



**GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE**

**High-Level Informal Presidential Discussion on New Technologies,  
Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Divide**

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**High-Level Informal Presidential Discussion on New Technologies,  
Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Divide**

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## Introductory Remarks

**H.E. Mr. Omar Zniber**, President of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva

Today's event marks a significant moment in our efforts to confront one of the most pressing challenges of our time on how to harness the transformative potential of artificial intelligence, emerging technologies, while safeguarding human rights.

Here at the Human Rights Council, the UN Secretary-General's urgent call for global AI rules rooted in human rights is clear. You may remember he exchanged with us while he was present here in February in his declaration before the Council. Indeed, in his Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed the urgency of developing clearer guidance on how to apply human rights standards in the digital age.

This task involves the Human Rights Council, Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies, the Office of the High Commissioner, and a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society, international organizations, academia, and business. Furthermore, the call of Mr. Guterres to action for human rights highlights the need to ensure that artificial intelligence advancements do not undermine human rights, worsen inequalities, or reinforce existing discrimination. Allow me here to extend my deepest gratitude to our esteemed co-facilitators for their excellent work achieved so far and thoughtful recommendations.

It is important that we assess and consider these recommendations as it has been shared with you in the report of 16th July. It is important that we assess these recommendations in a constructive manner to advance our shared goals on this fundamental issue. In these introductory remarks, I would also like to underline the valuable work of the Office of the High Commissioner in this regard.

The recent mapping exercise confirmed that key human rights principles such as equality, non-discrimination, inclusive participation, accountability, legitimacy, legality, necessity, and proportionality, remain highly relevant in the digital realm, in particular with regard to economic, social, and cultural rights. Artificial intelligence and other digital innovations have the power to transform societies. They can revolutionize healthcare, education, and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. But they also entail serious risks. Without a human rights framework, AI can be misused, exacerbating discrimination, violation of privacy, displacing jobs, and creating new forms of inequality, including deepening the digital divide.

This is why I am pretty sure that all of us will consider that this presidential discussion of the Human Rights Council is not only timely, but fundamental and essential. Its rationale is to examine how the Human Rights Council can play a vital role in shaping a future where technological progress is aligned with our core human rights values, thus joining ongoing initiatives such as ITU's AI for Good and UNESCO's recommendations on the ethics of AI, while continuing important work on innovation and intellectual property. Noteworthy is also the [Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Body on AI](#) and perspectives for ongoing discussions in New York and to which we have already and I have already contributed as President of the Human Rights Council by sharing the outcome of the co-facilitators and some of my own ideas with the President of the UN General Assembly and the relevant co-facilitators in New York.

We must ensure that these frameworks address the risks and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence from a human rights perspective, laying the groundwork of global rules that benefit to all. This is the reason why we are here this morning. What is important for the Human Rights Council is to have such partnership and cooperation more than ever, and to be open. We do have our own mandate, but we need clearance on how to achieve our goal and provide answers to all the peoples of the world on the enjoyment of their human rights in the face of what the world is experiencing in terms of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence - be it their challenges or their opportunities.

### United Nations Institutions

**Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin**, Secretary-General, International Telecommunications Union

The President of the UNHRC has prioritized the pressing issue of artificial intelligence and the digital divide to ensure that technological advancement doesn't come at the cost of human rights and human dignity. The national and regional initiatives and legal frameworks to establish protection around the development, the deployment, and the use of AI that we have witnessed in the past several months are a positive step in that direction. Progress, as we all know, is also happening at the United Nations - from the General Assembly resolution on AI that was adopted last March and the subsequent one adopted in July, to the upcoming UN Summit of the Future and its Global Digital Compact (GDC). As we sit here this morning, Member States in New York are discussing Rev. 5 of the Global Digital Compact. ITU and other UN agencies are closely coordinating to support the follow-up of the GDC. As a considerable share of the substantive work to implement the GDC will happen right here in Geneva.

We are just 19 days away from the Summit of the Future. We are also six short years from the deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This is a turning point. It is a turning point for the SDGs, and it is something that the President of the General Assembly has called a fragile and special moment. As head of a UN agency for digital technologies, I also think it's a moment of reckoning. Cyber insecurity is amongst the top 10 most severe global risks. Photos of children are being scraped off the web to create powerful AI tools without the knowledge or consent of those children or their families. Deepfakes and misinformation are blurring reality by eroding trust in our elections and in our institutions. AI systems are showing gender bias and increasingly impacting our environment.

Meanwhile, not one of the top 100 high-performance computing centres in the world that are capable of training large AI models is hosted in a developing country. These are just some of the most complex and pressing challenges that we are facing today. ITU is tackling many of them head-on. Front and centre are the 2.6 billion people that are still offline around the world, even as the pace of AI development continues unabated. Even among those connected, far too many people lack the means, the high-speed connectivity, the digital skills, the trust to truly benefit from new and emerging technologies. Closing the digital divide is central to the non-paper on AI that was presented by the co-facilitators and permanent representatives of the Gambia, Luxembourg, and the Republic of Korea. I do want to recognize the Council's work in this critical area, and I want to reaffirm ITU's support.

The actions that we take now will have a lasting impact for generations to come. We have a historic, but also a narrow, window of opportunity before us. To succeed, I believe that we need to focus our efforts on three fronts:

- Harnessing digital and emerging technologies to rescue the SDGs.

Only 17 percent of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved. Do you accept 17 percent? Well, I refuse to accept 17 percent, especially when we have shown that game-changing digital solutions like AI can actually accelerate progress on 70 percent of the SDG targets. Our latest UN activities report on AI highlights more than 400 projects that are covering all 17 SDGs. ITU is already using AI to connect schools in our work with UNICEF; to improve early warning systems in our work with WMO, UNDRR, IFRC; and to advance healthcare with my friend Daren Tang at WIPO and WHO, among others.

- Balancing innovation with safeguards that respect and protect human rights.

At our AI for Good Global Summit, we did see dozens of very concrete applications that are changing people's lives everywhere. If I had to choose one from what we saw in July, I think I would choose the device that was connected to Luis' brain - for those of you that might remember that moment. Luis is 37 years old. He has ALS, a disease that makes communicating almost impossible. When he told us from his home in Lisbon, fighting back the tears, that he was optimistic, that he believed he could start to have a much more normal life and be able to communicate using tools like AI. His intervention drew both tears and applause from CICG here in Geneva.

Thus, my second front is balancing innovation with safeguards that respect and protect human rights. ITU is a strong proponent of human-centric and rights-based approach to emerging technologies – an approach that reflects core UN principles of peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance, and solidarity. We will continue to build capacity to have meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement around all of these topics.

OHCHR's report on human rights and technical standards also conveys a very powerful message. If we're going to harness the full potential of new and emerging technologies, we need to root them in a rights-based approach and engage all stakeholders. It builds on the resolution of the Human Rights Council that calls for closer cooperation and collaboration between OHCHR and standards development organizations such as ITU. The need for collaboration comes at a time when we're all witnessing this strong call for more harmonized AI standards.

When the UNSG visited Geneva some weeks ago, he also visited us at the ITU and he said very clearly that harmonizing AI standards would be crucial for both the regulators and the industry. He warned that fragmentation would be especially harmful to the developing world. Ministers, regulators, and leaders from the UN, from industry and academia, joined us for our first AI governance day that took place during our summit, and they all expressed the need for greater interoperability. I think that's the reason why standards feature so prominently in the recent AI governance white paper. It's a UN-wide AI governance white paper that was led by ITU and UNESCO. We are also working very closely with the High Commissioner Volker Türk and his Office, as well as our longtime partners - the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) - to develop standards that are based on a rights-based approach and that address safety, security, and ethical practices.

- Ensuring international cooperation by bringing all stakeholders, including those from the developing world, at the table.



In December 2023 in this building, during the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), I pledged on behalf of ITU to advance universal meaningful connectivity through a multi-stakeholder approach - an approach grounded in respect for human rights. We need to bridge the gap between policy-makers, the technical community, and the human rights community. In today's increasingly polarized world, open, inclusive, and secure access to means of communication is absolutely essential. It is essential to ensure that all voices are heard, respected, and empowered. Today, I renew this pledge, and I sincerely hope that you will join us in making dignity and equality for all the cornerstone of a truly inclusive and empowering global digital space.

When I was a young graduate in Washington D.C., I would often go and think at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. It's quite a beautiful place, quiet, near the Potomac – just a few blocks from the hustle and bustle of Congress. There's a quote on one of the rotunda walls that I think is quite relevant to today's discussion: 'As new discoveries are made, new truths discovered, and manners and opinions change, laws and institutions must advance to keep pace with the times.' This really does bring more truth today than ever before. As we look forward to the Summit of the Future and its Global Digital Compact, we must keep these things in mind, including as we look forward to the World Telecommunications Standardization Assembly (ITU-WTSA) that will convene in October 2024 and next year's 20-year review of the World Summit on Information and Society.

We must keep pace with the times. This is an opportunity to not just follow where technology leads us, but to actually lay out our vision and to actively shape the path towards a digital future that is safe, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable for all. Let's rescue the SDGs because I firmly believe that we can do it. Let's balance innovation and regulation. Let's give everyone a seat and a voice at the table. And above all, let's ensure that human rights are at the bedrock of our collective digital future.

**Mr. Daren Tang**, Director-General, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

It's not often that I come into this very, very hallowed chambers, but as a former human rights lawyer myself, I've seen this ceiling many times on pictures and on screens, but it's nice to be here in person to share a few of my thoughts on AI and human rights.

Let me start by talking about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted almost 80 years ago in 1948 and let's put things in perspective. This technology that we are dealing with has been just the latest in a series of many different waves of technological changes since the 1940s - television, VCRs, CDs, the Internet, smartphones. In a way, I think we can find comfort and find some sense that what we're dealing with is not entirely new, not entirely novel, though the manifestation in a way is demonstrated can be new, but that, like previous technology waves, today's generative AI (Gen AI) and digital technologies brings both risks and opportunities. I'm very happy to hear that both the President and Doreen have mentioned that we have to engage in this balancing act between risk and opportunity.

I believe very strongly that the UDHR along with the human rights framework centred around human dignity addresses not just civil and political rights, but also economic, social and cultural opportunities, and incorporates a sense of rights as well as responsibilities. It's a very central frame for taking a balanced approach to any technology, including Gen AI. Allow me to share with you some data, since I'm coming from WIPO and we see the global trends of innovation on what's going on in this area.

First, I want to share with you that the explosion of Gen AI in the last two years is part of a larger trend of the explosion of digital technologies, which I believe has been accelerated by the pandemic. In 2022, the world filed 3.5 million patents, of which one-third were connected to digital technologies - not just AI, but also quantum computing, cybersecurity, 5G, 6G, and so forth. Already a predominant number of patents - or the largest quantity of patents filed in the world - are connected to digital technologies.

Second, another big trend observed by WIPO is that these technologies are merging with industrial technologies. In other words, digital innovation is combining with industrial innovation. I can think of no better example than a car that is no longer a machine or an engine with an axle on four wheels, but increasingly a data centre, an entertainment centre, a sophisticated laptop on four wheels. This trend of the merger between digital technologies and industrial innovation or industrial technologies is becoming pervasive to all forms of technologies. Just look at your phone or at the machines around you in a hospital. They are driven by software and algorithms within as they are by the hardware and the actual machine itself. What is interesting, though, is that WIPO recently prepared a patent landscape report on generative AI, and we found that, unsurprisingly, many of the Gen AI patents are helped by big companies. Doreen mentioned that the 100 labs are all in developed countries. In fact, even within these developed countries, they are concentrated within a handful of the biggest companies. It takes a lot of money. It takes a lot of effort. It takes a lot of energy. It takes a lot of computing power to run AI models. But what is interesting and what gives us hope is that while Gen AI itself is helped by a very small group of big companies, the application of Gen AI into different areas of life and to healthcare, for example, is much more diverse. We see many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and many entrepreneurs, both in developed as well as developing countries, who are using Gen AI to change lives and to solve problems at their local and regional level.

