Global AI and Digital Governance:

Imperatives for Inclusive Priorities in Base-of-the-Pyramid Markets Amid WSIS+20 and GDC Implementation

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Abstract

As of December 2025, global AI and digital governance is at a critical juncture, with the Global Digital Compact (GDC) adopted in 2024, the launch of UN AI bodies in September 2025, and the impending WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (15–17 December 2025). This paper introduces the key multilateral processes shaping AI governance, including UN-led initiatives and industry summits, while highlighting persistent issues such as digital divides affecting over 2.6 billion unconnected individuals, predominantly in Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) markets. It incorporates detailed descriptions of these processes and proposes contextualized priorities for BoP communities—universal connectivity, digital public goods, capacity building, equitable AI governance, and meaningful representation—to ensure AI advances the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Comparative analyses of Global South versus North AI initiatives, supported by statistics (e.g., $108.3 billion in Northern AI investments versus $12 billion in the South), and case studies like Bangladesh's Sundarbans AI-blockchain project, substantiate the propositions. Drawing on our previous frameworks for fluid governance and BoP innovation, the paper advocates policy reforms for equitable outcomes.

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Keywords: Global Digital Compact, WSIS+20, AI governance, Base of the Pyramid, Global South, digital inclusion, multistakeholderism, Sustainable Development Goals, AI initiatives comparison, BoP case studies

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Executive Summary

The Nexus of Global AI Governance: A Critical Juncture for Equitable Digital Futures

As of December 2025, the landscape of global AI and digital governance is characterized by rapid development and high stakes, standing at a pivotal critical juncture. The recent adoption of the **Global Digital Compact (GDC) in 2024**, the official **launch of United Nations AI bodies in September 2025**, and the looming significance of the **WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (scheduled for 15–17 December 2025)** collectively underscore the urgency for coherent and inclusive governance frameworks.

This paper meticulously examines the constellation of key multilateral processes that are actively shaping the future of AI governance. This encompasses not only high-profile **UN-led initiatives** but also influential **industry and multi-stakeholder summits**, which often set the de facto technical and ethical standards.

Despite this progress in global policy dialogue, the paper highlights the deeply persistent issues that threaten to undermine the promise of AI: notably, the pervasive **digital divides**. These divides affect a staggering **over 2.6 billion individuals who remain unconnected** to the internet, with the majority residing in the **Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) markets**—the poorest two-thirds of the global economic human population. This significant exclusion poses a direct threat to the principle of equitable technological advancement.

To ensure that AI serves as a powerful accelerator for achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, the paper integrates detailed descriptions of these global governance processes with a proposal for **contextualized priorities specifically tailored for BoP communities**. These essential priorities are:

1. **Universal Connectivity:** Advocating for policies and infrastructure investment to bridge the 2.6 billion-person gap, recognizing connectivity as a foundational human right in the digital age.

2. **Digital Public Goods (DPGs):** Promoting the creation and deployment of open-source software, data, and content that can be freely adapted and used to serve local development needs.
3. **Capacity Building and Digital Literacy:** Focusing on scaled-up educational and training programs to empower BoP populations to be creators, not just consumers, of digital technologies.
4. **Equitable AI Governance:** Pushing for regulatory frameworks that mitigate AI bias, prevent technological exploitation, and ensure that AI systems are relevant and accessible in low-resource environments.
5. **Meaningful Representation:** Insisting on the inclusion of voices and perspectives from the Global South and BoP communities in all key international AI standard-setting and policy-making bodies.

The propositions are robustly substantiated through **comparative analyses of AI initiatives across the Global South versus the Global North**. For instance, stark statistics reveal the financial disparity: **$108.3 billion in AI investments concentrated in the Global North versus a mere $12 billion in the Global South**. The paper further utilizes specific, high-impact **case studies**, such as the pioneering **Bangladesh's Sundarbans AI-blockchain project**, to illustrate how contextualized technological interventions can deliver tangible development outcomes in BoP settings.

Building upon our established theoretical contributions, including previous frameworks on **fluid governance** and the dynamics of **BoP innovation**, this paper culminates in a strong advocacy for comprehensive **policy reforms**. These reforms are crucial to move beyond mere policy dialogue and translate the promise of AI into truly **equitable outcomes** for the entire global population.

