

**28th UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development
OHCHR Concept Note Side Event | 9 April 2025 | 13:20-14:50**

**“Data, AI, and Human Rights: Frameworks and Use Cases for Responsible
Deployment in Global Contexts”**

Date and Time: April 9, 2025 | 13:20-14:50(Geneva time)
Location: Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland
Organized by: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Background

Technologies enhanced or augmented by artificial intelligence (AI), such as facial recognition, predictive analytics, and automated decision systems are being deployed at fast pace. Often, regulatory frameworks struggle to account for the evolving innovation, creating a critical gap for human rights protection. Frontier technologies such as AI tools, if deployed without proper safeguards, can threaten privacy through excessive data collection, amplify discrimination, and undermine transparency through complex “black box” systems, curtailing or encroaching on fundamental rights and freedoms. To ensure a secure and purposeful implementation of AI systems carrying out human rights due diligence is key. Recent incidents, such as biased facial recognition leading to wrongful detentions and automated welfare systems incorrectly denying benefits, illustrate why governance frameworks must account for systemic risks and unintended consequences in AI deployment, especially in vulnerable communities,

One way to proactively mitigate and prepare for these new frontiers and more open innovation is for rights-conscious organisations to develop and deploy such technologies applying our own best practices to them. The United Nations and its agencies and partners are actively testing AI applications that improve humanitarian response, monitor human rights violations, and they are also implementing rights based due diligence across the lifecycle of digital technologies to ensure their development and deployment are aligned with human rights. Data is a critical and integral part of this picture – how it is governed, protected and used.

This side event explores the AI products and services within the UN and development ecosystem and its application in real word systems with a view to informing open innovation, capacity building and international governance, while safeguarding human rights. These sessions explore the application of AI along the crisis-to-development continuum, and how its responsible use will shape the delivery of improved protections, assistance and digital public goods at a time when the most vulnerable are more exposed than ever. This side event, held during the 28th Annual Session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), examines these complex dynamics through a human rights lens.

Objectives

The side event aims to:

- Critically examine the relationship between AI technologies, data governance, and human rights protection.

- Analyse the implementation of AI systems through the lens of human rights, specifically with respect to privacy, non-discrimination, access and the role of the private sector.
- Present and assess global case studies where AI has been applied in human rights contexts, offering practical insights and lessons learned.
- Engage in a dialogue on strategies for ensuring the rights-respecting use of AI technologies, with a particular focus on marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- Facilitate collaboration among stakeholders in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by AI in human rights-sensitive contexts.

Expected Outcomes

The side event will generate valuable discourse on the critical issues of data protection, governance, and the application of AI technologies, with an emphasis on human rights protections. Specific outcomes include:

- Providing actionable insights and lessons learned from real-world applications to inform ongoing UN dialogues and policy discussions.
- Contributing to the global policymaking process surrounding AI governance and human rights.
- Enhancing international cooperation and knowledge sharing on AI applications within human rights and development contexts.
- Showcasing key case studies on the responsible deployment of AI within international organizations, particularly in areas where human rights and data protection are paramount.

Session overview

Panel 1: AI Deployment in Global Contexts: Real-World Application, Tools and Use Cases (45 minutes)

Moderator: Irene Kaggwa, ITU/UNICEF Giga Project

1. Anwar Mahfoudh, OHCHR, Chief Innovation and Analytics Hub
2. Ashutosh Chadha, Microsoft, Senior Director UN Affairs and International Organizations
3. Francesca Bosco, CyperPeace Institute, Chief Strategy Officer
4. Philippe Marc Stoll, International Committee of the Red Cross, Technologies and Armed Conflicts

This panel will explore how AI is being deployed across international organizations, providing a critical examination of:

- Cases studies: Practical examples of AI implementation within the UN system, agencies and partner organizations.
- Successes and challenges: Insights into the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from AI deployment in diverse operational contexts.
- Technological diversity: The unique challenges and opportunities of AI deployment in regions with limited technological infrastructure.

- Human rights and ethical considerations: How current AI deployments are addressing critical human rights concerns, including privacy, discrimination, and fairness.

Panel 2: Data and AI Governance in Human Rights-Sensitive Contexts
(45 minutes)

Moderator: Olivier Alais, AI and Human Rights Expert, Program Coordinator - International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- Tim Engelhardt, OHCHR, Human Rights Officer
- Lance Bartholomeusz, UNHCR, General Counsel
- Domenico Zipoli, Geneva Academy, Geneva Human Rights Platform
- Maria Paz, Global Partners Digital, Head of Policy and Advocacy

This discussion will focus on the governance frameworks necessary for deploying AI in contexts where human rights are directly impacted. Key topics will include:

- Existing and mission data governance frameworks: Useful frameworks that incorporate human rights safeguards, particularly in relation to data sovereignty, privacy, and access, and the role of the private sector and what is missing.
- Global AI governance: The application of recommendations from the “Governing AI for Humanity” report, such as the establishment of AI standards, capacity development, and ethical frameworks.
- Digital privacy and sovereignty: Addressing the challenges posed by digital privacy and sovereignty, especially when working with sensitive data from vulnerable populations.
- Balancing innovation and protection: How organizations can foster innovation while maintaining stringent protections, particularly for marginalized groups.

Interactive Q&A

An interactive Q&A session will be integrated throughout the event, allowing participants to engage directly with panellists and contribute to the discussions, ensuring a dynamic exchange of perspectives on the deployment and governance of AI systems in human rights contexts.

Closing:

Towards Global Cooperation on Data, AI and Human Rights

Languages Supported: English, French