



Artificial intelligence governance to reinforce the 2030 Agenda and leave no one behind*

Summary

Artificial intelligence has a multitude of potential benefits, but there are also numerous challenges, risks and ethical concerns linked to its use. Governments have a particularly important role to play in governance of the technology, both as regulators and users. Together with the relevant entities and forums of the United Nations system and others engaged in the global dialogue on this issue, governments can usefully identify guiding principles and policy priorities for the regulation and use of artificial intelligence by the public sector so that the diffusion of the technology reinforces implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and leaves no one behind.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the Council:

Reiterate that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has both accelerated the digital transition and revealed technological weaknesses of public administrations while exacerbating inequalities caused by digital divides, and *encourage* Governments to manage digitalization of public services in an inclusive, fair, ethical and people-centred manner, while accelerating efforts to bridge digital divides, inter alia, through hybrid models of public service delivery (Paragraph 16).

Recognize that Governments play a central role in ensuring equal access to the benefits of digital technology and preventing harm, and *underscore* the need for Governments, in collaboration with the relevant entities and forums of the United Nations system, to identify guiding principles and policy priorities for the regulation and use of artificial intelligence by the public sector so that the diffusion of the technology reinforces implementation of the 2030 Agenda and leaves no one behind (Paragraph 17).

► See [ECOSOC resolution 2024/L.14](#)

* Excerpt from Committee of Experts on Public Administration, Report on the twenty-third session. See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2024, Supplement No. 24 ([E/2024/44-E/C.16/2024/9](#))

Discussion

Artificial intelligence governance to reinforce the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and leave no one behind

Governments have a role in the regulation and use of artificial intelligence in the private sector, the public sector and society, taking into account its potential to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the need to mitigate potential risks. To unlock its transformative power, well-designed governance frameworks are essential.

Traditional and generative artificial intelligence are two distinct forms of the technology. Traditional artificial intelligence excels in efficiency, interpretability and specific task-solving while the advantages of generative artificial intelligence lie in creativity, the handling of uncertainty and novel applications. Both approaches have their strengths and limitations, and their future holds tremendous potential for groundbreaking advancements.

Use of artificial intelligence in the public sector

The integration of artificial intelligence into the public sector holds immense promise for enhancing decision-making and service delivery. For example, by leveraging artificial intelligence capabilities, governments can help to mitigate biases and enhance efficiency in education, taxation and other critical functions. As systems are deployed to support government functions, however, attention must be paid to questions of ethics and potential bias in algorithmic decision-making. Careful consideration is also imperative when employing artificial intelligence for surveillance to safeguard privacy and security and prevent misuse such as racial profiling.

to mitigate the risk of discriminatory practices and uphold the principles of fairness and equity. The use of artificial intelligence in the public sector therefore calls for a robust framework of accountability across diverse sectors, as well as for transparency and oversight mechanisms to ensure that artificial intelligence-driven processes align with societal values and respect fundamental rights. It is essential to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to exchange insights and lessons learned, thereby advancing the responsible use of artificial intelligence as a common good and as a tool to augment human expertise rather than replace it in policy development and service delivery.

Ensuring that artificial intelligence tools respect fundamental rights and ethical principles is essential

Elements of artificial intelligence governance

Artificial intelligence governance should comprise a legal framework to ensure that artificial intelligence technologies are researched and developed with the goal of helping humanity to navigate the adoption and use of these systems in ethical and responsible ways. Artificial intelligence governance should be

intended to close the gap between accountability, transparency, ethics and integrity in technological advancement.

Governments serve dual roles as both regulators and users of artificial intelligence, holding significant responsibility in establishing robust safeguards and

guardrails for privacy, security and ethical artificial intelligence use. Leading by example, they not only set standards, but also gain valuable insights into effective regulation through their own use of the technology. In addition, artificial intelligence governance must prioritize the focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals while ensuring equitable benefits for all and avoiding exacerbating inequalities. Capacity-building for developing countries is crucial to avoid them being left behind.

Risks and challenges

Artificial intelligence systems carry inherent risks and challenges that warrant attention, such as biases that can perpetuate inequalities and discrimination if fairness is not central to their development and implementation. Equally significant are data security and privacy concerns, the environmental impact of large data centres and the imperative of robust data governance. In addition, the lack of quality data, in particular for underrepresented groups, further compounds those challenges, highlighting the need for comprehensive data management practices.

The evolving landscape of artificial intelligence also raises pertinent issues relating to the workforce, including potential job displacement and the emergence of skills gaps. Addressing those challenges necessitates proactive measures, such as workforce retraining to mitigate the risk of deepening digital disparities. Moreover, ensuring transparency and interpretability in artificial intelligence decision-making processes is essential

Relevance of ongoing global dialogue

The Committee notes that the year 2024 can be pivotal for efforts to promote a fairer distribution of the benefits of artificial intelligence, with greater inclusion of vulnerable groups and developing countries. Intergenerational equity also needs to be

Multistakeholder involvement is essential for the effective shaping of artificial intelligence governance. Governments, civil society, the private sector and academia all need to be engaged in an active dialogue in the development and implementation of artificial intelligence governance frameworks. Regular dialogue and review mechanisms should be established to facilitate continuous evaluation of such frameworks. This iterative process is crucial to adapt to the evolving technology landscape and address emerging challenges effectively.

for upholding public trust and fostering accountability. An overdependence on technology and potential loss of traditional skills further underscores the importance of balancing technological advancements with the preservation of essential human capabilities.

The misuse of artificial intelligence poses serious ethical and societal concerns, potentially leading to human rights violations, undermining democratic principles and exacerbating income inequalities. The dominance of big technology companies in artificial intelligence development and its impact on geopolitics necessitate careful consideration and regulatory oversight to ensure the equitable access and utilization of artificial intelligence resources. In addition, governments should remain cognizant of risks associated with artificial intelligence systems that can act independently of their human developers, especially as they relate to potential uses in warfare and fragile contexts, as underscored at various artificial intelligence safety summits.

considered to ensure that artificial intelligence benefits everyone.

A global dialogue should continue to be fostered to build the evidence base required to regulate

artificial intelligence and ensure that it is aligned with shared global values, contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and leaves no one behind. The Committee also notes the relevance of ongoing efforts by governments, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to address governance issues, including the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 78/265 in March 2024 and the formulation of a global digital compact to be agreed upon at the Summit of the Future in 2024.

The Group of 20 presidency of Brazil in 2024 presents another opportunity to further the global agenda for a just digital transition and responsible use of artificial intelligence in favour of greater social inclusion and the reduction in inequality between and within countries. The Group of Seven presidency of Italy, with the support of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, also underscores the importance of promoting the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the public sector.

You can access the CEPA working group page for more information [here](#).