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YOUTH PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UN'S HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY BOARD ON AI

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YOUTH PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UN'S HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY BOARD ON AI

The SPRING Group
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2. Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a uniquely global issue that affects stakeholders around the world in some capacity. In today's digital era, scientific research is being transformed by AI modeling in every field, governments are investing in AI for benign and harmful reasons from simplifying routine citizen processes to establishing dangerous surveillance mechanisms. Multinational tech companies are racing to establish profitable moats in AI fields ranging from autonomous vehicles to generative AI.

In this cacophony of competing stakeholders and interest groups, harmful and unethical practices slip through the cracks, creating concerns over human rights, privacy, and sustainability. AI datasets often rely on crowdfunded labor exploiting low-income workers around the world to manually label and create the data that AI trains on, treating workers like machines. Rapid advancement of AI risks harmful tools falling into the wrong hands.

The solution is a global framework and body that can cooperate on AI. The United Nations seeks to establish a multi-stakeholder High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence to build capacity for developing AI, leverage AI to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and address the lack of representation in global discussions.

One non-represented stakeholder stands out to us: the youth.

In the discourse on AI, it is all too easy to ignore the youngest generation for the most influential stakeholders: the proposed advisory body in question, after all, ***only invites experts in fields of governing AI from government, industry, academic, and civil society backgrounds***. This ignores the millions of youth around the world actively engaging as researchers and academics, as changemakers in civil society, and as students learning and using AI; *regardless of lived experience, the expertise and backgrounds required* ***shuts them out***.

In sum: we, the people who have grown up with technology, have no voice in how it affects us.

In this brief, we call for the explicit representation of youth stakeholder groups from around the world through the formation of a similar youth group on AI. We believe that the youth have perspectives that they can offer on issues that the youngest generation currently faces and future generations will face. These issues range from youth data privacy to best approaches to educate youth on AI ethics and use to bridge the widening digital divide. In our perspective, this is the *best way* that the UN can integrate the voices of the youngest generation, and all future generations unable to advocate for themselves.

3. Introduction

3.1 Why is AI Needed?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the field of computer science dedicated to creating systems that can perform tasks that typically require human cognitive functions such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving. Systems achieve this by processing large volumes of data, often using machine learning algorithms, to make predictions, automate tasks, and improve decision-making.

Throughout the past few decades, the ascent of AI has been driven by exponential growth in computational power and the proliferation of big data. Machine learning techniques have enabled AI systems to excel in tasks such as image and speech recognition, natural language processing, and reading comprehension (Figure 1). This progress has not only led to more accurate predictions and automation, but also sparked a surge in AI-driven innovations. As AI continues to develop, it poses exciting opportunities and ethical challenges. The global youth are affected by AI's formation today, but require empowerment and authority so they can become the agents of change for tomorrow.

