**AI for Developing Countries Forum - Dialogue Script**

**Conversation 1: Opening Panel Discussion**

**Moderator:** Welcome everyone to our panel on "AI Priorities for Developing Economies." I'm joined by experts from various sectors. Let's begin with a fundamental question: What are the key interests and priorities that should drive AI development in developing countries?

**Dr. Amara (Tech Policy Expert):** Thank you. I believe the primary interest should be developing AI solutions that address local challenges rather than importing models designed for Western contexts. In many developing countries, we need AI that works with limited infrastructure, multilingual populations, and different societal structures.

**Professor Chen (AI Researcher):** I agree with Dr. Amara. We're seeing a concerning "AI divide" where developing nations risk becoming mere consumers of AI rather than creators. Our focus should be on building local AI talent and research capacity so countries can develop sovereign AI capabilities tailored to their specific needs.

**Minister Okonkwo (Government Representative):** From a policy perspective, we're interested in AI that drives economic growth while ensuring equity. Many of our countries are dealing with challenges in healthcare, agriculture, and education where AI could make tremendous impact. But we need frameworks that protect our citizens' data and ensure these technologies don't exacerbate existing inequalities.

**Ms. Rivera (Entrepreneur):** As someone building AI startups in Latin America, I'd add that there's strong interest in creating sustainable business models around AI. We need technologies that can operate in areas with intermittent connectivity and on less powerful devices. And we need investment ecosystems that understand our markets.

**Moderator:** Those are excellent points. What about the tension between rapid AI adoption and potential job displacement?

**Minister Okonkwo:** That's precisely what keeps policymakers up at night. Our countries often have younger populations and different labor market structures than developed economies. We're interested in AI that augments human work rather than simply automating it away, especially when social safety nets may be less robust.

**Dr. Amara:** I'd add that there's significant interest in ensuring AI development aligns with cultural values and norms of each society. Western AI systems often embed assumptions that don't translate well to other contexts.

**Professor Chen:** Absolutely. We're also seeing interest in collaborative models that allow developing countries to pool resources for AI research and development. No single country may have all the components needed, but regional collaborations are showing promise.

**Conversation 2: Workshop on AI Applications**

**Facilitator:** In this breakout session, we'll be discussing specific AI applications that address developing country priorities. Let's go around and share what you're working on.

**Dr. Patel (Healthcare Innovator):** We're developing AI diagnostic tools that can work offline in rural clinics. The key interest here is creating systems that don't require constant cloud connectivity or expensive hardware, but can still provide accurate diagnoses for common conditions.

**Mr. Adeyemi (Agricultural Technologist):** In our case, we're using AI to help smallholder farmers predict crop diseases and optimize planting schedules. The interest is in making these tools accessible to farmers with basic feature phones, not just smartphones, and in multiple local languages.

**Ms. Nguyen (Education Specialist):** We're focused on AI tutoring systems that adapt to different learning styles and can work across various educational backgrounds. There's huge interest in personalized education that can help address teacher shortages in many regions.

**Dr. Santos (Climate Researcher):** We're using AI to improve climate resilience planning. Many developing countries are disproportionately affected by climate change, so there's strong interest in prediction models specifically calibrated for tropical environments and extreme weather events.

**Facilitator:** These are fascinating applications. What challenges are you facing in implementation?

**Dr. Patel:** Data is a major challenge. Medical datasets from developing regions are often scarce, meaning models trained on Western populations may not perform well. There's significant interest in developing better approaches to data collection that respect privacy and consent.

**Ms. Nguyen:** We're finding that context matters tremendously. Educational AI developed for structured Western curricula often doesn't work well in different educational systems. The interest is in creating flexible frameworks that local educators can adapt.

**Mr. Adeyemi:** Cost remains a huge barrier. There's strong interest in business models that make AI accessible without creating dependency on foreign companies or requiring unaffordable subscriptions.

**Conversation 3: Policy Roundtable**

**Chairperson:** In this session, we're discussing policy frameworks for AI governance in developing countries. What specific interests should these frameworks address?

**Dr. Menon (Data Governance Expert):** A primary interest is data sovereignty. Many developing countries are concerned about citizen data flowing to foreign corporations or governments. They want frameworks that ensure data remains under local jurisdiction while still enabling innovation.

**Professor Osei (Ethics Researcher):** There's growing interest in ensuring AI systems respect diverse cultural values. For instance, different societies may have different perspectives on privacy, autonomy, and fairness that should be reflected in how AI systems operate.

**Ms. Rodriguez (Human Rights Advocate):** We're seeing strong interest in frameworks that protect vulnerable groups. In countries with complex histories of ethnic tensions or social stratification, there's concern that AI could amplify existing biases or enable new forms of discrimination.

