

Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and Global Dialogue on AI

Consultation for The UN Global Digital Compact

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Introduction:

The multidisciplinary Independent International Scientific Panel on AI should **level the playing field** in determining the future of AI by **rebalancing current power asymmetries**—in other words, ensuring that the voices shaping AI objectives and deployment decisions are no longer limited to a privileged few. This means prioritizing the perspectives of those **traditionally silenced or marginalized**, so that AI's benefits and risks are **equitably distributed** across diverse geographies and communities.

A key focus is **broadening the scope** of AI used in the public sector. Too many systems today emphasize **fraud detection** or cost-cutting alone, rather than harnessing AI to **enhance social services**, uplift community well-being, and protect human dignity. By questioning who defines system objectives and when AI tools are ready for real-world use, the Panel will spotlight **fundamental questions** about whose values, needs, and rights take precedence.

Through **evidence-based research, policy guidance, and inclusive dialogue**, the Panel will drive a **paradigm shift** from a narrow, efficiency-driven AI mindset to one that emphasizes **equity, human rights, and justice**. It will integrate insights from multiple disciplines—technical, legal, social, ethical—and highlight **lived experiences** of communities on the front lines of AI impact. Its recommendations will target **structural changes** in governance, urging public and private actors to pursue AI designs that **advance collective well-being** rather than merely optimize profits or punitive oversight.

In sum, the Panel's mandate should be to:

1. **Promote Inclusive Governance:** Elevate underrepresented voices in defining AI priorities and readiness.
2. **Rebalance Power Dynamics:** Challenge existing structures so that AI development responds to real community needs.
3. **Catalyze Broad Societal Benefits:** Encourage AI applications centered on dignity, social justice, and public good.

4. **Ensure Equitable Outcomes:** Develop frameworks for **fair risk distribution** and **collective accountability**.

By embedding **equity and inclusion** at every stage—from design to deployment—the Panel would aim to reshape global AI governance so that **all communities** can shape and benefit from the next generation of AI systems.

What should be the mandate of the multidisciplinary Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, to be established within the United Nations?

Rebalance who defines AI objectives, ensuring historically silenced voices shape decisions. Expand AI's scope beyond cost-cutting to center social services and dignity. The Panel shifts from efficiency-driven to equity-focused, bridging technical, legal, and lived insights. It mandates governance reforms so communities worldwide can guide and benefit from just AI.

What should be the size, composition and governance structure of the Panel?

Pluridisciplinary Panel of approximately 20–30 members to ensure manageability yet broad representation. The Panel should comprise:

- **Technical Experts** (e.g., AI researchers, data scientists, engineers)
- **Social Scientists** (e.g., anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists)
- **Legal and Human Rights Experts** (e.g., international law, digital rights advocates)
- **Justice and Equality Experts** (including community organizers and scholars focused on racial, social, gender, disability, and economic justice)
- **Experts with Lived Experience** (individuals from communities significantly impacted by AI systems—particularly those who have been historically marginalized)

A **flat or low-hierarchy governance structure** will foster equitable participation among these diverse experts. **Overrepresentation of underrepresented communities and Global South countries** is crucial

And/Or a "pods" structure where each issue area (like healthcare AI or automated decision systems) has a dedicated cross-functional team including:

- Technical expert in that specific domain
- Community organizer with relevant lived experience
- Social impact researcher
- Rights advocate specializing in that sector

This creates accountability through relationship-building rather than just formal structures. Each pod should have dedicated funding for community research and pilot testing of governance frameworks.

How should the nomination and selection process of the Panel be?

A hybrid nomination model is recommended:

- Open Self-Nomination: Individuals and organizations globally nominate themselves or others, highlighting relevant experience or community representation.
- Directed Nomination: UN member states and reputable civil society networks can propose candidates, ensuring coverage of critical expertise and geographic reach.

A Selection Committee composed of diverse stakeholders (including civil society, technical experts, and existing UN bodies) should then evaluate candidates based on criteria of expertise, and integrity. Particular emphasis should be placed on ensuring the final composition is balanced in terms of geography, gender, disciplines, and lived experience.

