Empowering Nations for Inclusive Prosperity in the Era of AI

Background

In light of the successful adoption of the Pact for the Future and its annex, the Global Digital Compact, **the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Kenya, supported by the United Nations Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, will co-host a high-level side event on the margins of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly.**

Globally, a widening capacity gap continues to define the landscape of AI readiness. While some countries have established robust AI ecosystems, others face significant shortfalls in technical expertise, policy development, and digital infrastructure. The Secretary-General's report on innovative voluntary financing options for AI capacity building (A/79/966) offers a structured approach to thinking about AI readiness and options for putting a floor under the AI divide.

About the Session

This event aims to explore how international cooperation can enhance institutional readiness and strengthen national capabilities for inclusive, safe, and effective AI adoption. It will also underscore the importance of advancing multilateral cooperation and South–South exchange, enabling Global South partners to share best practices, pool resources, and drive collective innovation.

In particular, the event will focus on how Member States can create centers for exchange and cooperation and integrate these centers into a United Nations-supported network, as a new pathway to bridging AI capacity gaps. Such a network would facilitate coordination and the availability of in-kind contributions from universities, corporations, Member States, and other relevant actors, and could also undertake a range of other useful activities to build AI capacity, anchored in shared normative commitments.

As a result, the session will promote a more inclusive and collaborative model of AI capacity building, one that is bottom-up, cross-sectoral, cross-regional, and openly accessible.

The event will be held as a closed, invitation-only session. It will bring together representatives from governments, international organizations, academic institutions, civil society and the private sector to exchange experiences, identify priority needs, and build momentum around inclusive and collaborative approaches to AI capacity development.

Co-hosts

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