Fortune favours the brave.

1. Introduction

The accelerating integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across global economic and social systems holds immense promise for transformative benefits, yet it concurrently risks exacerbating profound global inequalities, a phenomenon often termed the "AI Divide." This disparity is particularly acute for the Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) populations—a vast and diverse demographic comprising over four billion low-income individuals, primarily situated within the developing nations of the Global South.

These BoP communities are characterized by multi-faceted and entrenched structural barriers that critically limit their potential to fully engage with and derive equitable benefits from the ongoing AI revolution. The most salient of these barriers include:

1. **Critically Limited Digital Connectivity and Infrastructure:** A significant portion of the BoP lacks reliable access to essential digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet, affordable computing devices, and consistent electricity supply. This foundational gap prevents access to AI-driven services, educational resources, and economic opportunities, creating a fundamental exclusion. (ITU, 2025).
2. **Significant Skills Gaps and Educational Disparities:** The nature of work is rapidly evolving due to automation and the demand for AI-specific skills. BoP populations often lack access to quality education and vocational training necessary to navigate this new landscape. Without targeted upskilling initiatives focused on digital literacy, data analysis, and ethical AI usage, these individuals are at a high risk of being relegated to low-value, non-AI-driven economic sectors or suffering job displacement.
3. **Lack of AI-Relevant Data and Contextualization:** AI models are often trained on data predominantly reflecting the socio-economic contexts and languages of the Global North. This inherent bias results in AI solutions that are ill-suited, ineffective, or even harmful when deployed in BoP settings, failing to address unique local challenges in areas such as agriculture, microfinance, or vernacular

healthcare needs.

The cumulative effect of these interconnected structural challenges—including uneven access to high-speed internet and computing infrastructure, a stark global disparity in AI research and development capacity, and a lack of locally relevant data and talent—is a widening chasm between the 'AI Haves' and the 'AI Have-Nots.' This emergent digital divide stands in direct contrast to the aspirational potential of Artificial Intelligence as a powerful and scalable tool for poverty alleviation, fostering sustainable development, and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Prahalad, 2010). If left unchecked, this technological and economic polarization risks exacerbating existing global inequalities, creating a self-reinforcing cycle where richer nations and corporations benefit disproportionately from AI advancements, while developing economies struggle to keep pace and reap the benefits.

Bridging this rapidly expanding gap requires a holistic and concerted global effort that extends far beyond simple technology deployment or donation. The focus must shift fundamentally toward fostering an environment of inclusive and equitable AI adoption, predicated on three foundational pillars:

1. **Inclusive Policy and Governance:** This involves the creation of international and national regulatory frameworks that promote ethical AI development, ensure data privacy and sovereignty, and explicitly mandate mechanisms for technology transfer and capacity building in the Global South. It necessitates establishing public-private partnerships that prioritize open-source AI models and technologies, thereby lowering the barrier to entry for developing nations.
2. **Localized Innovation and Application:** Instead of merely importing foreign AI solutions, efforts must be directed towards supporting and funding local researchers and entrepreneurs to develop AI applications that are specifically tailored to address unique regional challenges—from precision agriculture suited to

specific soil types to healthcare diagnostics for endemic diseases. This shift ensures that AI is relevant, context-aware, and effective in solving local problems.

3. **Equitable Access to Foundational Pillars:** At the core, this means universalizing access to the fundamental building blocks of the digital economy: affordable, reliable broadband infrastructure; foundational digital literacy training for the general populace; and specialized STEM and AI education programs to cultivate a robust local talent pool capable of developing, deploying, and maintaining AI systems autonomously.

The escalating digital divide poses a profound and systemic threat to global equitable development, a crisis starkly visible in the current technological landscape. As of December 2025, the challenge is massive: an estimated 2.6 billion individuals worldwide remain completely unconnected, effectively establishing a rigid barrier that excludes them from the opportunities generated by the rapidly expanding digital economy and the accelerating wave of artificial intelligence.

