



**Comments of the World Privacy Forum to the United Nations
Regarding its Scientific Panel on AI and Global Dialogue on AI Governance**

Sent via www.un.org/global-digital-compact/ai

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to the UN regarding its Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

The World Privacy Forum is a public interest research group that conducts research and analysis on complex data ecosystems and their governance, including AI, identity, and health ecosystems. WPF works extensively in the U.S., India, Africa, Asia and the EU. WPF has a 22-year history of publishing groundbreaking research and analysis regarding global governance as applied to complex information systems and technologies. See for example, our *Global Table of Data Protection and Governance Laws and Treaties*. See also our index of AI governance tools in *Risky Analysis: Assessing and Improving Global AI Governance Tools, An international review of AI Governance Tools and suggestions for pathways forward*. WPF was part of the original experts group that worked on the OECD AI Principles beginning in 2018, and we participated in the most recent update of the principles and key definitions. For additional information about our organization and work, please see <https://www.worldprivacyforum.org>.

Following please find our responses to the queries from the UN regarding the Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

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

The mandate of the Scientific Panel on AI should be the following:

- Set a non-political research agenda that is neutral as to jurisdiction and comprehensive in its incorporation of regional expertise while at the same time acknowledging the importance of understanding and respecting regional, national, and subnational contextual distinctions, including socio-cultural-technical differences;

- Ensure that aspects of AI are investigated with breadth across differing jurisdictions and sectors, and produce factual updates and reports on the findings;
- Ensure that indigenous expertise and techniques are incorporated, including unique socio-technical approaches (example, the Aotearoa New Zealand Algorithm Charter followed by the 29 January 2025 non-binding AI Framework, which includes considerations for Indigenous Peoples);
- Ensure that a balance of stakeholders are consulted as to developments and topics of interest, including civil society, academia, practitioners from industry and government, researchers, and end users.

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

- Regional and subregional representation should be distributed evenly utilizing the UN/ISO M49 standard (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>). Inclusion of all regions is essential.
- The World Privacy Forum has published extensive research on the data governance landscape for all M49 jurisdictions. In our research, we found that the small island developing states are most likely to be left out of policy efforts and lag behind larger regional jurisdictions in many indicators, including governance and technology. See: *Global Table of Countries with Data Privacy Laws, Treaties, or Conventions*, World Privacy Forum, 2024. <https://www.worldprivacyforum.org/2024/06/countries-with-data-privacy-laws/> . Select the "small island developing states" filter.
- In terms of composition beyond regional representation, gender parity is essential and we encourage every effort to ensure women are equally and robustly represented on the panel.
- In terms of composition of expertise, there needs to be expertise regarding the implementation layer of AI, not just the development layer. For example, people who have technical and policy expertise in metrology regarding AI governance and AI governance tools.

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

- We urge that the national Human Rights Commissions have a vote in this process, as well as the National Academies of Science within the regions or jurisdictions. Consultation with National Statistical Organizations is also important as key data actors in most jurisdictions,

IV. What types of evidence-based impact, risk and opportunity assessments should it deliver, and with what frequency?

- Our research indicates that AI governance tools are essential, but that these tools lack standards and lack consistent metrics by which their effectiveness can be measured. The AI governance tools that are being seen as key for testing AI systems for fairness and other aspects of trustworthy AI may in fact be very faulty tools that are not able to fulfill their intended purpose, thus creating false assurances where there are faulty tools. See: *Risky Analysis Assessing and Improving AI Governance Tools, An international review of AI Governance Tools and suggestions for pathways forward*, World Privacy Forum, 2023: <https://www.worldprivacyforum.org/2023/12/new-report-risky-analysis-assessing-and-improving-ai-governance-tools/> .

- Providing baseline guidance for assessing the effectiveness and utility of AI governance tools is therefore an important starting point, and making recommendations as to how AI governance tools can be made more reliable, trustworthy, and set to UN or UN/ISO standards will become increasingly important.
- UNESCO's work on AI Impact Assessments is excellent and should continue and be strengthened.
- We are very interested in seeing more focus on regional impact assessments and case studies that are technical in nature; it would be very helpful if the scientific panel could develop an assessment tool that accomplishes this.