Doreen spoke so eloquently about the digital divide. We need to be aware of the fact that there is not just a divide of access to infrastructure but also a divide of opportunities. A lot of the work that we need to do here at the UN and in a number of states is how to close the digital divide not just in terms of gaps, but also in terms of giving people opportunities. Interestingly, the data shows that there is a lot of hunger from laboratories and countries to use this technology. Let's avoid looking at the Global South as a community of helpless individuals who are waiting. Let's look at the Global South as a community of very energized individuals who want to use AI and digital technologies to build a better life for themselves. On this, I would like to comment on two very interesting sets of data.

Stanford carried out a survey of attitudes towards Gen AI which showed that the attitudes were the most positive in many of the emerging economies such as Malaysia, Mexico, Turkey. They had more positive attitudes towards Gen AI and its ability to build a better life than in developed countries. Last year, WIPO surveyed 25,000 laypersons in 50 countries. We asked them what they thought about IP and whether IP would be good for their societies and economies. Surprisingly, their attitude towards IP was more positive in Africa and Asia than in Europe and North America. I believe this echoes my own experiences. When I travel around the world and meet many entrepreneurs on the ground in many developing countries, I see that they're looking for ways to use AI and technology to improve their livelihoods. I think that part of the work we need to do as a UN family is to give them the training, the tools and the competences that they can use to improve lives.

On the IP system itself, let me just share with you some WIPO's views on Gen AI. I believe that the IP system feeds from the same waters as the human rights system, because both are centered around human dignity, human creativity, and human inventiveness. Let me just cite article 27.2 of the UDHR, which states that everyone has a right to the protection of the moral and material interests that arise from their scientific, literary, or artistic production. Already in the UDHR, we have a recognition that IP and the protection of the creations of the human mind are important. That's why IP recognizes creations made from tools. For example, when we take a photograph using a camera, we recognize that you as a human photographer own the copyright. When AI is used to create new protein structures, the lab technician or inventor owns the patent. There has not been a single case in which the IP system has recognized the 'machine's creation right' as having IP rights. I think that has to remain, because we need to make sure that the human being remains at the centre of innovation and creativity. It is my personal belief - so it may not be an official WIPO view - but it's my personal belief, based on my understanding of Gen AI, that it is a highly efficient and effective replicator, but it is not genuinely creative or innovative. It can learn from Monet to produce millions of paintings in the style of Impressionism, but it could never make the jump from Monet to Picasso, from Impressionism to Cubism. What we need to do is to make sure that AI, like other tools that have come before it, is used as a tool to empower, to enable, and to enhance human creators and innovation, but not to undermine that. I think we do this in many ways.

Like what Doreen is doing in a much larger way with digital technologies, as far as IP is concerned, WIPO wants to be a forum where people from all over the world can come and talk about these issues, not just from developed countries, but from all over the world. We are pleased that it has been five years since WIPO established the [Conversation on Intellectual Property and Frontier Technologies](#). Our nine conversations - many of which have been centered around AI - have reached nearly 9,000 people from over 170 countries in a genuine multi-stakeholder approach. WIPO also provides information and tools, as by navigating this new technology, it is important that decision-makers, policy-makers, and others have the right insights to react and to regulate or to do the necessary to harness the power of AI. For example, WIPO has released an AI policy toolkit that is targeted at IP officers and regulators, as well as a toolkit for SMEs to navigate the world of AI.

As the global repository of innovation information, WIPO releases many reports monitoring developments in the world of Gen AI information, but we do need to translate all these into on-the-ground impact. I mentioned earlier the developing countries' appetite for using and harnessing the power of social technology to make better living. Thanks to its partnerships with other UN agencies, notably the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Health Organization (WHO), WIPO mentors and trains AI entrepreneurs from developing countries to apply their entrepreneurial energy to solve healthcare problems in their country. This is a very practical example of how different UN agencies are coming together to apply different activities to help people on the ground in a very specific way.

WIPO is also starting to provide IP management clinics for SMEs in the Middle-East region, because we found that many of these entrepreneurs need help harnessing the power of the IP system to bring their ideas to the market and to use their entrepreneurial energy to change lives. They need training and help. WIPO is providing mentoring support for them over a 9-12 month period in order to understand the business journey and help them use this in order to bring their ideas to the market. We are also working on very interesting projects, such as the IP for Disability Project in Mexico. We are working with the Mexican Polytechnic and the Mexican authorities to



harness the power of innovation, including digital technologies and AI to support persons with disabilities in Mexico. Lastly, the re-invention of SMEs. Here, we believe that it's important to use the power of AI in order to be able to address the common global challenges we face. WIPO has a platform called [WIPO Green](#), which is the UN largest technology matching platform for climate change technologies, where we offer 130,000 technologies from over 140 countries and we match these technologies with those that need them.

In these different ways, as a forum where people come and talk about AI issues and as a place where WIPO provides tools and information and reports, and most importantly, by providing on-the-ground country projects, WIPO can work with you and with others in the UN system to genuinely harness the power of digital technologies to help build a better world.

Let me conclude by saying that in just two weeks' time, the UN General Assembly will convene in New York, along with the Summit of the Future and the Global Digital Compact. I think that there's no better frame than to use the rights-centred frame for us to build, to be able to balance the risks and the opportunities that AI presents. WIPO pledges its support to work with all of you in order to find very concrete ways in which we can translate some of the future aspirations expressed in these documents into actual projects and programmes on the ground that can mitigate risks and provide the opportunities that people around the world want to have in order to be able to use AI and other digital technologies to make the world a better place.

**Ms. Audrey Azoulay**, Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Our world is changing thanks to a major technological revolution driven by artificial intelligence. It is a turning point that is also anthropological, an opportunity to develop our societies, but there are also existential risks that we must face, very tangible risks. Today, half of the world's population is connected to the Internet. This revolutionizes access to information, but in an unregulated universe. Our societies are more and more confronted with disinformation, with the dissemination of conspiracy theories. This is a threat that weighs ever heavier on our social contracts.

In an UNESCO-IPSOS investigation carried out in 16 countries, of the countries where elections are held in 2024, 87% of the people interviewed estimated that disinformation would have a major impact on the upcoming elections in their countries. Generative AI can also reproduce and amplify prejudices, multiplying their effects in all fields of social life. A report that was published in March last year highlighted sexist and racist biases experienced on platforms employing artificial intelligence. It can also sometimes pose a new threat to the transmission of facts, but also of history.

For all these reasons, as part of our mandate on the future of sciences, UNESCO has engaged in a pioneering dialogue on the ethical risks of the development of artificial intelligence. I remember the time when I was invited to Rabat in 2018 when we launched this reflection. In 2021, after long negotiations based on the work of experts from all over the world, our Member States have developed the first universal normative instrument on the ethics of artificial intelligence, through a recommendation adopted during our General Conference in November 2021. This text anticipates crucial questions such as transparency of information, responsibility, energy use, inequalities, and in particular, gender issues. This text lays the foundations of an information and media education based on critical thinking at the time of COVID-19, so that the verification of the facts is an integral part of the basic skills of a civil society. As we strive to guide this new

technology, this recommendation is not only an ethical compass, it is also a tangible tool for the elaboration of national public policies.

We are thus accompanying fifty countries at the moment - from Chile to Brazil, from Morocco to Senegal - in taking into account, in their national strategy, the great principles of this recommendation. As Africa is one of the major transversal priorities of the UNESCO, we have worked hand-in-hand with the African Union to establish a continental strategy for artificial intelligence. We have also worked at the same time on the first global principles for the governance of digital platforms, as part of an unprecedented global consultation.

I would like to thank the President of the UNHRC because our action allows us to go further, whether it is for the ethics of artificial intelligence, but also for the right to education, or, more recently, in the fight against crime. You can count on UNESCO to work with the Human Rights Council to create a new plan on fundamental rights. I would like to conclude with the words of a researcher, Ms. Sally Fahey, a pioneer in artificial intelligence, who told us that, despite its name, this technology has nothing artificial. It is made by humans, so it must be guided by human concerns.

**Ms. Celeste Drake**, Deputy Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)

The topic of this informal presidential discussion is captivating our attention and generating both hopes and fears, and it will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Beyond scrolling on social media and perhaps vacuuming our apartments with robot vacuums or purchasing and shopping on Amazon, for many people it's really in the workplace where they will experience first-hand the potential uses and possible effects of artificial intelligence.

For many, this experience will be exciting. It's a new challenge. It's an opportunity to do our jobs better, to be more productive, more efficient, more effective, and more impactful in our jobs. For others, it will come with anxiety - Will I still have a job in the future? If I do, will I have the skills that I need to do the job well? After all, these fears are understandable because for most of us, no matter where we live in the world, our job is our only source of income and wealth. We want to make sure that as we think about the human rights impacts of AI, we are addressing not only the real risks, but also the perceived risks so that there is a level of trust in adopting this rapidly developing technology. This is why the ILO welcomes the call for the prioritization of human rights in discussions and responses to the opportunities and the risks posed by the development and adoption of AI and other emerging digital technologies. It seems that every day there is a new headline on the possible job losses from AI. Both ILO and I recognize that the story is much more complex than just jobs disappearing, as critical as that issue is.

The impact of AI on the world of work isn't just about the quantity of employment, but on how workers will be recruited to their jobs, how they will carry out their work, and under what conditions and circumstances. Whether their fundamental rights, which are indeed human rights, will be respected as well as how AI can be leveraged to tackle poverty, inequality, and reduce and even eliminate the digital divide. With respect to possible job losses, ILO research finds that 2.3% of total global employment, or about 75 million jobs, are at risk of disappearing if generative AI is fully implemented. However, at least six times that many jobs have the potential to be augmented or transformed. But these projections fundamentally depend upon access to technology.

Our latest report on the effects of generative AI in Latin America, done jointly with the World Bank, suggests that the significant digital divide in the region could prevent workers from fully realizing

the benefits of Gen AI. Beyond these effects, we must consider potential regulatory gaps and responses that address different dimensions of decent work. We must ensure that the development and deployment of AI doesn't infringe upon labour rights. In this respect, I will focus on three major themes.

First, the critical issue of international labour rights and standards. AI systems are being deployed at an unprecedented rate, even in comparison to other recent technologies. We cannot let the speed of change deter us from protecting and supporting human rights. As highlighted in the UN white paper on AI governance released earlier this year, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights of Work applies to all working environments, including those impacted by AI. In more concrete terms, we need to ensure that all workers are awarded protections and benefits in accordance with national labour laws and international labour standards, including the millions of workers involved in the development of AI systems who painstakingly tag, test, and moderate content, most of whom are located in the Global South.

Given the enormous changes ahead, we also need to consider the adaptation and development of new government regulations and government structures, grounded in social dialogue, of course with representatives of workers' and employers' organizations. We also need to think about how labour administration can be improved here. How can governments, for example, use and deploy AI and related technologies to improve their labour and employment administration? Can they deploy AI to more effectively reach workers with the social protections that they are entitled to, such as payments to expected new mothers, unemployment insurance, and pensions? For instance, ILO is working with the Government of Albania on a very promising cooperation programme which consists of testing the use of artificial intelligence by the labour inspectorate through the use of massive data models to determine which workplaces should be inspected. The results are promising, as the inspections are about 30% more effective than random inspections. In this context, the ILO's 2025-2026 standard-setting discussion on [Realizing Decent Work in the Platform Economy](#) represents an important step to consider how international labour standards can address new opportunities and challenges posed by technological advancements.

