



Wilton Park

The future of international diplomacy in an online world

Monday 7 and Wednesday 9 June | WP1873

1300-1530 UK time

Overview

The global spread of the COVID19 pandemic, and the public health measures put in place to control the virus, have challenged traditional modes of diplomacy. The practice of meeting face to face, shaking hands and carrying out in-person diplomatic functions has been replaced by virtual video conferences, without the close personal inter-action traditionally deployed.

The rapid shift to the online world, precipitated by the global COVID19 pandemic, has accelerated discussion about ways of conducting traditional statecraft. As the world adjusts to a 'new normal', there needs to be a better understanding of the trends, risks and opportunities for international diplomacy, balancing digital and in-person engagement, taking into account effectiveness, security and the principle to 'leave no-one behind'.

A Wilton Park online discussion '[The future of international diplomacy in the digital sphere](#)' held in September 2020 identified some of the emerging trends and challenges. Taking into account new developments and building on the emerging body of work being conducted by a range of expert practitioners, these meetings will provide an opportunity to advance practice on 2 of the key areas identified in the September discussion:

- How to conduct effective diplomacy in a digital world
- Promoting inclusive engagement

The meetings will bring together selected groupings of up to 25 thought leaders, academics and diplomatic practitioners in a mix of plenary and break out discussions..

Part One-Monday 7 June

The art of diplomacy in a digital world

Part Two-Wednesday 9 June

Promoting inclusive engagement: diplomacy in a digital world

In between the two sessions we will be using an inter-active online tool to enable participants to sustain discussion, post resources and exchange ideas and proposals.

In association with



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs FDFA

The art of diplomacy in a digital world

In Part One we will explore the skills, approaches and resources needed to conduct effective diplomacy in an online world, including fully virtual and different formats of hybrid events. Through a mix of plenary and break out groups, the meeting will draw on best practice, including the emerging body of work on 'diplomatic tradecraft' being conducted by a range of expert practitioners.

Topics for discussion to include:

- How to build on the gains and the new opportunities presented by online working? What skills and competencies are needed to enable effective online diplomacy (online presence, behaviours)?
- Constructing and influencing negotiations- meeting formats/shaping the agenda
- How to manage, moderate and design effective online discussions in the digital environment and how can these be incorporated within the frame of diplomatic training?
- Trust and influence- Creating space for 'corridor diplomacy'- what opportunities for informal inter-action?
- What resources will be needed- eg tech support/producers?

The outcomes of the meeting will include recommendations for innovative ways forward and the sharing of best practice. Discussion will also be used to inform Part Two of the series.

Promoting inclusive engagement: diplomacy in a digital world

In Part Two we will consider ways in which online diplomacy can strengthen global co-operation, maximising opportunities to enhance international networks and engage stakeholders in an inclusive way, with a goal of leaving no-one behind. This will include considerations for fully virtual and different formats of hybrid meetings. Through a mix of plenary and break out groups, discussion will draw on best practice, including the emerging body of work on 'diplomatic tradecraft' being conducted by a range of expert practitioners. It will also be informed by the preceding discussion on diplomatic skills and resources.

Topics for discussion to include:

- How to promote and embed inclusive practice to ensure equitable engagement with all stakeholders, across and between Ministries, overseas missions, multi-laterals, civil society organisations, and other experts in different geographical locations
- In what ways can practitioners create and sustain a sense of trust when operating online, taking into account security considerations and the principle of 'do no harm'?
- What is the scope to build skills and resource capacity to enable more inclusive engagement (eg technological resources and access, skills training, digital literacy)

The outcomes of the meeting will include recommendations for innovative ways forward and the sharing of best practice.

Monday 7 June

1245

Join meeting

1300-1310

Welcome

Julia Purcell

Programme Director, Wilton Park, Steyning

1310-1315

1. Diplomacy in a digital world

Barbara Schedler-Fischer

Minister, Deputy Head of Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Bern

1315-1355

2. Conducting diplomacy in the virtual world: best practice

This session will highlight instances of best practice and innovative modes of conducting diplomacy online, including: how to moderate and manage effective online discussions; creating space for 'corridor diplomacy'; and building trust in online spaces. Participants will consider the skills needed and how to build on these examples of best practice.

1-2 discussants to make brief introductory remarks highlighting good practice examples (max 5 mins each).

Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger

Austrian Permanent Representative, United Nations, Geneva

Tom Fletcher

Principal, Hertford College, University of Oxford, Oxford

1355-1400

3. Introduction to breakout groups

1400-1445

4. Breakout group discussions: exploring innovation

Potential sub-themes: New technologies that can/should be adopted, how to bring people together in different formats e.g. hybrid meetings, and how to share best practice.

1445-1450

Break

1450-1510

5. Breakout group feedback

1510-1530

6. The art of diplomacy

Recap on the key points emerging from the discussion at the end of Day One

Preview of next stage of the discussion

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo

The Bit In-Between

Patrick Allen

Senior Policy Officer, Wilton Park, Steyning

1530-1545

Informal networking (optional)

Tuesday 8 June

The Bit In Between: Inter-active engagement via Miro board

Participants to post reflections to online board

Wednesday 9 June

1245

Join meeting

1300-1310

Welcome

Julia Purcell

Programme Director, Wilton Park, Steyning

1310-1320

7. Leave no-one behind

Susan Eckey

Deputy Director General, Multilateral department, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo

1320-1400

8. Digital diplomacy: towards a gold standard for inclusion

What needs to be embedded into planning and formats for online diplomacy to reach the highest possible level on equitable engagement? What are the core elements? What are the responsibilities of different types of actor (convenor or convened, developed or developing, large state or small state)?

Valentina Bernasconi

Head of Regional Delegation, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), New York

Bonny Musefano

Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MINAFFET), Kigali

1400-1405

9. Introduction to breakout groups

1405-1440

10. Breakout group discussions: mechanisms for ensuring inclusivity

Best practice of how to ensure inclusivity. What are the mechanisms for ensuring equality of access? How can these be implemented in different contexts?? What are the responsibilities of different stakeholders?

1440-1445

Break

1445-1505

11. Breakout group feedback

1505-1530

12. Final reflections and next steps

Wrap up and final reflections from the discussion, how to continue this dialogue?

Susan Eckey

Deputy Director General, Multilateral department, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo

Barbara Schedler-Fischer

Minister, Deputy Head of Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Bern

1530-1545

Final announcements

Informal networking (optional)