This digital exclusion is set against the backdrop of a colossal economic shift powered by AI. Projections estimate that AI will inject a staggering $15.7 trillion into the global economy by 2030, fundamentally reshaping industries and creating unprecedented wealth. However, the anticipated distribution of this wealth is deeply concerning, threatening to exacerbate, rather than mitigate, existing global inequalities.

Current forecasts indicate that the benefits of this massive AI-driven economic surge will be highly concentrated and unevenly distributed. Nations comprising the Global South are currently projected to capture a disproportionately small share—only 10-15%—of this vast economic value (PwC, 2018; UNCTAD, 2025). This marginalization is not accidental; it is the direct result of a nexus of persistent structural deficiencies. These include critical infrastructural deficits, such as inadequate broadband penetration and unreliable energy access; inadequate and often outdated regulatory frameworks that fail to foster innovation or

protect consumers; and, crucially, insufficient investment in human capital—the foundational education and technical skills necessary to participate in and contribute to the AI revolution.

If this trend persists, the outcome will be the solidification of a new, deeply entrenched form of digital and economic marginalization. The 'AI dividend' risks becoming a major driver of divergence between the digitally connected and the digitally excluded, creating a permanent underclass locked out of 21st-century prosperity and consolidating global economic power among a few technologically advanced nations. Addressing this systemic challenge requires a coordinated, massive-scale global intervention focused on infrastructure, regulation, and inclusive skills development.

The years 2024 and 2025 have proven pivotal for establishing a comprehensive global governance architecture for the digital age, with a particular focus on the rapid advancements and challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI). This period saw the culmination of several key United Nations processes designed to create inclusive, rights-based, and forward-looking frameworks for international cooperation.

1. The Global Digital Compact (GDC): A Foundation for Digital Cooperation

The cornerstone of this new governance landscape is **The Global Digital Compact (GDC)**, formally adopted at the transformative **2024 UN Summit of the Future** (United Nations, 2024a). The GDC is not merely an agreement on technical standards; it establishes a unified, global framework intended to guide digital cooperation among all stakeholders—governments, the private sector, civil society, and technical communities.

The Compact's central function is to ensure that the digital transition benefits all of humanity, not just a select few. Its core principles are expansive, focusing on:

- **Digital Inclusion and Connectivity:** Addressing the persistent global digital divide to ensure meaningful access for all.
- **Protection of Human Rights Online:** Applying internationally recognized human rights principles—such as freedom of expression, privacy, and non-discrimination—to the digital realm.
- **Responsible and Ethical Use of Frontier Technologies:** This is a crucial element, specifically addressing the rapid development and deployment of advanced technologies, including Artificial Intelligence. The GDC provides an initial ethical and policy foundation for managing the societal and economic impact of AI at a global scale.
- **Building Trust and Security:** Promoting a stable, secure, and resilient digital environment, combating cyber threats, and ensuring the integrity of digital infrastructure.

2. The Establishment of UN AI Governance Structures

Building directly on the foundation laid by the GDC, September 2025 marked the establishment of two distinct yet complementary bodies under the auspices of the United Nations, signaling a decisive move towards institutionalizing global AI oversight (United Nations General Assembly, 2025a). These structures were created to manage the complex, cross-cutting nature of AI policy:

- **The UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance:** This mechanism is designed as an **inclusive, multi-stakeholder platform**. Its primary function is to foster continuous, open-ended discussions aimed at forging global norms, policies, and collaborative approaches to AI. By bringing together governments, leading AI companies, academic experts, and civil society groups, the Dialogue ensures that the resulting global AI norms are representative, practical, and adaptable to rapidly changing technology. It focuses on facilitating consensus on ethical guidelines and regulatory best practices.
- **The Independent International Scientific Panel on AI:** Recognizing the need for policy to be grounded in objective reality, this Panel was established to serve as the **authoritative,**

evidence-based scientific advisory body for global AI policymaking. Its mandate is to provide rigorous, independent assessments of the risks, opportunities, and societal impacts of AI. This includes evaluating the state of the art in AI, predicting future trajectories, and offering concrete, policy-relevant analysis to inform the work of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and other UN bodies. The Panel's existence ensures that global regulations are technologically sound, risk-informed, and maximize AI's potential for sustainable development.