Second, we need to better understand the impact of algorithmic management on the rights of workers. We need to ensure that the use of algorithms and data-driven systems to make decisions, allocate tasks, direct work, manage, and coordinate workflows and organizations doesn't infringe upon workers' rights, reduce their autonomy, or harm their well-being. A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental right that should be respected in all workplaces. Achieving such a commitment requires transparency from technology developers and users, along with dialogue and cooperation between employers and workers to promote the benefits and curtail the risks of AI. We cannot allow, for example, that workers' private communication to their Union be monitored through digital technologies, as this would be an infringement upon the fundamental right to freedom of association.

Third, let me come back to the issue of the digital divide. ILO's recent report with the UN Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Technology titled 'Mind the AI Divide' underscores the importance of enhancing digital infrastructure and technology transfer and promoting AI skills and social dialogue, including collective bargaining. Investing in skills development and lifelong learning is vital for equipping workers with the skills and knowledge required in this rapidly changing environment, including those impacted by job loss and job transformation. Engaging industries through sector skills bodies as well as financial incentives and technical assistance can support these efforts. Micro, small, and medium-sized businesses will continue to need

specific support so as to create an enabling environment for sustainable businesses that work for employers and workers alike.

To showcase our work in these areas, ILO will launch the [Observatory on AI and Work in the Digital Economy](#) at the end of this month. The Observatory aims to enhance our knowledge leadership on the world of work dimensions, including AI, algorithmic management, digital labour platforms, and workers' personal data. We believe these aspects are under-researched and not yet sufficiently understood by policy-makers, employers, or workers themselves.

As reflected by our close cooperation with OECD, the UN High Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence, and others, we are committed to working with the UN system and all willing partners to strengthen our understanding and capacity to respond to the implications of AI for the world of work. We look forward to working together with the Human Rights Council to address the world of work dimensions of AI and other new technologies.

**Ms. Peggy Hicks**, Director, Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures, and Right to Development Division, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

We have already heard a convincing case from my fellow panellists on both the immense opportunities and the unprecedented perils that are posed by the rapid evolution of digital technology, and the spread of Gen AI in particular. Within a sea of change and promise, the human rights framework can be and must be a lifeline. The human rights framework brings to it three palpable advantages. First, it's multifaceted. It addresses all of the key challenges that have been raised related to dignity, privacy, labour issues, free expression, non-discrimination, equality, and justice. Second, this framework builds on ethics, the moral principles that have been generally agreed. Third, these are principles that have been turned into law and have been agreed across continents and contexts. So they are applicable across all the different aspects we're talking about. That being said, we're here today in part because it's easier said than done. It's challenging to implement the human rights framework in this very complex space, and you only need to read daily news - big stories in places near and far - that raise fundamental questions and debates about how we are doing in terms of the regulation of business and the upholding of rights with regard to digital technology and artificial intelligence.

It's absolutely clear we need to do several things. First, we need to set guardrails, but we need to do it in a way that avoids stifling innovation, because there is so much promise associated here. Second, we do pretty well at identifying one of the problems, and we've heard about many of them in the remarks that have been made so far. But I have to say that my analysis of solutions is sometimes hard. The solutions we need in this complex area are multifaceted, diffused, and different from place to place and from issue to issue. But instead, we tend to get simple fixes. The idea that we can flip a switch and eliminate disinformation from the online environment that we've created won't work. We need longer term approaches, compound ideas that allow us to work on issues and make progress, recognizing that we will not be able to address and solve all these issues in short form. Third, the environment we work in is often spurred by competition rather than cooperation. The reality is that there's a race to use this technology, get it out there and use it, and be the ones that take the lead in these areas. This brings with it a lot of problems in terms of trying to ensure that we have the right guardrails in place. So we need to address that.

Furthermore, it is crucial that this conversation gives equal attention to the role that the private sector and governments have to play here. From a human rights office perspective, we believe that both companies and governments need to do better in this space. Although there's often a

bit of finger-pointing between the two about who's really responsible for the problem, we do need tech regulation, but what we've seen is that a number of laws that are particularly problematic from a human rights perspective and need to be fought. So I've said that the human rights framework is what brings us together. But we also have to acknowledge where we on the human rights side need to do better as well. The first is that the human rights framework is generally applicable, but applying it in practice to the challenges we face on the ground is very difficult. We need to help guide that application and ensure that the recommendations that are being made in the human rights system are really accessible and implementable for those decision-makers who are addressing these challenges on a day-to-day basis.

We also - and this is a point that this panel really exemplifies - need to figure out ways to bridge conversations that are happening in this room with those that are happening in related spheres on cybersecurity; the use of technology and peace and security issues; technical standards setting; and intellectual property issues. All these conversations have a human rights component, but we don't necessarily have the ability to bridge and make our way into those conversations in the way that we would like. I also want to emphasize, before moving on to some ideas about how we can move forward, that the concern here is not only about ensuring that a human rights foundation is built in, but also that the promise of AI and digital technology is realized by all people everywhere.

Opportunities abound, but if the past is precedent, these advantages that we see will be concentrated first and most in a larger way in the developed world. The corollary to that is that those most in need are likely to access the benefits that we see less. We need to rectify that inequality and - as it has been said so eloquently - ensure that the SDGs are brought into this conversation and focus on how we can better achieve them through use of technology, but that will not happen without concerted effort and real change in the way that we're currently working.

The Global Digital Compact has been referenced. In this respect, I would emphasize that it's very clear in its current draft and all the drafts about some of the systems and support that will need to be in place in all countries to be able to mine AI opportunities while managing risk. But having spent time in some of the countries that are perhaps furthest along and have some of the greatest advantages with regard to those challenges, I have to say that even they are struggling with how to move these things forward, setting up new AI safety institutes. How will they work? What kind of structures are needed? Those are difficult things to do. I think the business concentration that has been referenced and the incentives that exist for businesses to engage in some of the ways that I've mentioned do not favour the rapid expansion needed to ensure that AI addresses the needs of all people in all contexts and that it's used in a way that addresses rather than enhances inequality globally. I think much more needs to be done on that front. I would like to explain how my Office, the United Human Rights Office, is addressing some of these issues and how we work with the Human Rights Council to do so. These are the issues that we're really working to address.

First of all, one of our big projects is working to flush out the responsibilities of companies on which we're going back and forth on business and human rights. In doing so, we need to take that whole size approach that I mentioned. We're encouraging companies to race to the top, trying to differentiate between those who are rejecting the need to be better on their platforms and those that are moving forward to implement stronger measures to address the legal content and hate speech. But we also are working to try to inform government regulatory efforts through the B-TECH project. We've done that in the area of Gen AI, where we have a specific project. We have a community of practice involving some of the largest tech and communications companies and we're really looking to expand the efforts and discussions. We have work ongoing in Africa, and



we're looking to expand that to India and South Asia. We see this as a conversation that needs to be taken on globally.

Second, one of our big priorities is to bridge these conversations by injecting human rights and working with our partners, many of whom are represented here, in key areas. We've already mentioned the technical standard-setting area, where we work very effectively with ITU and other partners. We are engaged around cybercrime prevention and how we can ensure that the outcome document is both adopted and implemented in a way that brings in the human rights concerns. We're also looking at things like digital public infrastructure, building smart cities, and how to make them human rights-based.

Third, we're expanding and trying to work to advise and support states in the development of tech regulations and policies. The Director of UNESCO noted that they are working with 50 states in terms of implementing the ethics on regulation of AI. We, too, are trying to work alongside and with UNESCO to ensure that we are bringing into that conversation the strong human rights framework with all of its advantages. We are also mainstreaming efforts in the UN system, working not only with UNESCO and the GDC, but also through the issues of the work around a human rights and diligence policy for the UN itself, in terms of how we use digital technologies, with the idea that that could help both within our own ecosystem, but also be a model that can be used elsewhere.

In response to a question about what do we expect out of these conversations, we believe there is a need to bring that human rights framework home to governments and businesses in a better way. This means both expanding the ability to give tailored support to governments that are addressing some of these different legislative and policy issues, but also to expand the work that I mentioned with regard to the business sector as well, and advising in that regard as well.

We do see a real opportunity - based on the mapping report that the President mentioned - to bring together the work happening within the Human Rights Council. It has proliferated and grown immensely in a very positive way. I think nobody here will probably have read the entire total of 135 different Special Procedures reports that have taken a focus to digital issues. There's a wealth of information, ranging from digital impacts on older persons, to the issues around violence against women, to economic and social rights implications, and how to roll out technology in areas like the right to health.

Across the whole spectrum of issues that the Council addressed, everything has a digital component and the Council is engaging around that. But with that comes the need to figure out a way to coordinate and ensure that that work is brought together and that there is the ability to build on rather than simply replicate some of the findings and recommendations that are going forward. We're looking for ways to enhance cooperation within the mechanisms through a potential tech coordination group as one of the recommendations. One of the other key points that will come up in the conversation is about the information management system. There's an enormous body of work out there, but how do we all access it? How do we know what recommendations have been made by Special Procedures, by my Office, by other UN bodies? There's a feasibility study that has been done on how the Human Rights Council can better use information management. We want that to be broadened and used in a way that will allow us easier access to the work done within the Council and beyond. We want to continue our work on bridging and breaking silos. It's not only our Office, but the Human Rights Council itself that can help in that.

We can have conversations like these where we can dive deeper into some of the challenges. We've already done work through the Human Rights Council mandate on technical standard-setting that I think was very helpful to our partners and can be continued. But we can do the same in other areas where there are siloed conversations happening and we haven't had as much of a human rights focus yet. That's something the Human Rights Council can help with. We've also talked about ways to expand and deepen peer review. We're all part of the Universal Periodic Review system, and we know that it's not easy to cover every issue within that forum. But yet that forum is a very important way of bringing attention to conversations across states. So we're talking about ways to have greater efforts around the peer review in the digital tech space that will also allow greater opportunity for states to benefit from other experiences and practices and potentially get greater support in those conversations as well.

There were also proposals put on the table by the Ad Hoc Committee looking at how a task force could be created to have multi-stakeholder conversations in the context of the Human Rights Council and we're interested to see how that idea can be developed as well. This discussion itself illustrates that the Human Rights Council can contribute to addressing these challenges. The consensus here is clear. I'll echo what the President said, that what I've heard is a lot of alignment amongst the statements. While we will have to continue to explore and understand the impacts of AI on our society, it's now time to do something. The HRC will be taking up these issues, and our Office stands ready to support it.

As concluding remarks, public participation and the role of civil society within these conversations are areas where the Human Rights Council's work has shown that there are substantial shortcomings, exactly as Woman at the Table (see Interactive Dialogue below) noted the need for greater avenues for us to be able to ensure that civil society is present in conversations like this one, but also in the nitty-gritty work of regulating. One of those areas is around technical standards setting on which the Human Rights Council asked my Office to draft a report looking at how well are human rights being integrated in technical standard-setting. The answer is not nearly well enough, and that includes both civil society participation and academic participation. Those rooms tend to be dominated by government and companies without the benefit of what civil society and academics can bring in. We've worked very hard with partners like ITU to open the door to having more presence by civil society and academics within technical standard-setting, but we need support to actually allow people to walk through that door.

It's a labour-intensive and difficult procedure happening in many places, both at the international and national level in standard-setting, but it will only increase as we roll out AI. So those are conversations where we really need to think about who needs to be in the room and make sure that the avenues exist for that to happen. I would also like to emphasize the threats that people face online, and that means at times that civil society, human rights defenders, and others' voices are not being heard because they're not sure how they can safely make the risk that they see and their concerns known. So we also need to work with both governments and companies to ensure that human rights defenders, and in particular women, environmental and indigenous human rights defenders, are really respected in this process.