V. On the Dialogue:

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

- To ensure that the grass roots of each subregion, jurisdiction, or subnational area are being heard from in a meaningful way, and that this feedback is meaningfully incorporated.
- Prominent experts in AI are often utilized to stand in for representation of a region. While this is a very understandable, too often the end result -- albeit unintended -- is that unknown and unsung experts working in the trenches of jurisdictions are not heard from. They may not be aware of UN processes, or may not have extra money or time to engage. It is essential to capture these often unheard voices. The question we have for the UN is: how can the UN find and ensure that a wide variety of people working across many aspects of AI have a voice? People who are not prominent experts -- how can they be routinely included?
- AI is cyclical, and the cycles are rapid. This poses a challenge. We propose that instead of always being in response mode to cycles, that the panel work from case studies on the ground and move from a reality-factual basis. In this way the work that most needs to be accomplished can be accomplished without distractions of running after policy for the latest AI advancement to the exclusion of other needs that may come from a different development agenda.
- For example, in Mozambique, health datasets for AI is a high priority. This is solid work and a solid case study with solutions for building such datasets that can be employed for others with similar needs. In other jurisdictions, the priority may in fact be agentic AI. This case study could also be explored and utilized for those that begin to encounter the issue, or want to prepare for it. But the Global Dialogue should not follow the trends to the exclusion of other items from across the development agenda or the dialogue will only be useful to the wealthiest economies.

VI. What types of outcomes should it achieve?

- AI will impact a substantial and increasing percentage of people in myriad ways. The dialogue should achieve an outcome of robust input of a breadth of voices from technical experts to government experts to civil society to students to people working to upskill at home. Thus far, no multilateral has achieved this goal.
- We very much would like to see a mapping of where countries are - not by numbers of NVIDIA chips present in the jurisdiction, but by assessment of skills, AI readiness, AI impacts in that jurisdiction, as well as many local case studies. We refer you to the AI governance case studies we have been working on: If there were a profusion of such work, we would

have a much better idea of policy and technical needs at the subnational and national levels, and we would have a better working knowledge shared among stakeholders of what is working and where additional work is needed.

- See WPF's work on this:
 - *AI Governance on the Ground: Chile's Social Security and Medical Insurance Agency Grapples with Balancing New Responsible AI Criteria and Vendor Cost*, November 2024 <https://www.worldprivacyforum.org/2024/11/ai-governance-on-the-ground-chiles-social-security-and-medical-insurance-agency-grapples-with-balancing-new-responsible-ai-criteria-and-vendor-cost/>
 - *AI Governance on the Ground: Canada's Algorithmic Impact Assessment Process and Algorithm has evolved*, <https://www.worldprivacyforum.org/2024/08/ai-governance-on-the-ground-series-canada/>
 - *Privacy on the Ground Podcast Series 1, Indigenous Data Leaders* <https://www.worldprivacyforum.org/2024/09/privacy-on-the-ground-podcast-series-one-indigenous-data-leaders/>

VII. What should be the format of the Dialogue?

- We encourage smaller and inclusive sub-dialogues to be held at regional through subnational levels, dispersed evenly.
- Please ensure gender and other parities are well-attended to.

VIII. Any additional comments?

- We have considerable concern about AI becoming primarily developed and governed by the elite of this world, thus potentially exacerbating inequities, particularly among those living in poverty. WPF now has many years of research experience in the field in developing jurisdictions, including in India, Africa, developing sections of Asia, as well as developed jurisdictions. We believe that it is not yet too late to ensure that every jurisdiction has a seat at the table when it comes to AI. The UN has an important role to play in ensuring that the full range of jurisdictional contexts and their peoples have their unique contexts and needs taken into consideration in how the governance of AI is effectuated. WPF stands ready to support these efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Dixon
Founder and Executive Director,
World Privacy Forum
www.worldprivacyforum.org