**Mr. Kim (Industry Representative):** From the business perspective, there's interest in regulatory clarity that enables innovation while protecting citizens. Overly restrictive frameworks could prevent beneficial AI applications from reaching those who need them most.

**Chairperson:** How can these various interests be balanced effectively?

**Dr. Menon:** Multi-stakeholder governance models seem promising. The interest is in creating systems where government, industry, civil society, and academic voices all contribute to ongoing governance rather than static regulations that quickly become outdated.

**Professor Osei:** I believe there's significant interest in developing regional approaches that respect local contexts while providing enough harmonization to enable cross-border data flows and applications.

**Ms. Rodriguez:** We're also seeing interest in ensuring these frameworks explicitly address inclusion and accessibility from the start, rather than treating these as afterthoughts.

**Mr. Kim:** And there's growing interest in "regulatory sandboxes" that allow controlled testing of AI applications to understand impacts before full-scale deployment. This balanced approach protects citizens while enabling innovation.

**Conversation 4: Capacity Building Discussion**

**Coordinator:** Let's discuss approaches to building local AI capacity in developing countries. What interests are driving efforts in this area?

**Dr. Mbeki (University Dean):** There's tremendous interest in developing educational pathways that lead to AI careers. This includes everything from K-12 mathematics education to specialized graduate programs. The focus is on creating sustainable talent pipelines rather than one-off training.

**Ms. Chandra (Tech Transfer Specialist):** We're seeing interest in new models of technology transfer that go beyond simply importing solutions. Collaborative research, open-source development, and joint ventures that include knowledge sharing are becoming priorities.

**Mr. Ortiz (Industry Association):** From the industry side, there's interest in creating innovation ecosystems that connect research to commercial applications. Incubators, accelerators, and innovation hubs tailored to local contexts are growing.

**Dr. Wang (Research Funder):** Funding agencies are increasingly interested in supporting research that addresses local priorities rather than simply extending Western research agendas. This requires new evaluation frameworks and funding mechanisms.

**Coordinator:** What about the practical challenges of building this capacity?

**Dr. Mbeki:** Infrastructure remains a fundamental challenge. Interest in cloud computing access, reliable electricity, and affordable devices is high because these are prerequisites for AI development.

**Ms. Chandra:** There's growing interest in South-South collaboration rather than always looking to the Global North. Countries facing similar challenges can often develop more relevant solutions together.

**Mr. Ortiz:** We're seeing interest in public-private partnerships that can provide sustainable funding for capacity building beyond what foreign aid alone can support.

**Dr. Wang:** And there's significant interest in ensuring that capacity building efforts are inclusive across gender, geography, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The goal is avoiding the creation of new digital elites while leaving others behind.

**AI for Developing Countries - Extended Dialogues**

**Conversation 5: Financial Inclusion and AI**

**Facilitator:** Today we're exploring how AI can advance financial inclusion in developing economies. What interests are driving innovation in this space?

**Dr. Kumari (Central Bank Digital Innovation Lead):** Our primary interest is using AI to extend financial services to the unbanked. In many developing countries, 30-60% of adults lack basic banking services. AI-powered credit scoring that doesn't rely on traditional banking history could revolutionize lending for small businesses and individuals.

**Mr. Okoro (Fintech Entrepreneur):** We're developing AI systems that can verify identity without requiring government IDs that many people lack. The interest here is creating alternative verification methods using behavioral patterns, social vouching, and other contextual data.

**Ms. Patel (Microfinance Expert):** There's significant interest in AI that can optimize microfinance operations. Many organizations struggle with high operational costs when serving remote communities. AI that predicts repayment patterns can help make these models sustainable.

**Dr. Martinez (Consumer Protection Advocate):** While I support these innovations, there's also growing interest in ethical frameworks specifically for financial AI. We need systems that explain decisions, avoid predatory lending, and respect privacy in contexts where financial literacy may be limited.

**Facilitator:** How are these systems being deployed effectively given infrastructure limitations?

**Mr. Okoro:** That's where the interest in hybrid models comes in. Our systems combine lightweight AI that can run on basic smartphones with more complex models in the cloud. Users can access core functionality even with intermittent connectivity.

**Dr. Kumari:** We're also seeing interest in regulatory sandboxes specifically for fintech AI. These allow controlled testing with real users while providing consumer protections. Several central banks are pioneering these approaches.

**Ms. Patel:** Community-based models are showing promise too. There's interest in AI systems that incorporate village banking concepts and group liability, digitizing traditional support systems rather than replacing them.