3. The WSIS+20 Review: Adapting Foundational Digital Goals

Concurrently with the new AI-focused initiatives, the foundational principles of global digital development were critically reassessed through the **WSIS+20 Review** process. This review examines the outcomes and effectiveness of the landmark World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) agreements from 2003 and 2005. This comprehensive process culminates in the **December 2025 High-Level Meeting** of the General Assembly (United Nations General Assembly, 2025b).

The core mission of the WSIS+20 Review is essential: to update and adapt the original digital development goals to the realities of the mid-2020s. This includes:

- **Addressing the Complexities of Advanced Technologies:** Integrating the challenges and opportunities posed by technologies like AI, the Internet of Things, and quantum computing into the existing development paradigm.
- **Tackling the Persistent Digital Divide:** Reinvigorating efforts to close the gap in access and skills, which remains a significant impediment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The review emphasizes that the digital divide is no longer just about access to the internet, but access to **meaningful digital capabilities** and the tools necessary to benefit from AI-driven economies.
- **Harmonization with New Frameworks:** Ensuring that the

foundational WSIS action lines are seamlessly aligned with the newer, forward-looking mandates of the Global Digital Compact and the new UN AI governance structures, thereby creating a coherent and unified global digital agenda.

These global governance initiatives, aimed at creating a stable and equitable global digital order, are profoundly shaped by contemporary scholarly and policy discourse. A core focus of this discourse is the imperative to develop truly inclusive, resilient, and ethically grounded digital ecosystems, particularly as Artificial Intelligence (AI) rapidly integrates into all facets of society.

A significant body of work informing these initiatives stems from the research of Mamun, SM (multiple, 2025), which provides concrete, novel frameworks for addressing the persistent and complex challenges surrounding AI-related governance and the critical innovation gaps, especially in emerging economies. His contributions offer a dual approach, tackling both the regulatory and the practical application fronts:

- **Fluid Governance in AI (Mamun, 2025a):** This conceptual model moves beyond rigid, static regulatory approaches that are inevitably outpaced by the exponential growth of AI technology. It advocates for a paradigm shift toward an **adaptive, multi-scalar, and dynamic regulatory framework.**
    - **Adaptive:** The framework is designed with built-in mechanisms for continuous self-assessment, feedback loops, and rapid policy recalibration, allowing regulators to respond in near real-time to unforeseen technological developments and emergent ethical dilemmas.
    - **Multi-Scalar:** It acknowledges that AI governance requires coordination across multiple levels—from hyper-local community standards to national legislation, regional blocks, and global international agreements—ensuring coherence and minimizing regulatory fragmentation.
    - **Dynamic:** It establishes 'living' regulations that shift focus from banning or rigidly controlling technologies to

establishing principles, performance metrics, and accountability mechanisms, thereby fostering responsible innovation while uncompromisingly safeguarding core ethical standards, human rights, and societal well-being. This model is critical for maintaining regulatory relevance at the dizzying pace of AI advancement.

- **Minimum Viable Innovation Engines (MVIES) for BoP Markets (Mamun, 2025b):** Addressing the practical challenge of making AI accessible and impactful in the Global South, the MVIES concept offers a **frugal, contextually appropriate, and scalable** methodology for solution design. This approach is specifically tailored to overcome the unique constraints—such as limited infrastructure, high data costs, lack of digital literacy, and resource scarcity—and exploit the distinct opportunities within Bottom-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) economies.
    - **Practical and Frugal:** MVIES prioritizes resource efficiency, focusing on low-cost, open-source, or computationally light AI models that can operate effectively on existing, often limited, local infrastructure (e.g., feature phones, patchy internet).
    - **Contextually Appropriate:** Solutions are designed through deep local engagement, ensuring they solve genuine community needs (e.g., in agriculture, health, or education) and are culturally compatible, rather than being simply imported from high-income markets.
    - **Sustainable and Scalable:** The focus is on creating self-sustaining solutions that generate local value, employment, and expertise, facilitating their organic growth and diffusion across similar socio-economic contexts. This methodology is viewed as essential for truly bridging the global digital divide by fostering indigenous AI innovation capacity.
- **Dual Core Finance Model for AI Investment (Mamun, 2025c):** To bridge the stark investment disparity noted between the Global North and South ($108.3 billion vs. $12 billion), the Dual Core Finance model proposes a structured financial architecture for

equitable AI development. This model is designed to de-risk AI-for-Good ventures and ensure sustainable funding for both foundational infrastructure and localized innovation in BoP markets.