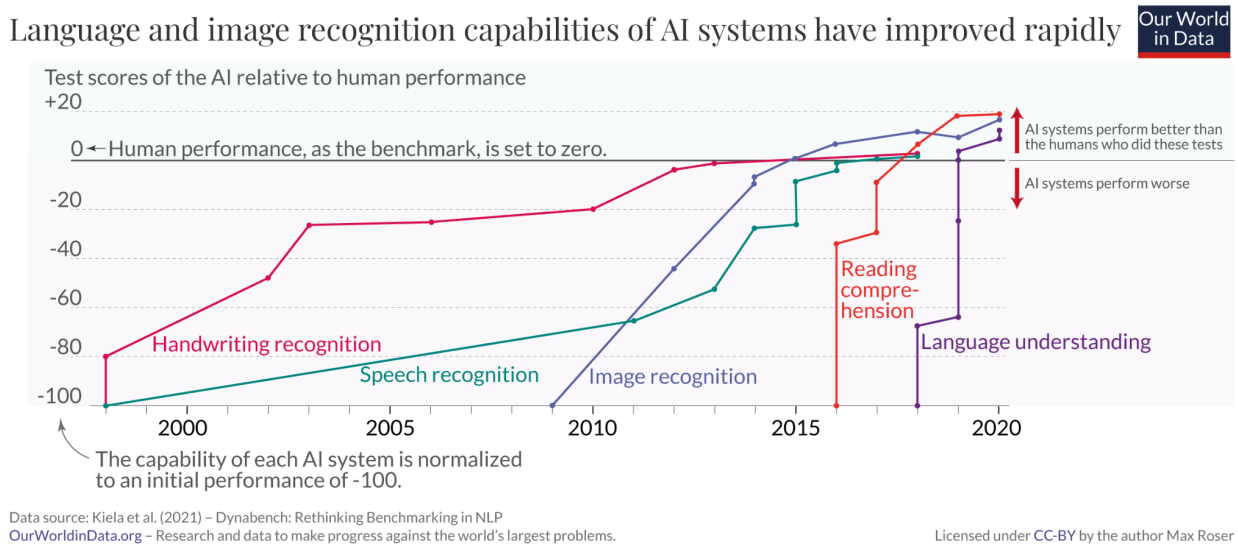

Figure 1. Progression of AI Systems between 2000 and 2020[1]

[1] Roser, 2022

3.2 Technical Timeline

Beginning in 2014, deep learning gained traction, paving the way for remarkable breakthroughs in computer vision, speech recognition, and natural language understanding that made many industries including autonomous vehicles more economical.[2] In 2015, AlphaGo's victory over a world Go champion demonstrated the power of AI applied to game theory.[3] The subsequent years witnessed a proliferation of chatbots and virtual assistants, as well as the rise of generative adversarial networks (GANs),[4] which revolutionized generative modeling. In 2021, OpenAI's GPT-3 demonstrated the potential of large language models.[5] As AI grows in its power, the youth must harness AI optimism to strike a balance between rapid development and precise, judicious consideration and action against its downsides.

This paper will examine current bilateral/multilateral initiatives and advisory boards (as well as their inclusion of youth perspectives into its decision-making) before proffering recommendations to create an equitable AI discourse space for all.

4. Analysis

4.1 Bilateral & Multilateral Initiatives

4.1.1 World Economic Forum (WEF)

The World Economic Forum has established the AI Governance Alliance, an initiative that aims to address economic issues relating to the use of AI.[6] The alliance's model framework consists of internal governance structures, AI-augmented decision-making, operations management, and stakeholder communication. A paradigm throughout each of these pillars is that of a risk-based approach. For example, the alliance encourages organizations to implement AI operations measures by identifying features with the largest effects on stakeholders, and then calculating what would garner the most significant net gain of trust among stakeholders. In June 2023, the WEF released a set of recommendations on Generative AI.[7] While it carefully addresses "black-box" problems and transparency, it may be treading too lightly on issues of model bias.

[2] Schmidhuber, 2014
[3] Madison & Guez, 2016
[4] Goodfellow et al., 2014
[5] Brown et al., 2020
[6] World Economic Forum, n.d.
[7] World Economic Forum, 2023

More specifically, when making such decisions, the forum holds four meetings every year, creating engagement between the youth and policy experts to provide a wide variety of perspectives.[8] Through deliberation, the stakeholders condensed down to some 50 projects aimed at solving global challenges. Indeed, having the youth's perspective has been a major component due to young innovators and activists.[9]

4.1.2 United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

AI For Good is a digital platform spearheaded by the UN's International Telecommunication Union (ITU)[10] whose events and activities enable AI innovators to develop prototype AI solutions that contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which span a breadth of factors including infrastructure, clean energy, gender equality, and sanitation.[11] Since the platform is so diverse, it requires cohesive global coordination to maintain. The platform has a continual program offering fresh governance perspectives year-round as they relate to various SDGs: a key operation that invigorates the initiative and garners success.

4.1.3 Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD)

The OECD AI Policy Observatory is an initiative that multilaterally combines resources from the OECD and other stakeholder groups to help nations monitor the ethical development of AI systems.[12] The Observatory's governance framework possesses a values-based approach—examples of values driving the Observatory's policy guidelines and opinions include accountability, inclusive growth, and security. Values-based decision-making ensures that core principles transcend the potentially fickle and adversarial interests of various parties. This both grounds policy recommendations in transparent, equitable goals and curbs bureaucracy regarding clashing interests and predicting risks associated with certain outcomes.