**Ms. Maria Dimitriadou**, World Bank Special Representative to the UN and WTO

Digitalization is the transformational opportunity of our time. Digital technologies, including AI and data, present a unique opportunity to accelerate development, poverty reduction, and climate action in an inclusive way that benefits everyone, including women, vulnerable groups, and the poor. The critical services that support development, like hospitals, energy, and

agriculture, rely increasingly on connectivity and data. The infrastructure that underpins these connections must be available, affordable, inclusive, and safe for countries to boost their development prospects. AI and the data revolution are accelerating digital capabilities for many, but low-income countries are falling further behind. We've heard from the Secretary General of ITU that about one-third of the global population, or 2.6 billion people, remained offline in 2023.

While more than 90% of people in high-income countries used the Internet in 2022, only one in four in low-income countries did so. In addition, 850 million people lack any form of identification. The global community needs to do more to help developing countries catch up, accelerate digital adoption, and ensure that everyone can reap the benefits. At the same time, fulfilling the promise of digital tech requires balancing risks and opportunities. As the world goes digital, safeguards are crucial to promote trust. Data protection, cybersecurity laws, and solid institutions must be in place to develop and enable strong, interconnected digital systems that can verify identities, quickly and safely transfer payments, and responsibly exchange data, while ensuring that the rights to privacy, free expression, and due process, to name just a few, are maintained.

At the World Bank, we are working with governments in developing countries to help them build the foundations for digital transformation, including their transition to digital economies, governments, and societies. Our work is currently focused on increasing access to fast, reliable, safe, and affordable Internet. We seek to stimulate demand for digital applications, digital skills, and digital platforms that support governments, businesses, and individuals to support and participate more fully in the digital economy. Digital components are increasingly included in projects across diverse sectors, such as transport, education, health, agriculture, and public sector management.

For example, the Digital Economy for Africa programme supports the ambition to ensure that every individual, business, and government in Africa is digitally enabled by 2030. Through this initiative, the World Bank helped increase access to broadband Internet in Africa from 26% in 2019 to 36% in 2022. Another example is a project focused on strengthening data infrastructure to close the digital divide in Argentina, aiming to benefit 350,000 residents in areas without Internet connection across 300 communities. Inclusion is at the heart of these investments.

Our environmental and social framework, which is the World Bank's sustainability framework for investment lending, supports countries in attending to issues of inclusion and non-discrimination, thus helping open the door for counterparts and stakeholders from different backgrounds to have their voices heard and work together towards ensuring the best outcomes from development projects.

Additionally, through our Human Rights, Inclusion, and Empowerment Trust Fund, the World Bank continues to work to inform how human rights relate to World Bank's core development mission. The Fund supports teams in identifying opportunities to advance human rights in our work. Grants provided by the Trust Fund have informed policy and provided guidance to partners and clients in different regions of the world. Specifically in the case of AI, this work has provided recommendations for identifying and meeting human rights risks that arise from bank funded projects with AI components. These recommendations will provide the foundation for future AI governance frameworks for the Bank's operations.

Let me conclude from how the President has introduced my intervention with our gratitude for his leadership and also for visiting the World Bank to discuss these issues and how we can contribute to your important efforts. While our approaches on this issue will differ and reflect the diversity of

partners here today, I believe that the challenge ultimately unites us all. This is how to address today's challenges while laying the foundation for a better future. We look forward to continuing the discussion.

**Ms. Louisa Franco-Machado**, UN Young Leader for the SDGs, on behalf of Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill, United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

As a young leader for the SDGs appointed by the United Nations and a digital rights expert, I stand before you today not just as a speaker, but as a representative of those who often remain unheard in these crucial conversations. We find ourselves at a critical juncture where the decisions we make today will significantly influence how technological progress intersects with human rights, equity and justice. Looking ahead to the Summit of the Future, we have an important opportunity to work together on defining sustainable development in a digital age. Therefore, it is crucial to make sure that young people are not just included, but are leading the way in creating a more inclusive and equitable digital future.

Artificial intelligence is often portrayed as a transformative force with the potential to revolutionize every aspect of our lives. From healthcare to climate action to education, AI offers unprecedented opportunities to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, we must not lose sight of the fact that AI is also a product of the same social structures that have perpetuated inequalities for centuries. AI is not inherently neutral, nor is it unbiased. AI systems being developed today often reflect the perspectives, biases and blind spots of those who create them. We must ask ourselves, who is developing these technologies and whose interests do they serve? More often than not, the answer to this question reveals a stark reality. AI is being designed and deployed by homogeneous teams that do not represent the diversity of our global society. This lack of representation leads to systems that not only fail to serve everyone equally, but actively harm marginalized communities.

Youth inclusion in the realm of new technologies and AI is not just a matter of representation. It is a fundamental requirement for building a future that is equitable and just. Unfortunately, young people are often sidelined to youth-specific initiatives or advisory boards that unfortunately lack influence on decision-making. Despite being the most digitally connected generation, we are frequently underestimated and excluded from leadership roles in AI and technology. This marginalization is not just a result of oversight. It is a reflection of systemic biases that perceive youth as inexperienced or not capable enough to contribute to high-level strategic decisions. This needs to change. It is time for intergenerational action, where young people are not just seen as the future, but as current leaders with valuable insights and expertise. We need to break down these barriers and create spaces where youth are integrated into all levels of decision-making, co-creating solutions. By doing so, we can ensure that the digital landscape is shaped by a diversity of perspectives and experiences, truly reflecting the needs and aspirations of all generations.

The digital divide is not just a matter of access to technology. It is a matter of power. It is about who has the opportunity to shape the digital world and who is left on the margins. Today, we are seeing a widening gap between those who have the skills and resources to really thrive in the digital economy and those who do not. To bridge this divide, we need more than just connectivity. We need to democratize the tools of digital creation and empower communities to develop their own solutions as well.

This means investing in digital literacy and infrastructure, but also in local innovation, in self-taught collaboration, youth-led innovation, and in the creation of digital platforms that reflect the cultural, social, and economic realities of all communities. To truly harness AI for good, we need to centre the voices of those who are most affected by its development - women, gender minorities, racial minorities, youth, persons with disabilities, those from the Global South, and so on. These groups will not only be included in conversations about AI, we must be leading them. We need diverse teams at every stage of AI development to ensure that these technologies serve all humanity, not just the privileged few.

To ensure AI serves as a tool for equity and justice, we must embed feminist and intersectional perspectives into its development and deployment. This includes actively involving women, LGBTQI+ individuals, and other marginalized groups in the creation and governance of AI systems. It means adopting gender-responsive policies that protect and empower rather than exclude. Tech governance should be rooted in principles of intersectionality and justice. It should recognize that our identities are complex and intersect in ways that uniquely shape our experiences with technology. This means going beyond binary understandings of gender, beyond monolithic representations of race, and beyond simplistic notions of ability. It means designing digital systems that are as diverse and nuanced as the people they are meant to serve.

As we look to the future, our goal should be nothing less than the creation of a new digital social contract, one that is built on the pillars of equity, transparency, and shared benefit. This contract must ensure that AI and digital technologies uplift every community, respect everyone's human rights, and honour every individual's right to privacy, security, and self-determination. This is not a task that can be accomplished by governments alone, nor by private companies acting in isolation. It requires a collective effort, a coalition of states, civil society, youth, academia, and the private sector working together to set and enforce standards that prioritize human rights above all else.

In conclusion, let us seize this moment to actively shape a more just and inclusive digital future. As young leaders, we're not waiting for change. We're making it happen. We're driving the conversations around AI and digital technologies, pushing for innovations that serve all of humanity, not just a select few. But we cannot do this alone. We need your partnership, your commitment, and your willingness to share power and responsibility. As we approach the Summit of the Future, I urge each of you to recognize the importance of intergenerational collaboration and to work with us to co-create a digital world where everyone, including young people, regardless of their background, is empowered to lead and innovate. The time for action is now. Together, let's build the technologies and policies of tomorrow that reflect the values of equity, inclusion, and justice for all.

### **Academia, Private Sector and Think-Tanks**

**Mr. Werner Vogels**, Chief Technology Officer and Vice-President, Amazon

I am making this assumption that most of you do not have a computer science degree, and probably, for most of you, the word AI was either something that you read in a book by Asimov or in a Schwarzenegger movie. Something changed about two years ago. But AI has been around for much longer than that. You can almost go back 3,000 years when Plato and Aristotle were actually battling over ideas such as 'can we actually make machines.' Plato in 'The Republic' even



described a household with robots. Nothing happened for many thousands of years until we got computers, which were also symbolically reasoning machines.

Since the first steps were taken, for example, by Turing in his famous paper on 'Can Machines Think?' Well, it turns out that machines don't think. But when artificial got into life - which happened in a famous workshop in Dartmouth in 1956 - the idea was that we needed to emulate the brain. But that went nowhere. Those who went somewhere were those who went into the world of robotics. They started thinking of how can we build human capabilities from the bottom up - language, vision, sound, touch. Most of those efforts have actually resulted in extremely valuable, well-working technologies, such as natural language processing and translation. If you drive a modern car today, your car is full of AI.

If you've been an Amazon customer for the past 20 years, you've been using AI for the past 20 years - systems like recommendations, fault protections. A typical warehouse of Amazon has 30,000 robots running around. They're all autonomous. It's all AI. Now much of these technologies that have been available and have become really mature over the past decades are being used by younger businesses and technology companies around the world to do good, next to having a good e-commerce business or building new self-driving cars. For example, an organization like Foreign wants to fight against child sexual trafficking. Foreign has a massive database of hundreds of thousands of children and women that have disappeared which matches their images against about 100,000 advertisements a day in the US for prostitution. 18,000 women have been rescued. 6,000 children have been taken away out of this sex trafficking. All that using AI. But it's much broader than that.

If you look at all the digital imagery we've had in Africa over the years - NASA, ESA, JAX have been actually bringing all of their satellite imagery over the years together. This is called Digital Earth Africa. By using that imagery and AI technologies, we're looking at illegal mining and mangrove deterioration. All these are technologies that work well today. And think about healthcare. Since recently, Sweden has a national program where women over 50s can get every two years a mammogram to detect early forms of breast cancer. A radiologist looking at thousands of images a day - at the end of the day, its eyes aren't that good anymore. AI detects 30% more breast cancer than a single radiologist and is as good as two radiologists. You can imagine the impact of this kind of technologies on healthcare around the world. These are technologies that are available for everyone to use.

You can think about the impact on younger businesses that these days are looking at solving hard human problems in their society, whether in Africa or Southeast Asia, in India, or in South America. They're using these technologies to build sustainable businesses that solve hard problems. For example, there's a company called Hara that provides identity data to smallholder farmers who didn't have that before. By measuring a plot of land and data by using AI, and then providing this data to both governments and banks, now these smallholder farmers no longer need to go to a loan shark and get charged 50%. Actually, these banks are eager to give these smallholder farmers a loan because they get 100% repayment. These are younger businesses using AI technologies to do good. However, because it works, we don't call it AI anymore. So what changed three years ago?

One of the things that happened a few years ago was a technology called Transformers that allowed us to build very large models based on text, quite successfully. Now, instead of having things like APIs, you have text as an interface to the system. It has made quite a significant impact. There isn't a company today that will have some form of chatbot that is based on these large

laboratories. But also, many of my customers actually tell me - 'Wait, we've now built these chatbots. What do we do now? Where are these efficiencies that we have promised to see?'

Now, why is this, why are we talking here about this new form of AI? It's because if you look at the traditional technology adoption cycles, there is a level of education that happens before new technologies get introduced. However, in this particular case, this technology was brought into the marketplace, into consumers' hands, without education, without really understanding what are the capabilities of the technology, what are the risks, and where can we apply it best, and only then introduce it to the general public. This didn't happen. Immediately, organizations like the Human Rights Council are looking at what is this technology, how to make sure that there's equal access to this technology for everyone.

