



## IMPROVING THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS THROUGH MORE TRANSPARENT, INCLUSIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED INTERNATIONAL RULEMAKING

### 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of International Organisations

3 September 2020

*Virtual meetings*

### SUMMARY

The Seventh Annual Meeting of International Organisations (IOs) took place on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020, co-hosted by the OECD and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Over the course of a full day, with a high-level webinar in the morning and a technical webinar in the afternoon, the meeting gathered representatives from 39 IOs, 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” (see annexed agenda and list of participants). The meeting was moderated by Nicola Bonucci, the IO Partnership facilitator.

The group met first for a High-level Webinar on the theme of *improving the role of international organisations through more transparent, inclusive and evidence-based international rulemaking*, and against the general context of the global health pandemic with great implications on the regular work of IOs and their constituencies. The Annual Meeting was opened by **Mr. Nigel Adams, Minister of State for Asia; Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom**, and **Angel Gurría, Secretary-General (OECD)**. Their remarks highlighted the importance of concerted action by the international community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for countries and IOs to strive for effective, impactful and co-ordinated international rulemaking for a successful response. Secretary-General Gurría stressed the OECD’s commitment to this endeavour, particularly by implementing the actions of the *Joint Statement from the Secretariats of the International Organisations* (the “Statement”) and continue working with the members of the IO Partnership in the development of the Compendium for International Organisations for Effective International Rule-making (the “Compendium”).

**Mr. Melvin Redondo, Secretary-General, SIECA**, and **Mr Stefan Naundorf, Chair of the OECD’s Regulatory Policy Committee** delivered closing remarks at the end of the day. Mr Redondo reiterated the importance of coordination among IOs and the value of the IO Partnership to facilitate the exchange of experience among IOs and to identify cutting-edge international rulemaking practices. Mr. Stefan Naundorf presented the IO partnership as an “innovative role-model for bringing different communities together”, whether IOs, academic friends, as well as country representatives. He highlighted that IOs and their members at the national level have a shared responsibility to deliver transparent, inclusive and evidence-based rules from the international to the domestic level, thus reiterating the importance of close engagement

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, the meeting, originally scheduled to take place in London, UK, on 27 March 2020, was postponed to a virtual meeting.



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of country representatives in the IO partnership. To conclude the Annual Meeting, **Mr. Nicola Bonucci, IO Partnership facilitator** stressed the sense of urgency the crisis has created for rethinking international rulemaking. Noting that this crisis heavily impacts international rulemaking, he urged the group to learn from this experience and use this opportunity to bring together secretariats and their constituencies to discuss the next generation of international rules.

## COMMON RESOLVE FOR IO COLLABORATION: JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE SECRETARIATS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Fifty secretariats are involved in the IO Partnership and 20 leaders of international organisations<sup>2</sup> participated throughout the day together with other IO and country representatives, collectively highlighting the critical role of clear, evidence-based, flexible and high quality international rules to support a comprehensive response to the crisis and its aftermaths, with perspectives from their respective organisations.<sup>3</sup> Participants took the opportunity to welcome UNCTAD as a new partner in the IO Partnership.

The IO leaders gathered for a virtual ceremony to agree on the Joint Statement, the first of its kind and the fruit of the collaborative efforts of the 50 secretariats involved in the IO Partnership. The Joint Statement reaffirmed the IO partners' commitment to advance the quality, effectiveness, and impact of international rulemaking through individual and concerted efforts in stakeholder engagement, implementation, evaluation and co-ordination.

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR MEMBERS FACING THE GLOBAL CRISIS TOGETHER

During the High-Level Webinar, a first round of discussion centred on what the global crisis, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, has revealed regarding the need for coordinated action internationally, and the importance of transparent, evidence-based, and flexible international rules to support countries in this regard. The panel involved: **Anne Hayes, Chairperson, Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme (PIC/S)**, **Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**, **Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO)**, and **Martin Milton, Director, International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM)**.

In their remarks, the panellists noted the following:

- **The initial reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic were uncoordinated, requiring particular impetus from IOs, as platforms for dialogue, research, analysis and consensus building, to foster international cooperation to address the global crisis.** IOs therefore tailored their activities to deliver emergency support to their members, whether through research and data collection, policy advice and the development of emergency guidance documents. In particular, IOs worked on enabling sharing of up-to-date scientific information, providing common terminology and measurement references and delivering joint guidance and statements across IOs to foster internationally coordinated approaches in unusual circumstances.
- **IOs have helped their Members leverage IT tools and virtual services to guarantee the continuity of activity, in particular the access to essential goods and services in the midst of the health crisis.** As such, they have been developing targeted virtual trainings and seminars and worked towards standardising terminologies and international practices regarding remote activities, for instance related to remote assessments of manufacture of medicines or to virtual inspections.