Indeed, in 2021, the OECD created a Youth Advisory Board, with the intention to bring international policy-making to the fore through ideas and experiences from the youth from those ranging in experience in AI, technology, and more.[13] To propose policy discussion and create engagement with OECD countries, several youth-specific events have been launched including the OECD event, "Securing the future: putting youth at the center of policy change," beginning each spring.

[8] World Economic Forum, n.d.
[9] World Economic Forum, 2023
[10] AI For Good ITU, n.d.
[11] United Nations, n.d.
[12] OECD, n.d.
[13] OECD, n.d.

4.2 Advisory Boards

4.2.1 The United States National AI Advisory Committee (NAIAC)

There exist various proposed global AI advisory boards (UN, Global Venturing, International Group of Artificial Intelligence, etc.), but many have not yet been set in motion. The U.S., via the National AI Advisory Committee (NAIAC), offers a glimpse into what a large-scale AI governance advisory board implementation looks like. Launched in April 2022, the NAIAC advises both the U.S. President and the National AI Initiative Office on AI issues relating to R&D goals, regulation standards, and ethics.[14] It operates under the National AI Initiative, a bipartisan government effort to ensure national leadership in the development and use of trustworthy AI in both public and private sectors. Members of the NAIAC are diverse and stem from academia, civil society, nonprofit organizations, and private industries.

The NAIAC demonstrates that AI governance advisory boards in motion exist. However, established internationally focused and values-driven boards are scarce, yielding an open niche suitable for organizations like the UN.

Although such a youth committee has not been created, specific projects can be further improved through a youth perspective.[15] For instance, within the NAIAC Year One Report, when detailing the need to cultivate international collaboration and leadership, this committee can provide a cultural and political representation of the country, enabling higher chances of success

4.2.2 The Europe CEPEJ Artificial Intelligence Advisory Body (AIAB)

Created in 2022 amongst a group of European countries led by Italy, France, Poland, and Bulgaria,[16] this council seeks to monitor the emergence of AI in applications throughout the judicial sector and ethical issues that may arise. Indeed, this council began to arise due to the rise in machine learning within the judicial systems and how a machine learning tool swayed the final decision,[17] raising concerns for the fairness of the court system.

[14] NAIAC, n.d.
[15] NAIAC, 2023
[16] Council of Europe, n.d.
[17] Giarda & Ambrosino, 2022

4.3 Current Proposals for Cooperation

4.3.1 Stanford's Multilateral AI Research Institute (MAIRI) Proposition

In May 2022, the Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence Institute (Stanford HAI) released a white paper outlining a detailed blueprint for a Multilateral AI Research Institute (MAIRI) that would involve values-driven approaches to conducting AI research while effecting international multi-stakeholder cooperation, bolstering innovation and prosperity.[18] Some of its guideposts include transparency, privacy, merit-based competition review, equity, and overall research integrity. A research institute built upon globally-aware AI governance goals is in a unique position to both innovate and serve as an ethical leader for institutions around the world to follow.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Including Youth Input on Artificial Intelligence Governance

From jobs to privacy, the impact of decisions in AI development and governance will affect today's youth in academic and professional environments. Subsequently, we propose a model of AI governance that would emphasize youth input in AI government.

State actors, international governance organizations, and nongovernmental organizations should convene a youth advisory board on artificial intelligence governance. Youth advisory board's should not only frequently consult policymakers on decision making, but also be empowered to develop its own policy solutions.

Youth advisors should be nominated by home countries and approved by the High-Level Advisory Board on AI. In any decision on AI, this Youth Advisory Board should be consulted as to whether the decision will help or harm children internationally. On decisions specific and relevant to children (e.g. restrictions of AI usage for those under 18). The Board should be a necessary vote of confidence in the HLAB's prioritization of AI issues- their approval should be required for that decision.