From Amazon's point of view, education is important. We need to make sure that as many people as possible are educated about the capabilities of these technologies, so that they can make informed decisions. Fairly important is also that this new technology is centred around language. The dominant models at this particular moment are trained on Western data. They're trained in English. And even though you can access these models through a different language, in essence it gets translated under the corpus into English and then it gets executed like that. You get an answer in a different language, but it's still English. And it's not just about the language, as it also incorporates culture. For example, one of the largest open source models, *Falcon*, created in the UAE, is actually available through Amazon Web Services (AWS), or *Sea Lion* created in Singapore, also available through AWS. We've been working in Japan and Korea on building these natural language systems that incorporate not just the language, but also the culture and the history.

We need to make sure that we democratize access to these technologies across the board. Now, it's very important that we enable continuous innovation. We have to think about regulatory requirements, which areas entail most risks, and what has been already regulated. Think about financial services, think about healthcare - we need to make sure that those young businesses that want to use this technology to do good, to improve the lives and the big issues that they see in their communities. We need to make sure that those companies can continue to thrive. For us at Amazon, it's crucial to provide democratized access to this technology. So we invite everyone, every other organization, every other company, every other country, to make their models available through our platform. So that customers and other companies and organizations can experiment, can find out where to use it, how to use it best, and where it has most impact.

Because what we're talking about here, AI, is the potential. Not necessarily exactly what we're doing today. Old-fashioned AI already takes care of that. One very important part in all of this is sustainability. We need to make sure that these technologies are available in the most sustainable way possible. Because if every country around the world will start building their own data centres, we'll actually start depleting the natural resources in this world much quicker than is necessary. Let's make sure that everyone has access to these technologies in the most sustainable way possible.

Amazon is the largest corporate purchaser of renewable energy in the world. There are 450 projects going on around the world to make sure that we can invest as much green energy as possible without depleting natural resources. Sustainability together with these technologies - we cannot see these two things separate from each other. We need to make sure that customers and companies can experiment. Let's make sure that we have a platform availability as broad as possible both in terms of sustainability and cultural awareness. Let's make sure that everyone is actually served by this technology.

**Mr. Stéphane Decoutère**, Secretary-General, Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA)

I would like to start my remarks with three observations that will guide my few words. First, we have been observing since 75 years a great acceleration of science and technology. Second, the advent of artificial intelligence accelerates this acceleration. It bears the potential to span the boundaries of what is possible in science and technology. And why this? Because AI might foster the convergence of various fields of research. For instance, the so-called Info-Bio-Nano-Code convergence, one of the current game-changers in knowledge production. This has consequences. The increasing convergence in science and technology requires addressing, at the same time and at the same pace, artificial intelligence and other emerging fields, as well as the relationships between them. With regard to neurotechnology, for instance, AI influences and accelerates. Third, the UNHRC has already undertaken several steps in addressing the human rights implications of new and emerging technologies, including neurotechnology, as well as digitization. For instance, UNHRC resolution 53/27 of 12 July 2023 states that these technologies have the potential to facilitate efforts to accelerate human progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. In that same resolution, the UNHRC stresses the need for all stakeholders to be cognizant of the impact, opportunities, and challenges of rapid technological change and the promotion of human rights.

So the question is, how can governments like yours, and stakeholders like us, help implement the vision of the Council? Let me give an insight on how we are doing this, or we are trying to do this, at the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator.

In response to the acceleration and convergence of science and technology, we firmly believe that anticipation becomes indispensable in order to realize the pillars of the United Nations goals - be it peace and security, be it development and prosperity, be it the human right to science, as stated in article 27, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The rationale behind our work and the reason why the Swiss Government and the Geneva authorities created us five years ago can be summarized as follows: we are all living in a world accelerated by science and technology. There is no plausible indication that the pace of change is going to slow down. But not everybody, and by far, benefits quickly from these advances. This is not sustainable and it is contrary to the UDHR.

Therefore, in our understanding, the path to a global sustainable future of people, society, and our planet is to democratize, as much as we can, both the early understanding and the early uses of emerging science breakthroughs, and well beyond the developers of those breakthroughs. If we succeed in doing this at scale - because everything at the end must be the question of scaling up - it seems, if we succeed in doing this at scale, all of society will have the time it needs to prepare for these changes with the best possible transition.

First, preparedness is key. Preparedness means, first, increasing science literacy by detecting and monitoring the major emerging scientific and technological advances that will change the way we live, think, and behave. Second, developing, supporting, and funding concrete initiatives based on these emerging trends that leverage technology for development, security, and the right to science, meaning the right to benefit people to profit from the advances of science and technology. Third, in doing so, nurturing policy with up-to-date information and concrete experience.

So how do we implement this at GESDA? How do we operationalize this framework? The first step we took three years ago was to test the anticipation mechanism. It was to work on a yearly Science Breakthrough Radar to present an overview of emerging trends in five different areas of science and technology development. Five and not one or two, because we are all scientists and we think that it's important to have some overview of what is happening in the field of science and technology.

The fourth edition of our Radar, to be released in one month, will give insight into 40 emerging scientific topics and 348 potential breakthroughs in 5, 10, and 25 years, as seen by 2,100 scientists from 87 countries. The highlights this year in natural sciences range from eco-augmentation to orbital environments, from unconventional computing to neuro-augmentation, lifespan, extension, and synthetic biology, while the behavioural science groups and the future of archaeology are this year's highlights in human sciences.

But we will also add something to this work now. We will add an intent to our Radar, an intelligence tool powered and enhanced by artificial intelligence to support decision-makers in understanding not only where the science is heading, but also what regulations do or do not exist, whether R&D is already hitting the market or not, and where public opinion lies, and it was already stated several times this morning, which I do share, we did also some kind of this work in our Radar, and we came exactly to the same conclusions that you presented. We will present this expanded tool at our upcoming October Summit in Geneva, as part of our new Knowledge Augmentation Initiative to democratize science literacy for future leaders, future diplomats, current authorities, and citizens from all over the world, and our final topics are neurotechnology and quantum computing.

Notwithstanding, effective multilateralism means action and results. It's not enough to get access to future-oriented knowledge if we do not act upon it. Therefore, last year, we launched another initiative on the potential uses of quantum computing, called the Quantum for All Initiative. It includes the Open Quantum Institute (OQI), to which President Zuber has been contributing since its very first steps in 2022. Thank you Mr. President for helping us lift up this initiative and your continuous support as well for your invitation.

The Institute is now embedded in CERN with the financial support of the mainstream global bank, UBIAS. Its aim is to democratize access and develop capacity-building on quantum computing for good, while harnessing human talent from across all geographies, develop use cases that benefit humanity, and accelerate the SDGs implementation. May they help save the SDGs. The OQI works as a multi-stakeholder platform, meaning encompassing scientists, companies, representatives of civil society, foundations, politicians and diplomats. It counts as participants in around 20 of the Permanent Missions based here in Geneva and several governments. The institute is open for all of you to join at any time.

To boost the OQI development, we also launched in March 2024 a worldwide contest with the XPRIZE Foundation and others for teams to accelerate the development of use cases from all over the world in the most promising fields for quantum computing according to quantum experts, water sanitation, food, water, food, or materials for carbon catch. So far, 240 teams have applied to participate in this contest. Finally, the Quantum for All initiative also addresses questions of governance. We will release this fall the second edition of this intelligence report on quantum development and quantum diplomacy for SDGs. It will be based this year on the collective work with 24 scholars, 10 quantum companies, including the chief scientist of Microsoft Quantum, Permanent Representatives of 31 countries, and 17 international organizations from the Geneva

ecosystem and beyond. Several of them are with us today, such as ITU, UNIDO, OECD, UNESCO, WIPO, ISO, and UNEP. We hope this yearly report will nurture your own discussions on the governance of emerging technologies, and in this spirit, GESDA stands ready to contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council.

**Mr. Jovan Kurbalija**, Executive Director, Diplo Foundation

I have to oblige to the President's point that there were no controversies and different opinions. But unfortunately, I agree with much of what was said so far. But my controversy will be in bringing some good news and some concrete points that may help us to take forward our discussion. What is the good news?

The first good news is that we don't have any more to fear-mongering about AI as we had throughout the last year. You may recall those titles 'Stop AI!' - as AI will 'eat us for breakfast'. I won't go now into explanations, but luckily now we have much more balanced discussions. What is AI, what are the realistic risks - long-term risks, medium-term risks, and immediate risks? The atmosphere is prone to good discussion. This is the first good news.

The second good news is that AI is much simpler than we thought. About eight years ago, when I was going to deliver a lecture on AI to the UN, I was thinking how should I explain to it fellow diplomats. I started writing a book titled 'Understanding AI Through UN Flags'. Essentially, all AI concepts, neural networks, and everything else, can be explained and understood by walking in the alley of flags. You can download the explanation, but this is the key point - patterns and probability are the two foundational concepts of artificial intelligence. This is second news. It's not as difficult, as complicated as we were told.

The third good news is that AI is affordable. I run an organization whose annual budget - about two million Swiss francs provided by our donor countries, Switzerland and Malta - is equal to the cost of the AI processing per a day. This doesn't make these models powerful. You will see in a few moments why AI is affordable, and why your missions, your countries, and your ministries should embrace it and develop it with limited resources and very fast. This is the point. We have to walk the talk. One of the things about the talk is that I'm recording and you can receive report, an AI-driven report of this session, which won't be like a usual Zoom report that is now a commodity. AI is becoming a commodity, let's admit it. But the difference is in the quality of annotated texts which are based on thousands of documents. This cannot be beaten by Google or any other company. Therefore, our knowledge, if it is properly organized and captured with a very small organization, can be a powerful tool.

After these good news, think about our meeting today as a unique knowledge exercise. We had excellent panellists. I'm sure we'll have great questions. You will be reporting back to capital. Can you imagine what volume of knowledge is generated today? I'm highlighting knowledge, not data. This is what has to come more in the language of the UN family - knowledge - because knowledge is an add-on element to the simple data, insights, reflections, and our shared values. Now, if we think about knowledge generated today with AI, we have to think about your reflections, while I'm talking or while other panellists are talking, we can start thinking about bottom-up AI.

This is my first point. We must develop bottom-up AI for a few reasons. Reasons for bottom-up AI are fundamental for the work of this Council. Knowledge defines our core humanity, today and throughout the history. If you read foundational books of major religions - let's start from China - you have in Taoism the way, and you will find the knowledge is a critical concept. When you move to Buddhism, you will find the concept of 'anata', of no-self, again built around knowledge. In



India's civilization, in Islamic tradition, the Avicenna's concept of floating man. We come to Europe, and obviously Descartes, '*Cogito ergo sum*' - I know therefore I am. But slightly different notion in Africa, in Ubuntu tradition, which says 'I am because you are'. These are just a few points where our knowledge, our awareness, defines who we are. Frankly speaking, if this Council will serve us well - and I'm sure under such able leadership it will - it has to bring knowledge back across the board. Knowledge that could be centralized in a few hands, and that can be prevented by bottom-up AI. Bottom-up AI is technically feasible, ethically desirable, and financially viable. Therefore, let us develop bottom-up AI, starting with discussions that we have at this meeting, and keeping our knowledge as our knowledge, shared with humanity, but as our knowledge.

My second point is that we have to revisit some of the core human rights in the context of AI. Famous article 19 UDHR provides for freedom of opinion, but you have in the more than two-thirds of article 19, the question of holding and forming opinion. What does it mean if I express an opinion, but that opinion is shaped by answers provided by ChatGPT? Will our opinion be shaped by a few big companies without reflecting cultural differences or not reflecting cultural differences? Gap in knowledge is already major. For example, only 5% of producers of the content on Africa on Wikipedia, are from contributors from Africa. I love Africa, spent quite a bit of my time working in capacity-building in Africa. It doesn't mean that only people from Africa should write about Africa, but less than 5% is a shocking statistics. Therefore, let's revisit article 19 UDHR and other instruments around the centrality of knowledge. We should have more knowledge of the language of the Council and human rights community.

