



Privacy International's oral statement to the Human Rights Council 53rd Ordinary Session, 22nd June 2023

Item 3: Inter-active dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health – Report on “Digital innovation, technologies and the right to health”

Mr. President,

Privacy International welcomes the opportunity to participate in this inter-active dialogue with UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health.

We share the concerns expressed in the Special Rapporteur's report on the theme of “Digital innovation, technologies and the right to health” and support the recommendations therein.

Across the world, we have seen governments and companies resorting to the use of new technologies in the health sector with almost complete disregard for human rights and in particular the right to privacy. We have observed how this is enabling data exploitation and surveillance by governments and third parties, including companies.

The UNSR's assessment that the right to privacy is facing unprecedented challenges because of the unregulated deployment of digital health innovation and technologies echoes the concerns raised by civil society.

It is important to note that these developments are not only a threat to privacy, but they also undermine the realisation of the right to health for all without discrimination. In her report the UNSR notes how digital health innovation and technology can sustain and even exacerbate existing types of discrimination. We saw this play out during the Covid-19 pandemic with the introduction of untested or poorly tested technologies by governments and companies disproportionately affecting certain communities including women and marginalised groups, migrants, the elderly and ethnic minorities, to name a few.

The UNSR analysis and recommendations are a timely reminder of the need to introduce a human rights-based approach to the use of new technologies in the health sector.

We would like to ask the Rapporteur for her views on these issues, and in particular regarding:

- what is the role of international community to respond to these concerns and the need for effective governance of the digital health innovation and technologies, including in the context of the Pandemic Treaty; and
- how should governments regulate the involvement of industry in use of digital health innovation and technologies?

Thank you, Mr. President