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UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS

Remarks

IGF 2024 Global Youth Summit

“AI in education: intergenerational cooperation for responsible digital future”

15 December 2024, 14:45-16:15

Workshop Room VII

Young people from around the world,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you at the IGF 2024 Global Youth Summit.

Your decision to focus this Summit on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on education is both vital and encouraging. It reflects your awareness of the transformative challenges and opportunities shaping our future.

It is equally encouraging to see decision-makers investing in collaboration with your voices, recognizing the critical role you play.

I am truly inspired by the remarkable leadership and spirit of cooperation that you have demonstrated through the IGF Youth Track.

The IGF Youth Track has enabled invaluable cross-regional dialogue and learning.

Along with this Global Youth Summit, the Youth Track sends a powerful message to the world.

You have made clear that uniting across generations is essential.

Only together can we meaningfully address the issues reshaping the foundations of our societies.

As we come together today to address the impact of AI on education, let us remember that education is a fundamental human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration.

It is our shared responsibility to ensure that AI supports this right , rather than undermine it.

AI-driven innovation holds the potential to help us avert a dire scenario where an estimated 84 million children remain out of school.

Good practices are around us. For example, in Morocco, AI is helping to reduce learning disparities in rural areas; in France, it enables visually impaired students to read by converting digital information into haptic feedback; in Brazil, AI-powered natural language processing is improving literacy; in India, AI-driven voice-assisted education tools are fostering language inclusion; and in the UK, AI is being used to convert complex documents into easy-to-read formats in over 70 languages, enhancing accessibility for learners with diverse needs.

However, these opportunities remain out of reach for many, as over 2,6 billion people are not even connected to the Internet. Adding to this challenge is the absence of robust governance frameworks to ensure that this technology respects human rights, and is both safe and secure.

This brings us to question: how do we achieve good AI governance?

The United Nations is committed to this cause. The recently adopted Global Digital Compact calls for action to foster international partnerships that enhance AI capacity-building, focusing on education and training programs, and expanding access to open AI models, systems, and training data, directly contributing to achieving SDG 4 on quality education.

I trust that today's summit, as a platform for multistakeholder, intergenerational dialogue, will help us find a path toward AI that is guided by ethical principles—one that guarantees every individual access to quality education, regardless of their background.

Thank you.