The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law

Resolution adopted unanimously by the 149th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 17 October 2024)

The 149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Reaffirming international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, and *recalling* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recognizing that rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) may provide significant opportunities and challenges for humanity, with impacts, including on human rights, experienced differently between nations,

Acknowledging that greater knowledge and understanding of AI systems is a prerequisite for informed debate and decision-making, including the following considerations:

   a.   ongoing initiatives that call for a balanced, inclusive and risk-based approach to the governance of AI, as a means to achieve an open, sustainable, fair, free and secure future for all,
   b.   the methods by which AI systems are trained and deployed, which have the potential to entrench existing societal prejudices, discrimination, biases and inequalities, both within developing countries as well as between developing and more developed countries,
   c.   the ways in which AI can facilitate the spread of false or misleading information, discrimination, and extremism leading to misinformation, disinformation, distrust and online violence, as well as AI-facilitated gender-based violence against women, including women serving in politics, all of which undermines the credibility of democratic institutions and actors, posing significant challenges to public discourse and societal trust,

Noting that advances in AI have impacts on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, including by facilitating the spread of misinformation and disinformation which can undermine democratic institutions, incite extremism and violate personal rights to privacy and data ownership, all of which may disproportionately affect children, women and girls, as well as disabled persons,

Aware that, at the same time, AI technologies, if developed and harnessed in a responsible manner and made available to all, can have a positive impact on democracy, including through increasing the accountability and transparency of public institutions, and facilitating citizens' engagement in political processes,

Highlighting the risk of AI widening economic inequalities on a global scale,

Acknowledging that an inclusive, responsible, human-centric and evidence-based approach to setting rules that mitigate risks pertaining to the creation, development, deployment and use of AI technologies is required in order to ensure equitable policy outcomes for the entire world, including the Global South and countries which may face unique challenges caused by disparities in keeping up with the rapid pace of AI development and deployment,

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Stressing that, in the absence of gender-balanced perspectives, data and decision-making, AI technologies, in particular generative AI, can create, perpetuate and amplify gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination and violence,

Noting that AI-generated deepfake material can negatively impact all women, and that for women in politics, these impacts often have the effect of silencing and excluding them from public and political life,

Concerned by the lack of comprehensive legislation, regulations and a globally agreed upon framework for the responsible creation, deployment and use of AI technology, and by the slow pace of the global community in developing these rules, and *underlining* the need for transparency and respect for democratic values in AI development,

Acknowledging the importance of regulating AI without constraining the emergence of responsibly developed and managed innovations that positively benefit humanity,

Alarmed that big technology companies have lobbied extensively to influence and set rules that may primarily benefit them, and to assert their control over training data sets and thus the technological development of AI for the foreseeable future to the detriment of the global community and the preservation of individual rights, including through the manipulation of personal data, unethical business marketing, non-socially responsible behaviour and algorithmic biases that reinforce existing inequalities and discrimination,

Noting that countries may already have existing legislation and regulations that could be adapted to meet emerging challenges and opportunities relating to AI, and that the principle of national sovereignty should be recognized in any initiative to regulate AI,

Noting also numerous international and regional initiatives to develop ethical standards and governance frameworks for AI, and that any such initiatives should employ a multi-stakeholder approach that guarantees a broad consensus across the global community,

Applauding the welcome efforts of key international organizations to assist parliamentarians and other actors in developing regulatory frameworks and policies,

1. *Calls for* increased international multi-stakeholder cooperation, collaboration, and exchange of information and experiences to ensure a united worldwide effort to maximize the benefits of AI, while mitigating risks to humanity, including through initiatives designed to reduce disparities in technological development between nations;

2. *Calls for* urgent measures to bridge the divides among and within countries in terms of digital infrastructure, connectivity and skills, including by removing digital gender barriers and scaling up international digital cooperation, as a precondition for equitable and inclusive access to AI benefits for all;

3. *Insists* on the inclusion of perspectives from, and the equal participation of, all countries of the world in debates on AI standards, frameworks and other governance mechanisms, while emphasizing the need for the active presence of the Global South;

4. *Calls upon* parliaments to effectively and transparently adopt or maintain strong legal frameworks and policies for the responsible creation, deployment and use of AI technology, and to contribute to efforts to establish global standards and frameworks;