What types of evidence-based impact, risk and opportunity assessments should the Panel deliver, and with what frequency?

The Panel should publish **annual comprehensive reports** covering both risk assessments (e.g., documented harms, emerging vulnerabilities) and opportunity analyses (e.g., promising AI solutions in healthcare, education, climate). In addition, **quarterly thematic briefs** could zoom into specific domains – such as public-sector use of AI or tech deployment in low-income regions – to highlight notable gaps and recommend corrective or proactive measures. By comparing **global case studies**, collaborating with academic and civil society partners, and synthesizing robust data sources (like AI incident databases), the Panel can **continuously track developments** and **advise on policy and governance** reforms that uphold equality, human rights, and inclusive innovation.

What should be the mandate of the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, to be established within the United Nations?

Global Dialogue Mandate: Move beyond high-level principles to specific intervention powers:

- Authority to require companies to open their training data for audit when rights violations are reported
- Power to mandate immediate system shutdown if discriminatory patterns emerge
- Ability to require companies to fund independent research into reported harms
- Authority to compel disclosure of system architecture when investigating incidents

The mandate should explicitly prioritize investigation of AI systems affecting essential services like housing, healthcare, and social services.

What types of outcomes should the Dialogue achieve?

The Global Dialogue should serve as a **practical, action-oriented forum** that delivers concrete, measurable outcomes to guide inclusive, equitable AI governance. Its outcomes might include:

1. Consensus-Based Frameworks

- Endorse a shared set of principles or guidelines for responsible AI development, grounded in human rights and social justice.
- Provide templates for national or sector-specific AI policies to foster alignment across geographies.

2. Accountability Mechanisms

- Establish clear processes for monitoring AI's societal impacts, including transparent reporting standards for both public and private sectors.
- Recommend remediation pathways for communities harmed by AI-driven systems, with protocols to address unintended consequences swiftly.

3. Coordinated Policy and Regulatory Efforts

- Identify gaps in existing AI governance structures and propose new policies or regulations, informed by multi-stakeholder input.
- Encourage member states to adopt or adapt these policies, ensuring they can be scaled globally while remaining sensitive to local contexts.

4. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

- Launch targeted initiatives that help under-resourced regions develop AI governance capacity (e.g., training, funding, technological support).
- Facilitate collaboration between countries, institutions, and civil society to transfer knowledge and build long-term expertise.

5. Inclusive Representation and Participation

- Create sustainable channels for underrepresented communities—esp. those in the Global South, Indigenous peoples, and historically marginalized groups—to influence AI priorities and decision-making.
- Ensure ongoing feedback loops, where lessons from on-the-ground initiatives inform future Dialogue actions.

6. Shared Knowledge and Transparency

- Publish regular findings on emerging trends, best practices, and case studies of both successful and harmful AI deployments.
- Encourage open sharing of data, methodologies, and research outputs, enabling transparent validation of claims and promoting peer learning.

7. Long-Term Roadmaps and Partnerships

- Develop multi-year strategies that integrate AI with broader UN sustainability and human rights agendas, ensuring the Dialogue's work remains impactful and future-oriented.
- Foster global cooperation through partnerships with academia, industry, civil society, and local governments, aiming for holistic AI governance rather than siloed or piecemeal approaches.

By achieving these outcomes, the Dialogue can **catalyze global alignment** on ethical and equitable AI development, help **rebalance power dynamics**, and **amplify the voices** of traditionally marginalized communities, ensuring AI contributes to the public good worldwide.

How should Governments and all relevant stakeholders be involved?

To ensure equitable and accountable AI governance, **governments and stakeholders** must take concrete steps that empower local communities, civil society, and industry insiders to influence both the design and deployment of AI systems:

1. **Funded Community Researcher Positions**

Governments and international bodies should allocate dedicated funds for **community-based researchers** who live and work in the regions affected by AI systems. These researchers would design and lead their own investigations into AI's societal impacts, ensuring that critical, on-the-ground insights shape policy recommendations.

2. **Guaranteed Access to Technical Teams**

Private-sector organizations, especially technology companies, must be required to provide **direct access to their technical teams**—not merely public relations personnel—when communities or civil society groups report issues. This access fosters transparency, speeds up problem resolution, and validates community concerns.

