Artificial Intelligence in the face of Covid-19 and beyond

A Virtual High-Level Side Event in the margins of the 2021 Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

Wednesday, 5 May, 2021
1:15pm to 2:45pm NY time
United Nations Headquarters

The Permanent Missions of Bhutan, Jamaica, Senegal, Singapore and Slovenia to the United Nations and the Office of the Special Representative of the OECD to the United Nations invite you to a high-level discussion on recent developments in the artificial intelligence policy landscape.

The artificial intelligence (AI) landscape has evolved significantly from 1950 when Alan Turing first posed the question of whether machines can think. Today, AI is transforming societies and economies. It promises to generate productivity gains, improve well-being and help address global challenges, such as climate change, resource scarcity and – as we have seen most recently – health crises. As AI applications are adopted around the world, their use can also raise challenges related to human values, fairness, human determination, privacy, safety and accountability, among others. These issues are global and require collective action.

In 2019, Ministers launched the OECD Principles on Artificial Intelligence, and the G20 subsequently adopted G20 Artificial Intelligence Principles which build on this foundation. A high-level side event held at the United Nations in the autumn of 2019 provided an initial opportunity to take stock of progress and challenges in the harnessing of AI globally, and the opportunities and challenges that AI can present for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Implementation of the AI Principles is now underway, with new OECD work helping policymakers to better understand the challenges and risks of AI in different contexts. The OECD AI Policy Observatory is collecting information on national policies, discussing practical tools for trustworthy AI, and compiling live data to help inform policy. New research on AI in Work, Innovation, Productivity and Skills is bringing valuable evidence to the fore. Covid-19 has heightened the urgency of these efforts, particularly as countries turned to technologies such as AI to combat the crisis. The trustworthiness of AI for health systems has grown in importance, as has the need for strong policy frameworks to ensure AI adds value to patients and society.

Issues for discussion

- What does the existing evidence on AI technologies tell us about the impact of these technologies on economies and societies worldwide?

- Where have AI technologies provided a response to the Covid-19 crisis and what can we learn from this?

- What are the implications of developments in the sphere of AI for the global digital divide? What policy issues are at stake, and where and how might international co-operation help to bridge divides and help to tackle shared challenges?

This side event, timed to coincide with the 2021 ECOSOC STI Forum, provides an opportunity for policymakers and the UN community to discuss some of these important questions, and exchange views on the way forward.

Draft Agenda

- Introductory remarks by **H.E. Ms. Darja Bavdaž Kuret**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations.

- Presentation by **Mr. Andrew Wyckoff**, Director of Science, Technology and Innovation, OECD.
- Presentation by **Mr. Marko Grobelnik**, Co-lead, Department for Artificial Intelligence, Josef Stefan Institute**.**

- Remarks by co-hosts **H.E. Ms. Doma Thsering**, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations and **H.E. Mr. Cheikh Niang**, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations.
- Interactive discussion / Q&A.

- Closing remarks by **H.E. Mr. E. Courtenay Rattray**, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations.

Moderator: Mr Robin Ogilvy, Permanent Observer and Special Representative to the United Nations, OECD.

Registration is required. Please register online here by Tuesday, 4 May to receive a link to participate.
Please address any questions to rsvp-newyork@oecd.org