The third point relates to the SDGs. We have been hearing a lot about AI as a tool for achieving the SDGs. We'll use it to achieve concrete SDGs to help people. We have never thought of using SDGs as a guardrail for AI governance. This is a solution in front of our faces. SDGs are currently the most up-to-date codification of societal priorities, values, and other elements. They're quite detailed with indices and other elements. It is always for me puzzling why we don't ask tech companies and AI developers to basically follow SDGs. Why would it be really helpful to use SDGs as AI guardrails? First, SDGs are available, and they can be made operational immediately. Second, new use of SDGs as AI guardrails will give new life to SDGs. We know that the race for 2030 is a bit in a delicate phase. There is 'SDG fatigue'. There is a need for new policy adrenaline. It can come from the use of SDGs as AI guardrails.

In conclusion, I would like to invite you to consider the centrality of knowledge, your knowledge that you are creating, knowledge of your children, parents, and relatives. This is our key asset that defines us as human beings. There is no better place to revitalize that relevance of knowledge in the context of the AI era than the Human Rights Council and human rights community. '*Cogito ergo sum*' should not become by paraphrasing '*AI ergo sum*' - namely 'I am because you are' should not become 'I am because AI is'.

**Mr. Ulrich Schlie**, Henry Kissinger Professor for Security and Strategic Issues, University of Bonn

I promise to be brief and limit myself to three points. My first point is that the digital power will reshape the global order and facilitate a worldwide process that will have far-reaching institutional consequences. I think this is a challenge, and it might change. For a long time, states have taken control of all aspects of society. But now we see that with AI that we have a new power - emerging actors on the field of international politics - which will also have consequences for science. I'm talking about international companies - Amazon is sitting here at the table. This will have an enormous impact on the question of world order and how we will shape the future.

European companies do not have the size or the geopolitical influence to compete with American and Chinese companies. The biggest competitors are today already similar to states. They bring resources and they will shape global affairs. Digital space is a new dimension in geopolitics. Social, economic, and political institutions will continue to shift. And governments will recognize that they will be, in some regard, out of control.

The transformative nature of AI will also transform warfare. It will create new destructive capabilities and change the way military commanders train, deploy, and equip their forces. These changes will shape the military balance. As China advances in the field of AI, the United States are faced with a new competitive challenge. When we look at the further development of the world system, we have to take this into consideration, and we must reflect about the relationship between states. AI is clearly a strategic rival for global powers. When we look at the future, we also possibly see the arrival of the so-called singularity of the battlefield. This means that we might not keep up with the speed of the decision-making process in the military. When some authoritarian states opt for a fully automatic approach to war, this will raise a number of ethical and operational risks. What does that mean for the protection of civilians? In support of military commanders, this could mean that new problems might emerge when encouraging offices to rely on programmes that are prone to error.

Let me conclude. What is required is a discussion of the necessary strategic and organizational implications. This could have an impact on international humanitarian law, and we will also need an interdisciplinary approach which combines international law, strategic studies, intelligence, technology, computer science, and economics. It has been truly said by my predecessors that we need a multi-stakeholder approach. Albert Einstein once noted that the advent of nuclear weapons had changed everything but our modes of thinking. By adapting a quote from the former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, I would like to conclude by saying that we need realities, we need new modes of thinking, and that the United Nations here in Geneva is the right place to bring together this new multi-stakeholder approach.

**Mr. Robert Chu**, Founder, TermLabs

We've heard a lot about AI, but I'm coming more from the quantum technology side of things. In that sense, I want to briefly elaborate on what quantum technologies means and expand your understanding of that definition. So I principally work in quantum communication, which is not quantum computing. There is also quantum sensing. In that context, I was part of a team that several years ago put together what is now the multi-billion dollar European Quantum Flagship Programme. That really is to try and push these technologies of computing, communication, and sensing forward to industrialize these technologies. In that timeframe, we've also seen this influx of investment from small and large companies, and a plethora of startups taking place in the field. So we see this has accelerated rapidly. Investment has accelerated rapidly and its impact on society is accelerating too. We're still only just starting to think about what that means. So I think this discussion here today is very critical.

Quantum computing is one of the things that you will have heard a lot about. Some of the biggest multinationals have invested in this. It has unprecedented power, potential for power, maybe not yet attained. But its main claim, or one of the most concerning factors, is its ability to break encryption algorithms that we use for secure communication. So this is just one of its potential applications, but it is perhaps the most critical to both individuals and states, and everyone in between. So quantum actually provides the solution to fight against this in terms of quantum communication, which is a way of encoding or encrypting information using quantum physics.

That's more my field of research, but not only do we provide the quantum computing, which apart from encryption, has some great potential for humanity. We can ensure that the encryption and the privacy and security of our communications, our medical records, our infrastructure can be maintained and sustained.

So I think there are two sides of the coins for quantum communication and quantum computation that are in a sort of conflict, but globally work together for a better solution potentially for all of us. Communication is not a terribly expensive technology compared to computation. So this is something that's actually not restricted let's say to the global North as much. In terms of job creation and start-up industries, it is a much more accessible technology front in the quantum domain. So this is something that is an advantage. On the computation side, we see a lot of cloud operated systems. I think some people at this desk have some of those.

The third aspect of quantum technologies is quantum sensing. This is something that is really not as expensive technologies as quantum computing and potentially has the impact to improve our health through imaging, diagnosis, medicines. I think it is a technology that's rapidly progressing and will be a good candidate for the global South for just inclusion of the rest of the planet and not just the global North. Why that's important is because a lot of these technologies, whilst they're cheaper and simpler, the concepts behind them are the same as quantum computing.

So this gives us a way of educating. We've heard a little bit about educating and reducing the fear of technology and having a much more sort of open sort of attitude in general at scientific literacy that accepts quantum technologies. AI is aware of what that means. I think some of these cheaper, more accessible technologies are a good opening point to expand this and understand how this may be useful in the future. One of the challenges of such a critical technology is developing frameworks for international collaboration. We heard about cooperation versus competition. I think we've tried to straddle this from an academic level for many years, quite easily. But as this becomes increasingly seen as a critical technology for sovereign states, the challenge of making cooperation and collaboration is one that's increasingly a barrier for research and innovation.

**Mr. Maxime Stauffer**, Co-Founder and -CEO, Simon Institute for Longterm Governance

I will allow myself to discuss some of the points made so far quite spontaneously. I will start with some of the points raised by Mr. Kurbalija. He said that AI is less complex than we thought. I actually think it is the opposite. As Professor Schlie said, it will likely change the world order. It will give more power to companies that will make them compete with states, that will challenge the state-based system we currently rely on. AI is not just a tool. It is how, probably, we will decide the way we operate societies, which values we encode in those systems, how we process information, how we make decisions.

The fact that there is less fear-mongering is likely good news. However, it might also mean that we are starting to take the risks a bit less seriously. Recently, the lobbying landscape in Washington D.C. shifted away from a risk-based focus to an innovation-based focus. Mr. Tang highlighted that AI is not entirely new. It is the continuation of existing previous tech. Indeed, it builds on previous tech. However, something is new about AI in the sense that it is the first technology that removes power from humans. All technologies today have given power to humans for themselves, between each other, or over the environment.

With AI, we start outsourcing decisions, outsourcing processes to systems that are black boxes that we cannot entirely control or predict. Therefore, it is a big question of values. Which values

do we encode in those systems that we outsource powers to? Mr. Vogels rightly highlighted that the current AI systems, or at least the leading ones, are ultimately biased. But they're not just biased towards Western norms and values. A recent report by Anthropic, one of the leading AI companies, highlights that AI systems primarily run on American norms and values. So you can imagine that it is already hard to build those systems based on American values. Think about how those systems operate for norms and values and cultures that are not meant to respect. Mr. Vogels highlighted that democratizing AI open sourcing is a way to inject variety, a diversity of cultures in AI systems. Here, I would appreciate more nuance. It is not that easy to open source AI systems or models. There's a trade-off. There's a risk with open sourcing. It can give powerful models to the hands of terrorists. Recently in New York, we showed a demonstration of how terrorists can use open source models to commit attacks in New York City. So there's a delicate balance to find when choosing to open source or not. I think it is very important that we approach this conversation with nuance.

There's an alternative - guardrails have been mentioned multiple times - but guardrails, when it comes to values and ensuring that AI systems are aligned, primarily apply to the R&D phase of AI development, not to the application level. Yet, if we look at an example, the recent Treaty on AI adopted by the Council of Europe, it explicitly excludes R&D. Now, we've heard quite a lot about quantum computing. I would appreciate that we talk a bit more about normal computing. Normal computing has historically driven AI capabilities. It is the best predictor for more and more capabilities from AI systems. But compute is also about infrastructure, Internet, data servers, and therefore, the inequality in terms of compute is also what drives the digital divide. So looking at compute might be a way to improve access, to reduce the divide, but looking at compute and as a predictor of capabilities, might be a way to introduce guardrails, thresholds that companies probably should not trespass in case they would develop dangerous AI systems.

Ms. Bogdan-Martin highlighted the need to harmonize standards, and this is extremely important. I would like to highlight another point, the harmonization of layers of governance. For successful AI governance, we probably need a combination of three things. One, speed, because technology is fast. Two, efficacy, because technology is technical. Three, inclusivity, because it affects everyone. No governance layer will satisfy all three of those criteria. The OECD might be fast and technical. AI Safety Summits might be fast and technical. But both of them will not be as inclusive as the UN is. But will the UN be fast and technical enough to address the challenges? Likely not. That's why we need to look at the harmonization between the layers of governance.

Maybe one last point - as I've maybe sounded negative or critical so far - is that there's indeed a turning point. Ms. Bogdan-Martin mentioned that the stimulus of the future is a turning point, and I agree with that. The turning point that I see is that we have this conversation today, and we see a lot of efforts at OHCHR and other UN agencies in tackling AI governance, despite the fact that we haven't seen major incidents. Policy change historically happens in reaction to disasters, to extreme media coverage after harmful happened. In this case, we have these conversations, and by virtue of anticipation, we actually look forward, we look at the risks and opportunities ahead of us, even though nothing drastic has happened. This is encouraging. I think it is at the core of the spirit of the Summit of the Future, and I look forward to having more conversation of this kind. In this spirit, the Simon Institute, which is a think-tank based here in Geneva, is at your disposal for questions and further conversations.

## Interactive Dialogue

### UN Member and Observer States

(in alphabetical order)

#### Bahamas

Artificial intelligence presents both profound opportunities and challenges for small island developing states like the Bahamas. While AI has the potential to enhance critical sectors such as disaster management and healthcare, the digital divide threatens to widen existing disparities if left unaddressed. For SIDS, limited access to digital infrastructure and insufficient digital literacy remain significant hurdles. It is imperative that we bridge this divide to fully harness the benefits of AI and ensure our nations do not lag behind in this rapidly evolving digital landscape. Furthermore, the ethical implications of AI are particularly acute for our regions. We must ensure that AI development is inclusive, culturally sensitive, and aligned with our values, safeguarding against biases and inequalities. Thus, I offer three recommendations. First, inclusive AI development. SIDS must be active participants in the development and governance of AI technologies to ensure our interests are represented. Second, bridging the digital divide. There is a pressing need for targeted investments and international cooperation to enhance digital infrastructure and literacy across our islands. Third, human-centered AI governance. AI must be governed by frameworks that prioritize human rights, ensuring that these technologies promote inclusivity and protect vulnerable populations. As we consider these issues, I pose this question to the panellists. How can we ensure that AI development and deployment not only bridges the digital divide but also actively contributes to reducing broader inequalities within and among nations? In closing, the Bahamas is committed to collaborating with the international community to ensure that AI and emerging technologies benefit all, leaving no one behind.

