2024 ECOSOC Youth Forum
"Youth shaping sustainable and innovative solutions:
Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of crises"

IDENTIFICATION	
Session title	AI for an Equitable Future: A youth-led dialogue on AI's potential to bridge the gender digital divide and empower young people
Session focus	Artificial Intelligence
Session leads	ITU, UN Women and MGCY
Session organizers	Generation Equality Feminist Action for Climate Justice, Generation Equality: Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality and ITU Generation Connect

BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has presented opportunities and challenges for global development, particularly in reference to youth and adolescent engagement in digital inclusion and gender equality initiatives. Forging ahead towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is crucial to address the intersections between AI's potential and the inherent risks of exacerbating existing inequalities.

The gender digital divide remains a barrier to realizing SDG 16. Breaking this divide requires centering the co-leadership of diverse peoples including youth, gender minorities, disabled individuals, Indigenous peoples, and other marginalized communities. Given our scope, we would like to highlight the need for young women and girls, particularly those with disabilities, in this dialogue to ensure that technological policies and programs are accessible and inclusive.

Moving forward, there is a compelling need to explore how AI can enhance strengthened influence and participation of young women and girls in the digital economy. Breaking the gender digital divide and fostering co-leadership opportunities for young persons with disabilities must be a priority. AI's potential in these areas is immense, yet the risks of AI advancements leaving more people behind, particularly women and girls, cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is essential to explore how AI can both aid and hinder socio-economic development and the achievement of SDGs 1 and 16.

In eradicating poverty, AI can help by improving access to information and resources for marginalized communities, enabling more targeted and efficient poverty alleviation programs. AI-powered tools can analyze big data to identify trends and patterns related to poverty, helping policymakers and organizations make more informed decisions on where to allocate resources effectively.

Furthermore, AI can facilitate partnerships between governments, non-profit organizations, and private sectors to collaborate on innovative solutions for poverty eradication. By leveraging AI technologies, such as predictive analytics and machine learning, stakeholders can work together to develop sustainable strategies that address the root causes of poverty and create lasting impact.

Overall, AI has the potential to revolutionize efforts to eradicate poverty by enhancing data-driven decision-making, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and driving innovation in sustainable development initiatives, ultimately contributing to the achievement of SDG 16 and SDG 17.

The integration of AI into the global youth and gender agenda calls for a nuanced approach that balances innovation with inclusivity. In this session, we aim to explore how AI can be used to address gender equality and sustainability issues facing youth around the world.

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION/PLENARY

This session aims to capture the insights of youth and adolescents to bridge the gender digital divide through AI, ensuring equal access to digital resources for all. Attendees will develop recommendations to utilize AI in fostering inclusive digital spaces for future generations in strong institutions, with a special focus on empowering young women and girls.

OVERALL FORMAT/STRUCTURE

The structure of the session will be divided into two parts: a discussion on the past/present opportunities and challenges that AI presents and a discussion on the implications for strong institutions in the future.

The session will use different methodologies including and not limited to Mentimeter to create an interactive panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities AI presents for closing the gender digital divide, making our virtual spaces more accessible, and strengthening our institutions. This interactivity will enable an interactive environment between the audience and panelists to foster knowledge sharing and inspire action towards more equitable and inclusive digital spaces for future generations.

A Question and Answer segment will be held in the middle of the dialogue.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General Questions:

- How can AI challenge and dismantle systemic barriers faced by young women and girls in technology sectors?
- What policies and strategies could be prioritized to ensure that AI tools are inclusive and create safer digital spaces that are free from gender-based violence and harassment?
- What strategies can be utilized to ensure the inclusion of young women and girls with disabilities in the development and use of AI?

Present:
- In what ways can AI amplify the voices and influence the agency of young women and girls, particularly in STEM fields? [Josselyn]
- How is AI currently changing the way young people, particularly marginalized communities, engage with democratic institutions? [Alejandro]

Future:
- What policies and strategies could be prioritized to ensure that AI tools are inclusive and create safer digital spaces that are free from gender-based violence and harassment? [Yash]
- What accountability measures should be in place to address risks associated with the design and application of AI in our physical and digital environments? [Allison]
- How can we use AI to develop solutions that directly address the root causes of poverty, with a focus on supporting young women and girls and youth with disabilities? [Divya]

NAMES AND TITLES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Moderator:
- Ms. Sinead Bovell, Futurist, Founder and CEO of WAYE Talks

Speakers:
- Ms. Allison Cohen, Senior Applied AI Projects Manager, Mila
- Ms. Josselyn Abusabal, Pan American Esports Games Champion 2023 & Esports World Cup Silver Medallist
- Mr. Alejandro Daly, Institute of Global Politics Scholar, Columbia University
- Ms. Divya Goyal, Consultant on Disability Inclusive Development and Social Policy, UNDP
- Mr. Yash Tamidalla, Doctoral Student in AI and Sociology

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

On March 6th, we hosted a virtual consultation session with leaders from the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology & Innovation and Climate Justice. During this session, we received feedback from these young leaders on our draft concept note as well as questions to consider for the planning of our event. As we complete our final concept note, we will reshare our work and proposed Run of Show to inform these young leaders of how their ideas were taken into consideration and ask for their feedback again to ensure we captured their ideas correctly.

We are also in the process of organizing a preparatory event in the next week with all speakers and our moderator to review our concept note, answer questions, and gather feedback.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS, SUGGESTED READING, IF ANY