3. **Dedicated Budget for Independent Technical Expertise**

Governments should establish or expand **grant programs** allowing community organizations and advocacy groups to hire their own technical experts. This levels the playing field by enabling communities to **critically evaluate complex AI systems** and produce evidence-based critiques or recommendations.

4. **Protected Whistleblower Channels**

To uncover and address systemic issues, companies and public agencies should create **secure and confidential channels** for employees to report concerns about AI systems under development or already deployed. Robust whistleblower protections encourage responsible disclosure and deter unethical or harmful practices.

5. **Civil Society Inclusion in Decision-Making**

As a formal process, governments should **nominate local civil society organizations** with proven track records in AI accountability to present their experiences. These organizations can highlight tangible harms, demonstrate how those harms disproportionately affect marginalized groups, and pressure policy-makers to take urgent action.

Through these mechanisms—**from resourcing community-led research to ensuring direct engagement with technical experts**—stakeholders can build a governance environment where **public sector, private sector, and local communities** collaborate to anticipate risks, address harms, and share AI's benefits equitably.

What should be the format of the Dialogue?

Dialogue Format: Structure around concrete case investigation rather than abstract principles:

- Regular sessions examining specific AI incidents and harms
- Community-led presentations of research findings
- Technical deep-dives when violations are found
- Working groups focused on particular sectors or technologies
- Direct dialogue between affected communities and system developers

The goal should be building a body of concrete precedent about what responsible human rights-based AI looks like in practice, not just principles.

What should be the relationship between the Panel and the Dialogue?

Panel-Dialogue Relationship: Give the Panel specific investigative powers:

- Authority to commission technical audits
- Budget for in-depth case studies
- Power to require documentation from companies
- Ability to fund community-led research
- Direct access to technical teams when investigating incidents

The Panel should build a public database of case studies and precedents that creates practical guidance, not just high-level frameworks.

How can the Panel and Dialogue effectively draw on and leverage existing initiatives within the United Nations? How can the UN system best support the Panel and Dialogue in a coordinated manner?

The Panel and Dialogue should integrate with UN bodies through concrete mechanisms rather than just general collaboration:

1. Strategic Integration with Key UN Bodies:

- UNESCO's AI Ethics Observatory: Direct pipeline for case studies and ethical frameworks, with joint investigation teams for major AI incidents
- ITU's AI for Good: Shared testbed facilities for evaluating AI systems, particularly those affecting developing nations
- OHCHR: Dedicated team integrating AI impact assessments into existing human rights monitoring mechanisms
- UNICEF's AI for Children: Joint working group on youth impacts, particularly in education and social services

2. Operational Support Structure:

- Create an AI Governance Coordination Office within the UN Secretariat that:
 - Maintains a real-time database of AI initiatives across UN agencies
 - Coordinates rapid response teams for AI incidents
 - Manages shared technical resources
 - Facilitates cross-agency investigations
 - Centralizes funding requests and resource allocation

3. Specific Integration Mechanisms:

- Monthly coordination meetings between Panel leads and UN agency AI specialists
- Shared investigation protocols for AI incidents
- Joint funding pools for urgent research needs
- Common data standards for AI impact reporting
- Unified platform for community input and complaints

4. Resource Sharing:

- Access to UN country offices for local investigations
- Shared technical infrastructure for AI system evaluation
- Combined training resources for capacity building
- Joint use of translation services and regional expertise
- Pooled funding for community engagement

5. Capacity Building Integration:

- Link with UNDP's digital transformation programs
- Utilize UN regional training centers
- Leverage UN volunteer networks for local monitoring
- Tap into UN university research capabilities
- Access UN diplomatic channels for government engagement

6. Implementation Support:

- UN country teams assist with local investigations
- Regional economic commissions provide economic impact data
- UN statistical divisions support impact measurements
- UN communications networks amplify findings

This approach moves beyond general coordination to create specific, practical mechanisms for leveraging UN resources while maintaining the Panel's independence and adding real value to existing UN initiatives.

The goal is to avoid creating parallel structures while ensuring the Panel and Dialogue have the operational support needed for effective action.