

Proposal for an IGF 2024 Policy Network

1. Title

Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence (PNAI)

2. Description

This 2024 Policy Network on AI (PNAI) proposal builds on the Network's work completed in 2023. The genesis of the PNAI arises from the discussions held at the UN IGF 2022 main session on Addressing Advanced Technologies, including Artificial Intelligence. The draft Addis Messages concluded that the *"IGF could be used as a platform for developing cooperation mechanisms on artificial intelligence (AI). A policy network on artificial intelligence could be considered for the upcoming work streams in order to review the implementation of different principles with appropriate tools and metrics."*

The IGF Messages further described important aspects that should be addressed at the global level and in a multistakeholder format, including:

- The development of representative and inclusive global standards will require the participation of the Global South and inputs from regional initiatives, as a means to tackle regional inequalities in how AI is conceived, developed and deployed.
- AI should be genuinely human-centred and environmentally protective by design, embodying all voices and used responsibly, with a commitment to fairness, accountability, transparency, trustworthiness, equity and respect for all forms of being.
- Upholding the rights of historically marginalised groups and individuals is fundamental to hinder the deepening of inequalities, now through automated means.
- Stakeholder collaboration is necessary as societies grapple with managing AI deployment and the rapid evolution of machine learning.

With that in mind, the Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence (PNAI) was formed with stakeholders from different fields and regions of the world. Its goal has been, from the very start, to become the institutional home for global policy research, debate and recommendation-making to address AI governance, policy responses and related aspects of data governance. Its main objective has been to do so in a way that is inclusive of voices that are usually marginalised from AI policy debates.

The PNAI has also built on the IGF's global reach and its leadership in convening a multistakeholder platform for open and inclusive policy discussions on Internet governance and digital policy matters. Further, it is also an effort to respond to the call of the UN Secretary-General in his "Our Common Agenda" report for a Global Digital Compact (GDC) to address, among other things, "Advanced Technologies, including AI".

The results of PNAI's work during 2023 were presented in its first report, titled *"Strengthening multistakeholder approach to global AI governance, protecting the environment and human rights in the era of generative AI"*, which includes three thematic topics: (i) interoperability of AI governance; (ii) race and gender inclusion; and (iii) governing AI for a just twin transition. The report explicitly focused on AI and related aspects of data

governance issues concerning the Global South, in continuation of the recommendations brought forth during the IGFs 2022 and 2023.

The Report results were presented and discussed during one of the main sessions at the IGF 2023 in Kyoto, Japan, which was called “Global AI governance & questions of interoperability, gender, race and environment: How to translate recommendations into action?”. The Policy Network’s work and the results of the report were reflected positively during the session by the speakers, who stressed the importance of PNAI as a multistakeholder platform in global AI governance. Participants also praised its capacity to respond to the needs and voices of diverse stakeholders, especially from the Global South, as well as to facilitate sustainable AI development and capacity building.

PNAI’s working spirit and commitment to a multi-stakeholder approach were also highly appreciated during the session, as expressed by Prateek Sibal, the panel’s moderator: “The working group of PNAI was formed in the true spirit of multi-stakeholderism at the IGF, and they collaborated closely to draft this first report. This approach ensures diverse perspectives and expertise are considered in shaping the policies and governance frameworks related to AI”.¹ Finally, there was a consensus that the PNAI’s work should continue, and participants provided recommendations on what topics it should focus on during 2024.

Beyond the panel, the importance of global cooperation in AI policy, a theme which is at the core of PNAI’s work, was also stated in the IGF 2023 Kyoto’s Messages:

“We can only realise AI’s potential to benefit everyone through collective global efforts that draw on the wide range of views of policymakers, technologists, investors, businesses, civil society, and academia from all countries and regions. High-level global governance dialogues and curated expert groups need to be balanced with inclusive dialogues that are open to all.

Collaboration between global AI policy and governance fora and initiatives is needed to prevent fragmentation of efforts and inconsistent policy approaches. Developing and sharing best practices will be important and must include perspectives from the Global South.

Multistakeholder consideration of digital governance and the data-driven digital economy should not be confined to experts but should find ways to engage and build on the experience of all people. An inclusive approach would ensure that diverse perspectives contribute to shaping policies that affect the broader population.

(...)

Concerted effort should be put into translating AI principles into actionable measures and effective implementation. Our efforts to operationalise globally shared values should be flexible enough for measures to be readily adaptable to diverse local and cultural contexts.

AI standards, guidelines, self-assessment mechanisms and codes of conduct are important, and regulation is also necessary for effective AI government (*sic*).”

After the IGF, an initial consultation was conducted amongst PNAI members in October 2023, whereby members expressed their support and commitment to continue PNAI’s work

¹Prateek Sibal (Programme Specialist, UNESCO) (2023) The Report of the PNAI Main Session at IGF 2023. <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2023-policy-network-on-artificial-intelligence>

in 2024. Among other AI governance topics discussed by the group, three areas were identified as key for the PNAI to focus on during its next cycle:

1. AI governance with a focus on regulation interoperability
2. Environmental Sustainability and the AI value chain
3. Labour issues within AI's life cycle

The PNAI will expand the momentum gained in the 2023 Report, including the continuity of the previous report's thematic investigation of AI policy and related aspects of data governance. As a critical component for responsible AI, data governance will remain a cross-cutting underlying theme in the aforementioned areas to highlight that a strong data foundation is critical for the success of responsible AI implementations²³ and to mitigate associated risks.