[18] Zhang et al., 2022

5.2 Youth Data Privacy Regulation

Numerous resolutions and treaties have declared a right to privacy,[19, 20] especially in regards to a child's right to privacy[21]. AI presents a challenge to children's data privacy rights. The use of AI can lead to the scrapping of child data, either from websites or from use with AI technologies themselves. Children may not fully understand or grasp the consequences of data harvesting by AI. Thus we propose that international governance of AI emphasizes child data privacy.

- Limiting youth data collection and storage: AI technologies should refrain from collecting a children's data unless truly necessary. We believe that training Machine Learning models should not use data from children. Second, data that must be collected, such as in regards to safety concerns, should be stored for the shortest time possible.
- Transparency to both child and parent: Data providers should be upfront about data collection to both the parent and child to empower children and parents to make their own data decisions.
- Global monitoring of child data privacy and AI safety: On a daily basis: Artificial intelligence is managed across borders. We urge international organizations or treaties to develop frameworks to monitor the impact of AI, especially on child safety.

5.3 General AI Education in Alignment With SDGs 4 & 10

Access to high-quality education on AI and general computer science is highly inequitable and divided in the status quo. Even in the United States, a developed country home to most major tech and AI companies, only 53% of public high schools offer foundational coursework in AI.[22] This would be in line with Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' statement and commitment to confront technology's perils, including amplifying economic inequality, proliferating disinformation, and unchecked development of AI.[23]

We believe the multistakeholder body should uphold objective C) Harness AI to support the Sustainable Development Goals by working with other UN programmes such as the UN Development Programme. Current UN initiatives are working to bridge the digital

[19] UN General Assembly. (1948). Universal declaration of human rights (217 [III] A). Paris
[20] United Nations (General Assembly). 1966. "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." *Treaty Series* 999 (December): 171
[21] Convention on the rights of the child (1989) Treaty no. 27531. United Nations Treaty Series, 1577, pp. 3-178.
[22] Code.org, 2022
[23] Guterres, 2023

divide between developed and developing economies as well as rural and urban areas through facilitating resources aimed at tackling the digital divide and coordinating efforts between countries. These efforts facilitated and supported by a multi-stakeholder body on AI would help ensure that AI benefits and advancements are equitable to all groups, future generations have an equal opportunity to advance and benefit from the economic and developmental potential of AI.

5.4 Educating Global Youth on Artificial Intelligence Ethics

Youth have the most trust and acceptance toward AI systems than any other generation, and while that does mean that a future transition into an AI ecosystem will go smoothly, it poses the danger of intelligent systems taking advantage.[24] We recommend that the UN take steps to create future accountability with AI systems by educating global youth about the functionalities, possibilities, and risks associated with AI systems.

The UN should both encourage member countries to implement this education into public and private domestic schools and create resources for this implementation. A curriculum should be designed that is both comprehensive in covering dangers with AI and accessible to a global audience. The UN should then encourage that such a curriculum be placed into education programs as a necessary unit. This should not be a large course, but simply a lesson about AI and the different facets.

6. Conclusion

We are in strong support of the UN's High-Level Advisory Board on AI, and believe that it offers a unique opportunity to prove that multilateralism led by the UN is crucial and effective to govern AI. Given the transformative power of AI in shaping our world and the importance of the UN's High-Level Advisory Board, it remains vital to include the next generation of decision-makers, leaders, and engaged citizens in forming AI policy. Current initiatives & advisory boards have begun to integrate the youth into discourse, but such adjustments need to materialize quicker to create a well-informed populace.

Building on the efforts of the WEF, OECD, UN, NAIAC, and others, we suggest the following:

1. The formation of a pipeline for youth perspectives to be represented or communicated to the High-Level Advisory Board on AI;

[24] Gillespie et al., 2023

2. Action to encourage privacy regulation for children with governments and corporations;
3. Collaboration with other UN bodies to encourage closing the digital gap and elevating early education in foundational computer science;
4. Programs to educate global youth on AI ethics;
5. Avenues for algorithm transparency; and
6. Global collaboration to create a streamlined approach to ethical AI development

The UN has the unique opportunity to facilitate and coordinate collaboration between supranational and national organizations racing to govern AI. We urge the High-Level Advisory Board to not lose sight of this opportunity to include the next generation too; with the youth, we can usher in a new era of AI development & deployment to make the world a better place.

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