#### Brazil

New technologies have the potential to enhance human rights protection but also entail risks, especially for minorities and vulnerable groups. It is vital that emerging technologies such as AI help bridge digital divides and promote sustainable development. Recent developments in AI should fully consider a diverse range of linguistic, cultural, racial and geographical contexts and be able to address violence embedded within these technologies. Human rights principles must be included in the lifecycle of AI and other technologies, particularly privacy and data protection, freedom of expression and access to information as well as non-discrimination and equality. We welcome initiatives such as the Global Digital Compact, the UN Global Principles for Information Integrity, the UNESCO Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms and Recommendations on Assets and Artificial Intelligence, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the G20 AI Principles. However, we need to further discuss AI governance in multilateral forums to align regulatory frameworks with our obligations under international human rights law. What challenges do experts see in translating these international principles into national human rights?

#### Cuba

New technologies and digital transformation are a vehicle for promoting sustainable development and the SDGs, so they must be used for peaceful purposes and access to them must be inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory. Efforts must be continued to eliminate the



technological gap and inequalities between developed and developing countries. Cuba is deeply concerned about the impact of these technologies on conflict, dehumanization and the challenges they impose on the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of all human rights. In addressing these issues, some rights should not be weighted above others, but rather universality, interdependence and indivisibility should prevail. While recognizing the importance of discussing these issues, we join our voice with a cross-regional group of 20 countries that have expressed their procedural concerns on this informal event. We reiterate our call for respect for the Human Rights Council's institution-building package, including the mandate of its Bureau, which is limited to procedural and organizational matters.

### **Dominican Republic**

The development and regulation of artificial intelligence is an issue of growing global relevance. Artificial intelligence is a powerful tool that has the potential to drive development and it poses risks to human rights, such as discrimination, invasion of privacy, and labour displacement. It also raises ethical concerns on such a magnitude that one historian is already describing artificial intelligence as an unprecedented threat to humanity because it is the first technology in history that can take decisions and create new ideas on its own. He made the ominous warning that within our societies could be summoning a power that they would later not be able to control, an admonition that reminds me of the old saying that calling the devil is not the same as seeing him coming. We welcome the convening of this informal meeting because it provides us with a unique opportunity to broaden discussions on appropriate approaches to the governance of artificial intelligence based on human rights and aligned with the international legal framework. My country has already taken a step forward, launching the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, a milestone in our national innovation policy 2030.

### **France**

Many thanks to the panellists and to the President for this initiative. For the sake of time, I would like to briefly introduce and extend an invitation to the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit which will be held in Paris on 10-11 February 2025 on artificial intelligence. It is a multi-stakeholder summit for which have extended invitations to many UN agencies and bodies, and it will focus on five themes, namely artificial intelligence as a public good; the future of labour at the time of artificial intelligence; innovation and culture; artificial intelligence and trust; and global multilateral governance of artificial intelligence.

### **Greece**

Warm thanks to the President for organizing this discussion and to the co-facilitators from Luxembourg, Uganda, and Korea, as well as to the distinguished panellists for their contributions. We are all aware of the risks and advantages of AI and other emerging technologies, such as neurotechnology, and that it is therefore urgent to build an adequate framework to ensure transparency, accountability, and protection of human rights. Today's discussion highlighted the necessity of a coordinated approach under the guidance of the UNHRC involving all stakeholders, including Member States, international organizations, such as WIPO, ITU, the World Bank, and others. Given the urgency of the matter, we need to take advantage of the work that has already been done in this field. In particular, the European Union, through its AI Act, has made significant progress in fostering responsible artificial intelligence development and deployment. It established a uniform framework in all EU countries to address potential risks to citizens' health, safety, and fundamental rights. It provides developers and deployers with clear requirements and

obligations regarding specific uses of AI. In conclusion, we warmly welcome the co-facilitator's recommendations, notably the proposal for a mandate holder on data, AI, and the digital divide, which should facilitate a broad approach to promoting effective oversight and protection of human rights.

### Holy See

At the recent G7 meeting held in Italy, Pope Francis said it was now safe to assume that the use of AI would increasingly influence the way we lived our social relationships, and even the way we conceived of our identity as human beings. It is therefore fitting that the President took up this important theme in the course of his Presidency of the Human Rights Council. The Holy See has consistently advocated for an artificial intelligence that serves each person and humanity as a whole and that respects the dignity of the human person, so that each individual may benefit from the advances of technology. AI must not have as its sole objective the greatest profit or the gradual replacement of people in the workplace. It is also imperative to ensure adequate, meaningful, and consistent human oversight of the development of artificial intelligence and new technologies. It is essential that the development and application of artificial intelligence is guided by an ethical framework underpinned by the inherent dignity of each human being and the fraternity that binds us together as members of the one human family, and these principles must serve as the indisputable criteria for evaluating AI and new technologies before they are employed, so that digital progress can occur with due respect for justice and contribute to the cause of peace. And yet, with so many conflicting visions of the human person promoted across contemporary society, it becomes increasingly difficult to develop shared reflections on political solutions aimed at the good of the human person. An authentic and shared anthropology is essential if we are to meet the challenges of our times, including the acceleration of technological progress. Pope Francis has consistently highlighted that international organizations can play a decisive role in this regard, and my delegation makes use of this discussion to reiterate the Holy See's proposal for the creation of an international agency on artificial intelligence, while simultaneously urging the global community of nations to work together to adopt a binding international treaty that regulates the development and use of artificial intelligence in its many forms.

### Iran

New technologies and artificial intelligence are rapidly transforming our lives - from providing easy access to information and services to enhancing educational and healthcare systems. The future of our world will be shaped by AI, and we must prepare ourselves for such a future. Now future generations will know only a world with AI, and it's up to current generations to create a safe and secure environment based on AI for them. AI has the potential to increase equal opportunities for development and can be a powerful driver of progress. However, it depends on how we use this tool to create a fairer, more sustainable and more inclusive world for everyone. Digital inequalities between countries may result in a situation where only some people have access to the benefits of AI, while others remain deprived. There is a risk that AI development instead of helping to reduce inequalities in various fields may actually deepen and sustain them among countries. In this context, AI can pose challenges to the realization of the right to development. It could further jeopardize the creation of equal opportunities for development and hinder the establishment of conditions favourable to the realization of these rights. In conclusion, the diversity of rapid developments may have made it inevitable for the Human Rights Council to address many issues from a human rights lens, but we firmly believe that any involvement of the

Council in any matter must be carried out with respect for and consideration of its institution-building package.

### Italy

The opportunities offered by new technologies and especially artificial intelligence for the promotion of human rights cannot be overlooked. Let us think about the positive impact they may have on the access to health and education or the rights of persons with disabilities. It is nevertheless imperative to ensure that these technologies are developed in line with our democratic values and in full respect of human dignity. The digital divide across regions, countries, genders, social and ethnic groups must be bridged as a matter of priority. In this context, we believe that the Human Rights Council can play an important role in defining a human-centered approach to artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies. We appreciate the work done by the co-facilitators in this regard. We also expect that the role of the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner are properly reflected on the Pact of the Future and the Global Digital Compact. Let me conclude by stressing that Italy, as current President of the G7, has launched several initiatives to promote a fair, human-centered and inclusive use of artificial intelligence. First, the establishment of an artificial intelligence hub for sustainable development which aims at supporting local artificial intelligence ecosystems and at strengthening capacity in partner countries. Second, an action plan on the use of artificial intelligence in the work domain with concrete action to address challenges to the labour markets and protect workers' rights.

### Japan

This high-level informal presidential discussion is an invaluable opportunity to exchange perspectives with distinguished panellists, Member States and other participants. As technology advances, emerging technologies such as AI are playing an increasingly critical role in shaping our society. While these technologies offer significant opportunities for innovation and growth, they also raise serious concern over human rights. It is therefore important that AI systems be developed and deployed in line with the principle of human dignity. Racial and gender-based discrimination facilitated by these technologies, particularly in digital contexts like social media platforms, are critical issues that must be addressed. Additionally, access to these technologies is increasingly vital for promoting and protecting human rights, such as the right to education. The digital divide should not hinder the realization of these rights. In this context, we have supported initiatives in international organizations, including ITU's Connect2Recover and the Young Professional Programme. Japan, together with the rest of the G7 members and other states, has led a discussion on AI and human rights, resulting in the Hiroshima Process, which emphasizes that AI should be grounded in the guiding principles of digital and human rights. We believe that multi-stakeholder participation is key to enhancing the Human Rights Council's capacity to address these evolving issues.

### Lebanon

As more efforts will always be needed to align new and emerging technologies with human rights by identifying gaps and challenges and ways to address them, we support all the initiatives that have been already taken, including the UNSG's roadmap for digital cooperation. We also thank the co-facilitators for their efforts and final recommendations for action in our Council and from human rights perspectives. There is already a strong understanding that new and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, which are developing exponentially, have great

potential. But given their unprecedented and somehow unpredictable nature, it is incumbent upon us to regulate them and to make sure they comply with existing human rights principles, mainly anti-discrimination, equality, and specific groups' rights for better inclusion. Valuable ideas and proposals do exist and are regularly mapped. In this regard, we thank the eminent panellists for their insightful and wide-ranging presentations. However, we may still be in need of more formal and operational platforms that would bring together all relevant stakeholders around agreed principles and procedures for effectiveness. In this respect, coordination efforts should always be made with more synergy and in good faith, both nationally and internationally, and should include the developers of these new technologies. Big challenges will be to prioritize the SDGs and to put the respect and promotion of human rights on a par with financial and economic interests.

### Moldova

The proposals made by Luxembourg and The Gambia have caught our interest and we hope they will continue. We will take some steps on those recommendations. Generally speaking, on the subject of the debate, there are probably three consensus factors, namely that (1) AI is developing at a great speed; (2) AI will have a huge impact - good and bad - and therefore (3) it needs to be governed. I think these three points are more or less part of each country's thinking. Based on this, the question which I wanted to ask to ITU and WIPO and others, is whether we shall aim for a treaty, a global legal instrument on this issue, or shall we try to tackle these challenges through *ad hoc* small isolated initiatives. Now, in the Global Digital Compact, I haven't seen any reference to something really ambitious because it's something more reduced. The Council of Europe has been mentioned as it has produced a Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. It's a legal document, a treaty which Moldova will be signing soon. Probably, it could have been good to have a Council of Europe representative here to share their experience, how did they reach a legal instrument in such an organization.

### Palestine

I am here to bring your attention again to the extremely urgent real-life case of the use of AI autonomous weapons systems against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. It is apparent that a number of thematic sessions and a number of states, including many of those who claim to champion efforts to regulate and prohibit these systems, are more comfortable speaking in theoretical terms but reluctant to mention the real-life case of the use of AI in occupied Palestine, which has been widely reported by the media, UN experts, NGOs worldwide. This is of concern not just to Palestine but to all states, as these systems have started being exported by the Israeli colonial power and will proliferate.

In 11 months, the Israeli colonial power has killed more than 40,738 Palestinians, including more than 14,000 children in Gaza. It has also killed more than 679 Palestinians in the West Bank, including more than 154 Palestinians in the West Bank. The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution in April condemning Israel's use of AI to commit international crimes against the Palestinian people. The primary reason for the large number of civilians killed in Gaza is due to the use of a system called *Hasbulla*. In 2023, Amnesty International issued a report titled 'Automated Apartheid: How Facial Recognition Fragments, Segregates, and Controls Palestinians in the OPT.' It reveals the extensive use of facial recognition technology by the Israeli illegal Occupying Power in Hebron and East Jerusalem. These technologies, including systems like Red Wolf and Blue Wolf, are used exclusively to persecute the Palestinian people, by severely

restricting their freedom of movement and violating their basic human rights, including privacy. These surveillance persecutions are part of the broader system of apartheid.

