



MISIÓN PERMANENTE DE
COSTA RICA ANTE LAS
NACIONES UNIDAS

GOBIERNO
DE COSTA RICA

PATHFINDERS
FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES
HOSTED BY THE NYU CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**Justice
Action
Coalition**

Artificial Intelligence and Justice Systems: Promoting Sustainable Development, Safeguarding Human Rights, Access to Justice and the Rule of Law

Concept Note

5 May 2026, 15:00-16:15

Conference Room 9, UNHQ

Context

Artificial intelligence is increasingly affecting sustainable development, including by shaping the functioning of the administration of justice at national levels, which impacts all SDGs. Courts are expected to increasingly be called upon to adjudicate disputes directly linked to AI and automated decision-making across sectors, including with respect to access to public services which impacts a wide range of SDGs. Courts are deciding cases involving technology and human rights, such as privacy and data protection, algorithmic discrimination, bias in the use of facial recognition technologies, criminal justice system, cybercrime and the use of AI by public authorities and private actors. Through this growing body of jurisprudence, courts will play a critical role in interpreting and applying international human rights law in the digital context, including safeguards related to due process, equality and non-discrimination, and the right to an effective remedy, as underscored by OHCHR in the recent Human Rights Council report on discrimination and unequal enjoyment of privacy in the context of data collection and processing, including through AI (see [A/HRC/60/45](#)).

This role situates the judiciary at the heart of global debates on AI governance and the rule of law. UN human rights guidance [stresses](#) that AI deployment in justice systems must be compatible with international human rights law, reinforce judicial independence, and strengthen rather than weaken access to justice and accountability. In particular, States have a duty to prevent adverse impact of AI on human rights and a duty to ensure that individuals have access to effective remedies where AI systems adversely affect their rights, including through independent and competent judicial oversight. Identifying how courts are navigating these challenges, and where risks and good practices are emerging, is an important step towards directing developments towards practices that are human rights compliant. It is also crucial that the justice sector is included in the development and implementation of national STI roadmaps and strategies.

Systematically integrating human rights into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has demonstrated potential to accelerate progress on achieving the Goals, as recently demonstrated in the OHCHR report presented at the current council session ([A/HRC/61/13](#)), therefore efforts to

advance access to justice for all, including the most marginalized, by using adequately regulated AI tools can contribute to a more just and sustainable development.

Objectives

This side event will discuss implications for access to justice, efficiency and accountability, while identifying common human rights and rule-of-law challenges, including bias and discrimination, transparency, automation bias, infringements on the right to privacy and potential impacts on judicial independence.

The discussion will also highlight initial approaches to addressing these challenges in practice and briefly reflect on emerging judicial responses to AI-related disputes, with a view to identifying opportunities for cross-regional learning and dialogue on responsible and inclusive AI use in justice systems, consistent with international human rights standards.

The side event will also be an opportunity to convene a multistakeholder discussion on AI and justice to inform the inaugural Global Dialogue on AI Governance to be held in July 2026. The discussion will also aim to find practical governance tools, such as algorithmic impact assessments, transparency requirements, and audit mechanisms that court and justice systems may consider when adopting AI tools.

Format

The event will be held in a hybrid format, with in-person participation in New York during the 2026 Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum), and remote participation online. It will feature two focused segments, with speakers from Member States across regional groups, as well as contributions from other stakeholders, including civil society, academia, the private sector and the technical community.

Speakers (virtual or in-person):

- Kate Fox Principi, Lead on the administration of justice, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Nathan Edwards, Marani Program Officer, [Justice for All](#), [Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) (NYU)
- Natali Helberger (IViR), AI governance, algorithmic decision-making, and the impact of AI on democracy
- Other specialist or judiciary/law representative from Global Majority

Guiding Questions

1. How is it ensured in practice that AI systems do not compromise judicial independence, and that judges retain meaningful human control and ultimate responsibility for legal reasoning and decision-making?

2. How are transparency and explainability of AI systems used in justice systems ensured vis-à-vis parties, lawyers and the wider public? How do we deal with “black box” systems or proprietary tools?
3. What concrete measures are taken to prevent, detect and remedy bias and discrimination in AI tools used in or affecting the justice system, including with regard to gender equality and the rights of marginalized groups?
4. How can courts, judges and legal professionals strengthen their own capacity to engage critically and effectively with AI (e.g. training, ethical guidelines, institutional policies), and what role can cross-regional cooperation and UN guidance play?
5. Looking ahead, what key elements should be part of a human rights-compliant, cross-regional agenda for responsible AI use in justice systems, aligned with the rule of law and the SDGs?