<sup>2</sup> ASTM, BIPM, IEC, ILAC, ILO, IOSCO, ISO, ITU, OECD, OIE, OIML, OTIF, PIC/S, SELA, SIECA, UNCTAD, UNIDO, WADA, WIPO, and WCO.

<sup>3</sup> The recording of the high-level webinar as well as all written interventions made by leaders of international organisations is available at <http://oe.cd/IOpartnership>



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- **IOs note that COVID-19 has compounded the crisis in international rulemaking and multilateralism.** To renew multilateralism and enable international rulemaking to deliver fair results for populations worldwide, participants highlighted the importance of coordinated action among IOs but also with their constituencies as well as other key stakeholders from civil society and private sector.

## COMMON IO ACTION TO ADAPT TO THE “NEW NORMAL”, STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE AND PREPARE FOR THE NEXT CRISIS

A second round of high-level discussions focused on the perspectives for international rulemaking going forward and the necessary steps to promote greater coordination on normative activities, adapt to the “new normal”, strengthen resilience and prepare for the next crisis. Panellists included **Monique Eloit, Director General, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)**, **Amb. Javier Paulinich, Secretary-General, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)**, **Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary-General, World Customs Organization (WCO)**, and **Sergio Mujica, Secretary-General, International Organization for Standardization (ISO)**.

In their remarks, the panellists noted the following:

- **The COVID-19 pandemic made evident the strong interconnections and interdependence of economies and the need for coordinated and multidisciplinary approaches to global challenges.** The crisis calls on the international community to increase its efforts to encourage countries to reach global solutions through the international architecture but also renew collaboration efforts across international organisations.
- **International organisations should intensify their cooperation efforts for the medium and long term.** This includes strengthening existing partnerships while also to searching for new partners and mechanisms for collaboration across policy areas. Coordination efforts should identify areas of convergence in which IOs can work together and create synergies at different levels to jointly-address issues. It is critical to improve capacities for and around exchange of information and promote flexible decision-making processes that ensure that IOs can provide joint solutions at the speed required by emerging challenges.
- **Going forward, IOs should make use of the strategic foresight strategies and emerging technologies used during the crisis to support their constituencies in the longer term anticipate and better prepare for upcoming policy challenges.** IOs gathered a wealth of information during the crisis, and are thus ideally placed to identify future disruptions on a variety of policy areas and explore their policy implications going forward. IOs can learn from their rapid crisis responses and use of new technologies during lockdown periods to make more long-lasting use of such tools and strengthen their resilience to future crisis.

## THE IO PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION: TOWARDS A COMPENDIUM OF IO PRACTICES AND BEYOND – SELF-REFLECTION, PEER-LEARNING AND ADAPTING TO A CHANGING WORLD

In the margins of the high-level webinar, the IO Partnership met to take stock of the ongoing work and agree on next steps. In particular, in the run up to its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the IO Partnership will focus on the finalisation and delivery of the *Compendium of IO Practices for Effective International Rulemaking*. The Compendium aims to provide a practical tool and guidance to support IO secretariats in ensuring the transparency, quality and impact of their international instruments, and thus help build confidence of national policymakers in the international instruments they adopt.



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The IO partnership went over the five sections of the Compendium in two thematic webinars held on 31<sup>st</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September in preparation to the Annual meeting. The results of these breakout webinars were presented by the OECD Secretariat and the Focal Points of the five Working Groups, after which the group initiated discussions on the future of the IO Partnership. Overall, participants were in agreement with the key principles identified in the four areas of the Compendium to improve transparency, inclusiveness, impact and coherence of international rulemaking practices. They also agreed with the state of play sections as reflecting the overall trends in IO practices well.

**Céline Kauffmann, Deputy Head, OECD Regulatory Policy Division** recalled that the OECD Secretariat circulated late August 2020 the first draft of the Compendium. The Compendium was developed following a collaborative process led by the focal points with the five working groups, using information gathered from all IO partners through two consecutive surveys in 2015 and 2018 and analytical work on IO rulemaking carried out since 2014. Finalising the Compendium will entail populating it with IO practices (collection is underway), highlighting the interdependence and synergies in the five areas of the Compendium, reflecting on how new technologies may help improve the effectiveness of international rulemaking, and drawing lessons and “new” practices from the responses to current COVID-19 crisis. The final product will take the form of an analytical report, as well as an online repository of IO practices.