- **Core 1: Global Development Finance (GDF) and Patient Capital:** This core is focused on leveraging strategic, long-term, patient capital from Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), global climate funds, and public-sector grants. Its primary role is to fund high-risk, foundational necessities, such as universal broadband connectivity, the development of Digital Public Goods (DPGs), and establishing local AI research capacity. The investment objective is maximizing long-term social and developmental impact aligned with the SDGs.
- **Core 2: Frugal and Catalytic Private Investment:** This core mobilizes localized, market-driven private capital using innovative and blended finance instruments, including tokenized assets, micro-venture capital, and targeted impact investment funds. This capital is specifically directed towards scaling Minimum Viable Innovation Engines (MVIES) projects that demonstrate contextual appropriateness and a pathway to a viable, sustainable financial return, thereby creating an autonomous, local AI ecosystem.

The successful navigation of the current global AI transition represents a pivotal moment in human development, one that hinges critically on the effective and deliberate alignment of global governance efforts with practical, inclusive innovation strategies. This alignment must specifically and urgently target the deep-seated structural deficits—ranging from inadequate infrastructure and limited access to education to financial exclusion—faced by the world's most vulnerable populations, often clustered in the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) markets. Without this focused and equitable approach, the AI revolution risks exacerbating existing global inequalities, creating a new 'digital divide' far more profound than its predecessors.

The Purpose and Scope of this Analysis

This paper is meticulously designed with a threefold aim to dissect this challenge, propose actionable solutions, and ground them in rigorous analysis:

1. To Describe the Key Global AI Processes and Governance Landscape:

This objective involves a comprehensive mapping of the current, complex global AI governance ecosystem. It will meticulously detail the key global AI processes, which include high-level, multilateral initiatives spearheaded by organizations like the United Nations (e.g., through discussions on a Global Digital Compact or the AI Advisory Body's work), as well as influential, often self-regulatory, frameworks driven by the industry (e.g., the development of voluntary codes of conduct and safety standards by leading tech firms). The analysis will incorporate an examination of all relevant regulatory and ethical frameworks, identifying points of convergence and divergence, especially concerning their applicability and impact on low- and middle-income countries.

2. To Outline Base of the Pyramid (BoP) Priorities within These Processes:

A central goal is to integrate the distinct needs and priorities of BoP populations into the global AI discourse. This section will systematically outline the imperatives for inclusive AI, contextualizing them amid persistent and critical ongoing issues. These issues include, but are not limited to, pervasive digital exclusion (lack of affordable access, skills gap), data colonialism (extraction and control of data by foreign entities), algorithmic bias (where models fail or harm marginalized groups), and displacement of low-skilled labor. The paper will argue that BoP considerations must transition from a peripheral concern to a core pillar of international AI policy.

3. To Propose Policy Imperatives for BoP Markets and Underpinning Strategies:

The final, and most crucial, aim is to move beyond diagnosis to prescriptive action. This involves proposing a concrete set of policy imperatives and strategic recommendations specifically tailored for the unique market dynamics, resource constraints, and developmental goals of BoP markets. These proposals will not be theoretical; they will be rigorously substantiated by comparative analyses across different emerging economies, up-to-date statistical evidence regarding connectivity and adoption rates, and detailed case studies of successful and unsuccessful AI interventions (e.g., in microfinance, agriculture, or healthcare delivery) that have either empowered or failed to reach vulnerable communities. The proposed policies will focus on areas such as public-private partnerships for infrastructure, responsible data governance frameworks, targeted skills development, and the creation of regulatory sandboxes for inclusive AI innovation.

2. Key Global Processes in AI Governance

Global AI processes are expanding to address governance, innovation, and equity, rooted in UN frameworks like the GDC and WSIS. These include UN-led panels, summits, and industry conferences, as detailed below.