**Conversation 6: AI for Public Health Systems**

**Moderator:** Let's discuss how AI is being leveraged to strengthen public health systems in developing countries. What interests are shaping this field?

**Dr. Nkosi (Public Health Official):** Our primary interest is in predictive systems for disease outbreaks. Many developing countries face endemic diseases alongside emerging threats. AI that can analyze multiple data streams—from clinic reports to social media—could provide early warnings that save lives.

**Professor Wong (Medical AI Researcher):** We're seeing strong interest in diagnostic tools that extend specialist care to underserved areas. The global shortage of specialists like radiologists and pathologists hits developing countries hardest. AI that can pre-screen cases could dramatically improve efficiency.

**Ms. Diallo (Community Health Coordinator):** From the ground level, there's interest in AI systems that can support community health workers. These frontline workers often have limited training but cover large populations. AI that helps with decision support, treatment protocols, and follow-up scheduling could multiply their impact.

**Dr. Santos (Supply Chain Expert):** An often overlooked area is pharmaceutical and medical supply management. There's growing interest in AI that optimizes distribution of limited resources, predicts stockouts, and detects counterfeit medications.

**Moderator:** What about data challenges unique to these contexts?

**Dr. Nkosi:** That's a critical point. Many developing countries have fragmented health records or paper-based systems. There's significant interest in AI approaches that can work with incomplete data or combine structured and unstructured information effectively.

**Professor Wong:** We're also seeing interest in federated learning models that allow hospitals and clinics to collaborate on AI training without sharing sensitive patient data. This addresses both privacy concerns and bandwidth limitations.

**Ms. Diallo:** Language diversity presents another challenge. In countries with dozens of languages, there's interest in multilingual systems or visual interfaces that transcend language barriers, especially for users with limited literacy.

**Conversation 7: Education and Skills Development**

**Chair:** In this session, we're focusing on AI applications in education for developing countries. What key interests are emerging?

**Dr. Rahman (Education Technology Researcher):** A primary interest is in personalized learning systems that can adapt to widely varying student backgrounds. In many developing countries, classrooms include students with very different preparation levels. AI that can provide individualized pathways could help address this heterogeneity.

**Ms. Gonzalez (Teacher Training Director):** There's growing interest in AI that supports teacher development rather than replacing teachers. Many countries face both teacher shortages and quality challenges. Systems that provide real-time coaching, lesson planning assistance, and content creation support could improve outcomes dramatically.

**Mr. Deng (Skills Training Provider):** Beyond formal education, there's significant interest in AI for vocational training and skill matching. Many developing economies have both youth unemployment and skills gaps. AI that can identify emerging job opportunities and create targeted training paths could address both issues.

**Dr. Nwosu (Education Ministry Advisor):** From the policy perspective, we're interested in AI that provides better education analytics. Many systems have limited visibility into performance, attendance, and outcomes. Better data could drive more effective interventions.

**Chair:** How can these technologies be implemented equitably?

**Dr. Rahman:** That's where the interest in low-resource AI comes in. We're developing models that can run on basic tablets or even feature phones, and work effectively offline with occasional synchronization.

**Ms. Gonzalez:** There's also interest in community-based deployment models where schools share technology resources and support each other's implementation. This creates more sustainable adoption than top-down deployments.

**Mr. Deng:** We're seeing interest in public-private partnerships where employers help define skill needs and contribute to training systems, ensuring relevance while sharing costs.

**Dr. Nwosu:** And critically, there's growing interest in measuring not just access to AI education tools, but actual learning outcomes and eventual economic impact. This helps focus resources on what works rather than what's merely technologically impressive.

**Conversation 8: Agricultural AI and Food Security**

**Moderator:** Today we're exploring AI applications in agriculture for developing countries. What interests are driving innovation in this space?

**Dr. Singh (Agricultural Scientist):** A primary interest is in predictive systems for small-scale farmers. Unlike industrial agriculture, smallholders often lack access to weather forecasting, pest prediction, and market information. AI that provides actionable insights via simple interfaces could dramatically improve yields and income.

**Ms. Mwangi (Farmers' Cooperative Leader):** From our perspective, there's strong interest in systems that democratize agricultural knowledge. Traditional farming relied on knowledge passed through generations, but climate change is disrupting these patterns. AI that combines traditional knowledge with scientific data shows promise.

**Professor Kim (Supply Chain Researcher):** We're seeing significant interest in reducing post-harvest losses, which can reach 30-40% in some regions. AI that optimizes storage, transportation, and processing could increase food availability without requiring additional land or inputs.