Ms. **Gita Kothari, OECD Directorate for Legal Affairs** (Focal Point for Working Group 1) highlighted the particularities the section of the Compendium dedicated to *Building Understanding of the Variety of International Instruments*. While it does not have key principles, it helps clarify the landscape of international rulemaking by outlining families of instruments, creating common reference points for IOs to refer to their normative instruments. The nature of international instruments also has strong bearing on the IO practices in the various areas of the Compendium.

Ms. **Karen Bucher, OIE** (Focal Point for Working Group 2) went over the Compendium section on *Strengthening the implementation of international instruments*, while Ms. **Belinda Cleeland, ISO** and Ms. **Annegret Rohloff, WCO** (Focal Points for Working Group 4) presented the section on *Developing a greater culture of evaluation of IO instruments*. A polling exercise during the call took stock of IO practices and confirmed the variety of IO practices to promote implementation and evaluate their instruments. With regards to implementation, IOs indicated that the key principles reflected areas where IOs were already active (e.g. supporting implementation, monitoring implementation, disseminating and advocating for the use of their instruments). On evaluation, IOs confirmed reflecting some of the principles in their practice, particularly being transparent about evaluation processes and using the results of evaluation. Nevertheless, evaluation is less systematically embedded in regular processes, as illustrated by the limited institutionalisation and relative scarcity of guidance documents. Discussions highlighted the difficulty to adapt the different implementation and evaluation mechanisms to instruments of different nature and over a long timescale, and a large majority of participants indicated that financial and human resource scarcity remained a core challenge to further the implementation and evaluation of international instruments.

Ms. **Claudia Nannini, WHO** (Focal Point for Working Group 3) presented the Compendium section on *Ensuring Efficient Stakeholder Engagement*. Discussions regarding stakeholder engagement by IOs confirmed the complexity in identifying the diversity of actors involved in IO rulemaking, the difficulty to reach out to underrepresented or marginalised stakeholders, and yet the great benefits that certain IOs have experienced in engaging with a wide range of actors. In this regard, the key principles on stakeholder engagement identified in the Compendium were seen as adequately reflecting IOs’ understandings and experience on stakeholder engagement. Ms. **Rahima Guliyeva, BIPM** and Ms. **Desirée Garcia, SIECA** (Focal points for Working Group 5) presented the section on *Maximising the Opportunities for Co-ordination across IOs*. Focal points recalled that the Compendium pointed to the growing intersections in IO mandates and thus an increasing need for coordination among IOs. Participants further highlighted that the need for coordination among IOs was ever more apparent in the current global crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Several efforts were made by IOs to work together more actively in the midst of the



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crisis, and discussions therefore noted that the next draft of the Compendium would benefit from illustrations of coordination in the COVID-19 context. More broadly, discussions confirmed the essential prerequisite of mapping potential partners, agreeing on common objectives and developing guidance on coordination, and the importance of coordination throughout the different stages of international rulemaking (i.e. development, implementation, assistance and monitoring).

Ms. **Kathie Morgan, President of ASTM International**, announced that the OECD secretariat has begun working on a new study of ASTM International, adding to the collection of IO studies developed since 2014 in the framework of the IO Partnership. The study will describe the position of ASTM international in the global standard-setting landscape, present the particular attributes of ASTM International's unique direct membership model, examine the openness and transparency in standard-setting process and review the efforts in co-ordination with other IOs. It is planned to be launched at the next annual meeting of the IO Partnership in 2021.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

By 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, IO partners are invited to:

- Provide feedback on the Compendium in writing;
- Fill in templates for the IO practices;

By end 2020, the OECD Secretariat and focal points will:

- Revise the draft Compendium on the basis of consultations with the five Working Groups, the Academic Friends of the IO Partnership and the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee;
- Exchange with IOs on practice templates received, revise them as relevant and finalise them for their insertion in the Compendium;

In 2021, the IO Partnership will meet for the 8th Annual IO Meeting. This meeting will complete the current phase of the IO Partnership and feature the release of the Compendium. **IOs and OECD Delegates with interest in hosting the 8th Annual Meeting of IOs in Q2/Q3 2021 are invited to reach out to the OECD Secretariat.**