Furthermore, the PNAI will also focus on the environmental sustainability aspect of AI to ensure the environmental sustainability of these systems, especially considering the intense consumption of natural resources along their life cycle.

Finally, advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) will also remain at the forefront of the PNAI's work. This means upholding a human rights-based perspective, especially related to gender, race, disabilities, and other historically marginalised communities.

3. Connection to the IGF and other IG processes

Over the past years, the IGF has explored various aspects of AI and its relation with data governance. This included AI deployment within social media platforms, including for content moderation purposes, and related risks of manipulation, deception and mis- and disinformation. Further, issues such as transparency needs related to algorithmic systems, as well as compliance with principles of rule of law, human rights, democratic values and diversity in the governance of AI, have also been extensively addressed.

Similarly, there is a plethora of AI governance frameworks and regulation proposals around the globe, and many organisations, governmental or not, continue to strive to make sense of them and develop interventions. These works have also been under the spotlight in many of the IGF's discussions and of other internet governance fora around the world.

The PNAI aims to continue building on previous discussions, policy discourses, and the breadth of knowledge on this topic that has been accumulated by the IGF community, and thus develop a systematic approach and framework as a base for focused conversations. This work also aims to facilitate more inclusive multilateral AI governance through a bottom-up approach.

² Zuiderwijk, A., Chen, Y. C., & Salem, F. (2021). Implications of the use of artificial intelligence in public governance: A systematic literature review and a research agenda. *Government Information Quarterly*, 38(3), 101577: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740624X21000137>

³ UNU (2023). *The Use of Synthetic Data to Train AI Models: Opportunities and Risks for Sustainable Development*
<https://unu.edu/publication/use-synthetic-data-train-ai-models-opportunities-and-risks-sustainable-development>

The PNAI community also acknowledges the Secretary-General's recent calls for the multistakeholder community to provide input and advice aimed at addressing the impacts of advanced technologies, including AI, with the view of incorporating such contributions in a GDC to be agreed at the Summit of the Future in 2024. Being an open, multistakeholder forum, the PNAI is in a privileged position to collect, analyse and share the global community's input and proposals to inform this process. It also aims to provide input to the work of the Multistakeholder High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence and the implementation of *Our Common Agenda*, as outlined by the UN Secretary-General.

4. Planned deliverables

For its second year (2024), the PNAI will build upon its first year of work while adding new dimensions to the discussions, as agreed by its members during the aforementioned October 2023 consultation. The community thus proposes to develop the following outputs:

1. A policy report that assesses best practices, ethical principles and actionable measures to be considered in regulatory frameworks that address AI's design, development, deployment and disposal and that provides recommendations for their implementation. The report will also provide critical inputs that could be fed into the UN's GDC process and the work of the Multistakeholder High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence.

The policy report's focus will be on the following topics:

- AI governance with a focus on regulation interoperability
 - Environmental Sustainability and the AI value chain
 - Labour issues within AI's life cycle
2. A series of webinars on the PNAI's working topics as a way to foster discussion and encourage input from the community.

5. Engagement and outreach plan Based on the above, the PNAI community proposes to carry out its work in the following ways:

- Encourage widespread participation from all stakeholder groups through focused invitations at the outset of the process. Special attention will be given to promoting the participation of representatives from the Global South, including through specific open calls and invitations made to organisations from the region and non-English speaking communities. This will focus on:
 - Creating a multi-stakeholder steering group including representatives of the proposing organisations and other relevant institutions, especially from the Global South, to form a balanced group based on stakeholder sector, geography, gender, and ethnicity.
 - Creating a broad network of contributors, including from the supporting organisations, their communities, and partners; organisations from the IGF community who have previously worked/presented on these topics; academics, researchers, and think tanks who have published on these topics, as well as representatives from governments, industry and academia. This broader network would act as the primary community for input to the PN's work, but also as multipliers to the PN's outputs.
- Cooperate with other actors and groups interested in the same area with special focus on UN agencies and collaborating organisations

- Leverage the extensive network of NRIs and DCs to increase participation from experts, especially in LDCs and SIDS
- Present progress of the work at key junctions of the IGF 2024 cycle and at the 2024 IGF annual meeting;
- Share learnings and progress at relevant conferences and other thematic events outside of the IGF.

The United Nations Internet Governance Forum's Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence represents a pivotal space to gather the voices of experts from the most diverse backgrounds with the common mission to contribute to the AI policy debate in a manner that is inclusive, multistakeholder and sensitive to the challenges faced by historically marginalised groups.

Continuing the work initiated by the PNAI in 2023 is key to pushing this objective forward, and the fact that the capacity of the PNAI to accomplish such a goal with excellence has been recognised within the IGF 2023 is representative of how the Network's contribution to the global AI policy debate is crucial to promote representativity.

In this sense, the PNAI Community cordially presents this proposal to the consideration of the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group, from which the Network also welcomes potential suggestions for its work.

ANNEX - List of contributors

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