



## **Statement to the First Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance**

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For the countries of the Global South, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is first and foremost a development issue. Persistent and widening global digital divides have left most developing and least-developed countries without the necessary capabilities to build, govern and benefit from AI. Rather, they risk entrenching dependence on external AI solutions, including technologies that are trained on their own national data.

Addressing this requires envisioning a global AI governance framework that is inclusive and facilitates benefit-sharing among all stakeholders. The governance of AI cannot be decided by a handful of large economies alone. It is a shared responsibility of the entire international community and all stakeholders. Any discussions on AI governance will be legitimate only if they enable the Global South to participate substantively and have an equal voice in the shaping of global AI policies, standards and governance frameworks.

As the most inclusive global platform, the UN should continue to anchor discussions on AI governance, while expanding collaboration among stakeholders for AI capacity-building. It should also seek to advance coherence and complementarities among the multiple AI-related processes currently underway in the fragmented global AI governance landscape.

There are specific actions that those assembled at this Dialogue can prioritise to ensure that AI is leveraged for supporting global peace, economic growth and sustainable development:

1. Data governance for AI training data must be strengthened, including through categorising such data as a sovereign resource. Developing countries should control how their national data is mined and benefit equitably from its use.
2. Access to financing for AI infrastructure in developing countries must be expanded, including through the establishment of the proposed Global Fund on AI.
3. AI capacity-building partnerships, including those based on South-South cooperation, should be enhanced.
4. Knowledge sharing and technology transfer in AI should be mandated and paired with capacity-building and technical assistance.

5. Open-source AI should be promoted as a means of enabling context-specific, localised applications that accommodate cultural and linguistic diversity, while preserving national sovereignty and avoiding lock-in to any single tech ecosystem.
6. Interoperability, not uniformity, must be a key objective of AI regulation, allowing each country to maximise benefits and address impacts, while preserving policy space for innovation and testing of governance approaches that address local conditions.
7. Developing and least developed countries should be enabled to participate substantively in setting AI standards, safety approaches and evaluation frameworks, ensuring that global AI governance reflects the needs, values and priorities of the Global South.

There is an urgent need to move from declarations of intent to measurable, financed, and auditable outcomes. Progress on the abovementioned priorities depends on effectively closing gaps in connectivity and infrastructure; in access to energy, compute resources and financing; in developing digital skills and literacy; and in building the institutional capabilities to test, evaluate and verify AI systems so that they can be directed towards sustainable development. Providing access to AI without building the capability to use it does not amount to inclusion.

It is also important to underscore that developing nations are facing unequal, differentiated and multidimensional impacts of AI on their workers, economies and societies. Addressing these impacts requires adopting proactive measures at all levels, including for developing digital skills, especially among youth, and supporting just transition and equitable sharing of AI's benefits with individuals and communities across the Global South.

In conclusion, we reiterate that global AI governance requires effective implementation of the Global Digital Compact through initiatives that are backed by financing and measurable progress. Enhancing international cooperation on AI with capacity-building for developing countries at its core will be key to building a future in which AI contributes to sustainable development and the well-being of all. The South Centre stands ready to contribute to this important effort.

Thank you.