**Mr. Osei (Agricultural Finance Specialist):** There's growing interest in AI-powered risk assessment for agricultural lending. Traditional banks often avoid small-scale farmers due to perceived risks, but better predictive models could unlock much-needed capital.

**Moderator:** What implementation challenges are most pressing?

**Dr. Singh:** Data remains a fundamental challenge. Many regions lack soil maps, detailed weather data, or crop performance histories. There's interest in crowdsourced approaches where farmers contribute observations in exchange for insights.

**Ms. Mwangi:** Accessibility is crucial. The interest is in voice-based systems that work in local languages and don't require literacy, along with visual interfaces that use universal symbols.

**Professor Kim:** We're seeing interest in cooperative models where farmers share technology access points and collectively interpret AI recommendations, combining machine intelligence with human judgment and local knowledge.

**Mr. Osei:** And there's growing interest in integrating these systems with actual market access. AI recommendations have limited value if farmers can't access inputs they recommend or markets for resulting crops.

**Conversation 9: AI Governance and Sovereignty**

**Chairperson:** Let's explore the governance aspects of AI in developing countries. What interests are shaping policy discussions?

**Minister Alonso (Technology Minister):** A central interest for many governments is maintaining technological sovereignty while participating in global AI development. We don't want to be mere consumers of foreign AI or have our citizens' data extracted without benefit to our economies.

**Dr. Tanaka (AI Ethics Researcher):** There's growing interest in governance frameworks that reflect diverse cultural values. Western concepts of privacy, consent, and fairness don't always translate directly to other cultural contexts. The interest is in pluralistic approaches that respect this diversity.

**Ms. Naidoo (Civil Society Representative):** From civil society, there's strong interest in participatory governance models. Many communities have been excluded from technology decision-making historically. AI governance presents an opportunity to create more inclusive processes.

**Mr. Hassan (Regional Cooperation Advisor):** We're seeing significant interest in regional governance approaches. Individual developing countries may lack bargaining power with global tech companies, but regional blocs can establish meaningful standards and requirements.

**Chairperson:** How can these governance models be made effective?

**Minister Alonso:** Capacity building is essential. There's interest in developing regulatory expertise within government agencies, not just technical AI skills. This includes both formal training and peer learning networks among regulators.

**Dr. Tanaka:** We're exploring adaptive governance models that evolve as technology changes. The interest is in creating principles-based frameworks rather than specific technical requirements that quickly become outdated.

**Ms. Naidoo:** There's growing interest in transparency requirements specifically designed for low-resource contexts. For instance, requiring explanations of AI systems to be available in local languages and accessible to those with limited technical backgrounds.

**Mr. Hassan:** And we're seeing interest in South-South cooperation on governance, with countries facing similar challenges sharing policy approaches rather than simply adopting models from developed economies.

**Conversation 10: Environmental Applications and Climate Resilience**

**Facilitator:** Today we're discussing AI applications for environmental management and climate resilience in developing countries. What interests are driving innovation in this space?

**Dr. Fernandez (Climate Scientist):** A primary interest is in early warning systems for climate-related disasters. Many developing countries are disproportionately affected by floods, droughts, and storms. AI that integrates multiple data sources can provide more accurate and localized predictions.

**Ms. Chen (Urban Planner):** We're seeing strong interest in AI for resource-efficient urban development. Many developing countries are urbanizing rapidly, and AI can help optimize water distribution, waste management, and energy systems to create more sustainable cities.

**Mr. Abdulahi (Conservation Manager):** There's significant interest in AI for biodiversity monitoring and protection. Many developing countries host critical ecosystems but lack resources for comprehensive monitoring. Computer vision and acoustic monitoring systems can extend the reach of limited conservation staff.

**Dr. Gupta (Renewable Energy Specialist):** We're seeing growing interest in AI for distributed renewable energy systems. Models that predict demand patterns and optimize micro-grid operations can make renewable energy more viable in regions with limited infrastructure.

**Facilitator:** What implementation approaches are showing promise?

**Dr. Fernandez:** There's interest in participatory sensing networks where communities contribute observations that enhance scientific data. This creates more comprehensive monitoring while building local engagement with climate action.

**Ms. Chen:** We're exploring AI systems that incorporate indigenous and traditional knowledge about environmental management alongside scientific approaches. This hybrid model often produces more effective and culturally appropriate solutions.

**Mr. Abdulahi:** There's significant interest in technology transfer models where conservation AI developed for one ecosystem is adapted to others with similar characteristics, maximizing limited research resources.

**Dr. Gupta:** And we're seeing interest in creating environmental data commons where information is shared across borders to improve regional planning, since ecosystems don't respect political boundaries.