We echo Amnesty's call and urge businesses and governments worldwide to regulate and ban the sale of surveillance technologies that contribute to this automated apartheid and illegal occupation. We reiterate the findings of the ICJ advisory opinion of 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024 that the Israeli occupation is unlawful and its continued presence on our land is unlawful. So the right to self-determination requires that all of you, all UN Member States, bring this occupation to an immediate end. No aid, no assistance, no complicity, no contribution, including no arms trade and no sale of surveillance technology and AI to the illegal occupier that is profiting from our blood.

### Philippines

Technological breakthroughs are emerging at breakneck speed. The consequences are far-reaching, some yet to unfold. We share the optimism of many on the transformative potential of new technologies. These can spur growth, empower people, improve governance, and generate revolutionary solutions to societal challenges. Last July, the Philippines launched its National AI Strategy Roadmap with a commitment to increase R&D spending to 1% of GDP to help achieve our Sustainable Development Goals, particularly on poverty, agriculture, and disaster resilience. But new technologies, particularly dual-use potential, pose ethical and human rights risks. Principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability must be upheld. AI, in particular, must serve the common good, be an instrument for human rights, peace, and security. This cannot be without closing the vast digital divide. Left unchecked, the implications will be dire for human rights. AI and related technologies aim to minimize and even eliminate the human element. While the human may be taken away, not so should their rights.

### Poland

I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the panellists for their substantial contribution. We heard today that the new technologies have a particular impact on the functioning of our societies and our public life. They can foster accountability and transparency of the public sector and ensure inclusive access to public services. However, they can also facilitate the spread of misinformation, undermine trust in democratic institutions and lead to unrest or radicalization. Finding the right balance between technological development and protection of human rights is essential. We would also like to stress the need to support educational activities to enable them to positively engage with AI technologies and raise awareness especially among young people about the impact of new technologies and AI systems on democracy, good governance and human rights deserve further examination.

### Singapore

We acknowledge the importance and the pressing nature of convening this discussion on such an important topic. Singapore would like to express its appreciation to the distinguished colleagues from the Republic of Korea - Ambassador Yun - for his work as co-facilitator on new technologies, artificial intelligence and the digital divide. Since 2019, we have worked very closely with the Republic of Korea and other distinguished colleagues from Austria, Brazil, Denmark and Morocco on the resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights. Our resolution was the first of its kind to address the human rights implications of new and emerging technologies in a holistic, inclusive and most importantly comprehensive manner. Its latest resolution focused on artificial intelligence - which was adopted by consensus at the 53rd

session of the Council - stresses the need to manage its risks while harnessing its positive impacts. The resolution mandates a comprehensive mapping exercise of the work done by human rights ecosystems on new and emerging technologies which was considered at the 56th session of the Council. In this regard, we urge all actors to focus on enhancing existing initiatives on issues where the conversation is well developed. All of us have experienced the effects of the ongoing liquidity crisis with several mandated initiatives having been postponed. We call for greater coordination between delegations and disciplines to ensure that the Council can deliver on its mandate of promoting and protecting human rights across the range of issues. While recognizing the positive intent behind this discussion, we would like to raise our concern with the procedure, precedent and prerogative of this event. We should ensure that proper procedure is followed when convening such substantive discussions on an important topic while simultaneously respecting prerogatives and bearing in mind any precedent.

### Slovenia

We fully align with the common message of this debate, namely that only the human-centric and human-rights-based approach to digital transition can ensure that digital technologies benefit all; reduce inequalities; and contribute to both achieving the SDGs and closing digital divides across regions, gender, income, language, and age groups. To achieve this, we must strengthen collaboration among diverse stakeholders. We welcome our distinguished panellists' ideas on how to achieve enhanced coordination among diverse stakeholders in the UN system and, more importantly or equally importantly, beyond. We do hope that today's discussions will contribute meaningfully to broader developments within the UN, including ongoing deliberations on the Global Digital Compact and the Pact for the Future. In conclusion, we are very committed to meaningfully contributing to a more inclusive and human rights-based approach in the development and deployment of new technologies and AI.

### Türkiye

Türkiye emphasizes the need for AI government frameworks that are inclusive, responsive, and firmly grounded in human rights and international law. Türkiye is deeply committed to the principle of leaving no one behind in the digital era. Transformative power of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, must be utilized for the benefit of all nations equally. Therefore, we advocate for targeted efforts to advance the digital infrastructure and technological capabilities in LDCs, ensuring they can fully participate in and benefit from the global AI ecosystem. Enhancing capacity-building, technical and financial assistance to developing countries, particularly LDCs, is crucial to close digital divides and support their participation in global AI governance. Collaboration with the private sector, academia, and civil society is key to effectively leveraging digitalization and creating an enabling environment for inclusive and equitable AI development. Both regional and international partnerships are enablers to promote digital literacy, support technical education, foster innovation in AI technologies, and share knowledge on AI risk management. Türkiye firmly believes that human rights and fundamental freedoms must be upheld throughout the AI lifecycle. This is the time to commit to promoting safe, secure, transparent, and accountable AI systems that align with international law and ethical standards.

### United Kingdom

Thank you for convening us here today and picking up our first point. Thank you to our extraordinary distinguished panellists for their insights, but also for their challenge which I think



is also really welcome here. We all know that new and emerging technologies including AI don't just have the potential to transform our societies. They're doing so already and I think what we've heard this morning is how they can facilitate the promotion and protection of human rights but they also pose risks. We're clearly again at a critical juncture as we all grapple to regulate effectively a technology that is developing exponentially. We are proud to have played our modest role in that through the inaugural AI Safety Summit last year. We are delighted that Korea and now France have taken up the mantle. We are absolutely committed as others here to the development of safe and ethical AI in which - by picking up the language used by Doreen Bogdan-Martin earlier - 'human rights are at the bedrock of our digital future.' That was a great phrase. We also clearly have to avoid deepening the digital divide as technology develops. Indeed, we should be trying to narrow that divide so that we can more effectively use this technology to get our SDGs back on track and to ensure the sustainable development that we all aspire to see. Finally, I think we all look forward to the conclusion of the Global Digital Compact with an outcome that serves everyone and in which human rights are absolutely at the heart of the development and the use of technology and in which we enhance the capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner to provide an advisory service on human rights for governments and partners alike.

## International Organizations

(in alphabetical order)

### European Union

We congratulate on the President for bringing together so many key interlocutors on digital issues. We can only concur that a multi-stakeholder approach is indeed central to ensure that human rights fully apply in the digital space. Very concretely, the EU promotes technologies that are safe, empower individuals, and respect, protect, and fulfill all human rights. Our projects through the Global Gateway have built our partners' capacities and reduced digital divides. We also need technology we can trust. This is why the AI Act adopted by the EU fully includes human rights and adopts a risk-based approach to AI systems. The EU supports the work done over the years by the Human Rights Council, Special Procedures, and OHCHR in defining challenges and opportunities of new technologies, making recommendations, and providing technical advice to developing countries. We strongly welcome cooperation amongst UN bodies and international standard-setting organizations, such as OHCHR and ITU. In light of the transversal nature of digital issues, we need a horizontal approach that brings together the technical and human rights communities. This is crucial to mainstream human rights and to avoid silos, duplication, and overlap.

### UN Women

A 2023 report on deep tech shows that pornography makes up 98% of all deep tech videos online, while 99% of victims targeted by deep tech pornography are women and girls. Deep techs are being widely distributed in many schools in the world as we speak and as reported in global media this past week. The urgent call to overcome the digital divide must be accompanied by targeted measures to increase efforts and deepen capacity to make of AI a human rights enabler, especially for women and girls that are disproportionately affected by harm and discrimination that occurs through the use of AI. Last year, the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) called on all stakeholders to mainstream gender considerations in all technology-related discussions. We would like to thank the government of France for operating gender as a

cross-cutting issue in the summit of AI next year. This year, the CSW held an interactive dialogue on AI which drew attention to the current AI architecture where benefits and risks are not equitably distributed as it reflects and amplifies social, cultural, and economic inequalities and gender stereotypes. As GDC negotiations are coming to an end, we stand ready to support its implementation by building on UN Women's work which provides concrete strategies and action to address the structural determinants of gender-based inequality in the digital age.

### World Health Organization

WHO is committed to working with multilateral stakeholders for Health for All enabled by artificial intelligence. Since last year, WHO has launched two important initiatives. The first is a global initiative on AI for Health. By amplifying the work with longstanding partnership with ITU and WIPO, this initiative has three pillars - enable, facilitate and implement - whose aims are (1) to enable countries to create good governance and use of AI through science-based policy guidance and standards; (2) to facilitate knowledge-sharing platforms among countries and partners; and (3) to provide support to countries in implementing a sustainable AI system to strengthen health systems and services. The second is a global initiative on digital health. As our colleagues from the World Bank have mentioned, it is also equally important to build foundations for national health systems enabled by digital technology. This is why WHO is working with countries to articulate the clear need for digital health investment along with development banks and donors to align and amplify resources. In line with the President's recommendation, WHO calls on partners and stakeholders to join the global initiative on AI for Health; invest in national AI policies; and strengthen the regulatory capacity for responsible AI deployment, while paying due consideration to human rights.

### Non-Governmental Organizations

(in alphabetical order)

#### Women at the Table

Women at the Table and the A+ Alliance for Inclusive Algorithms sound a loud alarm regarding algorithms wiring historic bias, inequality, and discrimination into our new economic governance and social systems, deeply entrenching inequalities at a global scale with extraordinary speed. Efforts to remove or more accurately suppress the algorithmic bias, because machine learning cannot unlearn bias, it can only be overwhelmed with more information. When successful, this happens only for one language, basically English. That means that lower resource languages, such as all the official languages of the United Nations, not to speak of Hindi, Swahili, Yoruba, Thai, will still have gendered roles being removed in real life, wired into new technology with old associations of gender, race, class, and caste embedded in the code, which amounts to the worst of an old world order being reasserted. Therefore, we recommend a mandate for use of algorithmic impact assessments that feature human rights impact assessment, both ex ante and post facto, the creation of new data sets that focus not only on quantity but on quality for public use with the UN leading construction. The public's right to know how AI systems that impact their lives has to be respected, along with the Human Rights Council's clear call for the right to know if algorithmic decisions have been made that affect an individual. This right includes continuous consent and contestability of these systems. Finally, the use of public procurement to jump-start new industries and expand definitions of what expertise is, so that social scientists and those with lived experience can influence the design and deployment of new technologies.

## World Jewish Congress

The rapid advancement of AI has brought both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, AI has the potential to revolutionize Holocaust education and remembrance, offering immersive experiences that preserve the memories of survivors like Inge Auerbacher. These technologies can also play a crucial role in combating anti-Semitism online by detecting and mitigating hate speech. However, we must also acknowledge the darker side, the misuse of AI for deepfake videos, biased algorithms, and targeted disinformation poses severe threats to Jewish communities worldwide. The digital divide exacerbates these dangers, leaving vulnerable populations exposed to misinformation and hate. A recent joint report by UNESCO and the World Jewish Congress warned that generative AI threatens Holocaust memory, and unless decisive action is taken to integrate ethical principles, AI could distort the historical record of the Holocaust and fuel anti-Semitism. All these have motivated the World Jewish Congress to launch the Institute for Technology and Human Rights, dedicated to harnessing technology for societal good. We focus on creating policies that ensure digital safety, counter online anti-Semitism, and bridge the digital divide, empowering Jewish communities through education and resilience-building initiatives. We urge the international community to take concerted action to ensure that the benefits of AI and technology are shared equitably, while robust safeguards are put in place to protect human rights. Together, we can harness the power of technology to build a more inclusive, safe, and respectful digital world for all.