5. *Recommends* that these legal frameworks set out requirements for transparency and information in the implementation of AI systems, affirm the accountability of the public and private entities who use them, and provide recourse for victims whose rights are violated by AI technology;

6.   *Invites* parliaments, in cooperation with civil society groups, academia and research groups, to give priority to reviewing existing legislation and regulations to ensure that advances in AI technology do not result in loopholes in existing protections for democracy, human rights, the rule of law and State sovereignty;

7.   *Urges* parliaments to prioritize the prevention and elimination of, and response to, all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination generated or facilitated by AI, including better content moderation, accessible and effective reporting mechanisms and the establishment of procedures to remove illegal content;

8.   *Calls on* parliaments, with a view to enhancing gender mainstreaming in the development of AI, to promote legislation and policies aimed at enabling and increasing girls' and women's access to education, careers and leadership in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

9.   *Invites* parliaments to ensure that advances in AI do not result in the perpetuation of discrimination stemming from biases present in training data and algorithms;

10.   *Urges* legislative action to prevent the creation and distribution of deepfake intimate images, recognizing that most of such content is pornographic in nature and disproportionally targets women and girls, as well to as to prevent the distribution of other AI-generated content that propagates hate speech or incites violence, including gender-based violence;

11.   *Calls for* the development, deployment and accessibility of new and existing tools to help people verify the provenance and authenticity of AI-generated images and content, to protect data privacy, and to prevent the misuse of personal information and data;

12.   *Calls upon* parliaments to promote AI systems that advance, protect and preserve linguistic and cultural diversity, taking into account multilingualism in their training data and throughout the life cycle of the AI system;

13.   *Urges* parliaments to place a high priority on debates related to AI and to ensure their policy responses evolve in line with advances in AI technology, so as to ensure these responses are conducive to the well-being of humanity and the principles of sustainable development;

14.   *Calls on* parliaments to strengthen their capacity to proactively address rapid technological developments, particularly in the AI field, including through: training programmes for members of parliament and staff; the establishment of specialized bodies; innovative formats for policy dialogues with the technical and academic communities, the private sector and all other stakeholders; and platforms for enhanced inter-parliamentary cooperation and sharing knowledge, good practices and solutions related to AI;

15.   *Calls for* the development of effective strategies to address the impact of AI on the labour market, including education, training and measures to mitigate the effects of automation on specific job sectors and to provide support to affected individuals;

16.   *Urges* parliaments to cooperate with their governments in raising the awareness of citizens on the impact of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

17.   *Calls for* increased and ongoing education and capacity-building on the uses and risks of AI, including for parliamentarians, to keep pace with quickly evolving technological developments;

18.   *Calls upon* parliaments to accelerate efforts to tackle information privacy violations caused by the use of unacceptable AI practices, such as AI-enabled surveillance and biometric categorization technology in unwarranted political surveillance and personal data collection, which threatens citizens' fundamental rights and individual freedoms, thereby weakening democracy and the rule of law;

19. *Urges* parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to advocate against international decoupling of data sets and AI models in order to prevent censorship and the walling in of individual systems, and to make AI as inclusive, culturally open and nuanced as possible;

20. *Notes* the need for independent research on AI, guided by high ethical standards;

21. *Calls for* the promotion of sustainable research and development in the field of AI, encompassing innovations designed to address global challenges related to human rights, particularly in the areas of epidemic prevention, public health enhancement, educational development and climate change mitigation;

22. *Urges* the enhancement of transparency and accountability in the deployment of AI by establishing standards that require companies to disclose their data usage and decision-making processes involved in AI applications;

23. *Calls for* the development of specific cybersecurity standards for AI to safeguard systems against cyberattacks and bolster the security of personal and sensitive data;

24. *Invites* the Inter-Parliamentary Union, given the crucial role of parliaments in achieving internationally agreed AI commitments, to explore modalities of providing a parliamentary input to AI-related processes at multilateral organizations;

25. *Urges* parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to continue to focus attention on the responsible development, deployment and use of AI, including through capacity-building initiatives and establishing linkages with relevant global initiatives, as a critical goal of their work.