

Tech Diplomacy Forum

Building Digital Bridges: Technology, Diplomacy, and Global Cooperation

Wednesday, 18 June 2025, Room II, UNESCO Headquarters

Background

Science and technology now permeate virtually every aspect of daily life and global systems. The rapid evolution of new technologies, such as quantum technology and artificial intelligence, brings great promise while simultaneously presenting new challenges and risks. Cybersecurity, disinformation and the global digital divide have risen on the agenda of foreign ministries, while the tech industry has emerged as an increasingly influential actor in global affairs. At the same time, the essential role of technology and digital cooperation in addressing global challenges is reiterated under frameworks such as the *International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024-2033)*, the *UN Pact for the Future* and the *UN Global Digital Compact*.

Adapting to the changing technological landscape and ensuring the ethical and equitable advancement of technology requires enhanced convergence and understanding between the spheres of technology and international relations.

The technological transformation underway also carries profound implications for international relations and diplomacy, just as geopolitical shifts increasingly influence how technologies are developed, deployed, and governed. In an era of growing geopolitical complexity, the intricacies of the digital age demand a new form of diplomacy that accounts for the deep interdependencies between technological advancement and diplomatic relations.

Tech diplomacy is emerging as a dedicated pathway for engaging with the unprecedented challenges and opportunities of accelerating technological advancements. It offers a response to the growing need to strengthen digital capacities in diplomacy and promote ethical norms, and to ensure that technologies can be leveraged to address global challenges and social inequalities. The broader concept of science diplomacy has laid the groundwork, having gained recognition as a transformative approach to bridging scientific systems and international relations to address global challenges, build peace and enable sustainable and evidence-based development. Operating within a similar framework to science diplomacy, tech diplomacy is focused on the unique challenges and opportunities at the interface of diplomacy and technology.

The inaugural Tech Diplomacy Forum provides a first-of-its-kind platform for driving global engagement at this critical junction. Organized in collaboration with UNESCO, the Forum employs an innovative and inclusive model of engagement to build dialogue and capacities among world leaders, tech companies, policymakers, and stakeholders. Experts and practitioners will participate in a series of unique session formats, focusing on the key themes of digital sovereignty and global governance, AI and ethics in international relations, cybersecurity and international cooperation, and bridging the technological divide.

Objectives

In its inaugural conference, the objectives of the Tech Diplomacy Forum include:

- To convene and build dialogue between the tech industry, policymakers and stakeholders;
- To build capacity among key actors to navigate the interface of technology and international relations;
- To examine successes, opportunities and challenges for tech diplomacy across world regions and among diverse actors; and
- To lay the foundation for future editions of the Tech Diplomacy Forum by raising awareness and recognition of tech diplomacy.

Outputs

As the inaugural event of the first global platform for technology diplomacy, the Tech Diplomacy Forum will connect and mobilize a new global network of actors at the junction of the tech sector and international relations.

Programme

09h00 – 09h40 | **Opening Remarks**

09h45 – 10h45 | **Plenary Session:**

The State of Tech Diplomacy and Regional Perspectives

10h45 – 11h15 | Coffee Break

11h15 – 11h30 | **Ignite Talk:**

'How to Build a World' by Dex Hunter-Torricke

11h30 – 12h30 | **Panel Discussion:**

Digital Sovereignty & Global Cooperation, Navigating the Complexities of a Polarized Digital World

12h30 – 13h00 | **Discussion:**

Building Digital Capacity Across Diplomacy and Tech

13h00 – 14h00 | Networking Lunch

14h00 – 14h45 | **Panel Discussion:**

Cybersecurity and Disinformation: Diplomatic Strategies for a Secure Digital Future

14h45 – 15h30 | **Oxford Style Debate:**

Tech companies should have formal representation in international diplomatic forums

15h30 – 16h00 | Coffee Break

16h00 – 16h45 | **Panel Discussion:**

Tech Diplomacy for Gender Equality

16h45 – 17h30 | **Panel Discussion:**

Bridging the Digital Divide

17h30 – 18h00 | **Closing**

18h00 – 19h30 | Networking Cocktail