to generate focus on, and attention to, the human rights challenges arising from new and emerging digital technologies, while realizing their possible contribution to the full enjoyment of human rights.

This activity builds on earlier work carried out on the subject, including by the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, as well as relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council.

Background documents: Human Rights Council resolutions relating to human rights and new and emerging digital technologies:

- [Human Rights Council resolution 40/12](#) of 21 March 2019
- [Human Rights Council resolution 39/6](#) of 27 September 2018
- [Human Rights Council resolution 38/11](#) of 6 July 2018
- [Human Rights Council resolution 38/5](#) of 5 July 2018
- [Human Rights Council resolution 38/7](#) of 5 July 2018
- [Human Rights Council resolution 34/7](#) of 23 March 2017
- [Human Rights Council resolution 33/2](#) of 29 September 2016
- [Human Rights Council resolution 32/13](#) of 1 July 2016
- [Human Rights Council resolution 28/16](#) of 26 March 2015
- [Human Rights Council resolution 26/13](#) of 26 June 2014
- [Human Rights Council resolution 20/8](#) of 5 July 2012