2.1 UN-Led Governance Panels and Dialogues

Established via UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/79/L.118 in August 2025, these bodies involve 193 Member States and stakeholders to evaluate AI risks and opportunities (United Nations General Assembly, 2025a).

Process	**Description**	**Key Focus Areas**	**Upcoming Milestones**
Global Dialogue on AI Governance	Inclusive platform for deliberations on AI challenges and interoperability. Launched September 2025.	Human rights, transparency, risk assessment, equitable development.	First session 2026, back-to-back with AI for Good Summit; annual reports.
Independent International Scientific Panel on AI	Global scientific body assessing AI impacts; nominations closed October 2025.	Societal effects, sustainability, inequality; annual reporting.	Inaugural report 2026; ongoing policy support.
UNESCO Global Forum on the Ethics of AI	Builds on 2021 Recommendation; convenes for ethical strategies.	Human rights, gender equality, sustainability.	3rd Forum: June 2026, Bangkok; regional adoption focus.

The global institutional landscape for Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance has been formally established through a series of actions at the United Nations, culminating in the creation of three interconnected, UN-led bodies in August and September 2025 via a landmark General Assembly Resolution. These three entities—the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, and the UNESCO Global Forum on the Ethics of AI—represent the crucial institutional core designed to steer global discussions, provide scientific insight, and promote ethical development in the field of AI.

The **Global Dialogue on AI Governance** is envisioned as the primary, high-level, and inclusive multi-stakeholder platform. Its mandate is to foster comprehensive deliberation on the most pressing issues arising from the rapid diffusion of AI technologies. Key topics for discussion include the protection and promotion of human rights in the AI era, establishing principles for transparency and accountability in AI systems, and ensuring equitable development so that the benefits of AI are shared globally, particularly by the Global South. This Dialogue is set to convene its inaugural session and release its first annual progress reports in 2026, marking the formal commencement of its deliberative functions.

Complementing this broad consultative body is the **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI (IIPA)**. Established as an authoritative, purely scientific institution, the IIPA's core function is to provide objective, evidence-based assessments, independent of political influence. Its research focuses on the multifaceted societal impacts of AI, evaluating its implications for global sustainability goals, and analyzing how AI deployment may exacerbate or mitigate global inequality. Modeled after successful intergovernmental scientific panels, the IIPA will deliver its inaugural comprehensive assessment report in 2026, providing the necessary scientific foundation for informed policy-making across the UN system and member states.

Finally, the **UNESCO Global Forum on the Ethics of AI** fills the critical role of focusing specifically on the normative and ethical dimensions of

AI. This Forum builds directly upon the foundational **2021 UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence**, which remains the sole global normative instrument in this field. Its efforts are concentrated on developing practical ethical strategies and promoting their implementation at the national and regional levels, with a strong emphasis on integrating human rights principles, fostering gender equality in AI development and use, and ensuring alignment with environmental sustainability goals. To significantly advance the regional adoption and localization of these ethical norms, the 3rd installment of the UNESCO Global Forum is scheduled to take place in June 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand. This choice of venue underscores the strategic goal of embedding ethical AI frameworks deeply within diverse geopolitical and socio-economic contexts.

2.2 Summits and Forums for AI Innovation and Good

These tie into WSIS Action Lines for digital inclusion, emphasizing practical AI applications.

Process	**Description**	**Key Focus Areas**	**Upcoming Milestones**
AI for Good Global Summit	ITU-led with UN agencies; identifies AI for global challenges.	SDGs alignment, robotics, skills; Global South inclusion.	2026 Edition: July, Geneva; youth sessions.
World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) +20 High-Level Event	Reviews 2005 WSIS; integrates AI into Action Lines.	Digital divides, AI ethics; GDC links.	WSIS+20 Review: Outcomes feed 2026 IGF; AI role renewal.
Internet Governance Forum (IGF)	Multi-stakeholder forum on digital policy.	AI governance, human rights, transparency.	IGF 2026: Q4, TBD; builds on 2025 discussions.

Process	**Description**	**Key Focus Areas**	**Upcoming Milestones**
Global AI Governance Dialogue (ITU-led)	Ministerial forum with UN partners.	Policy alignment, coordination.	2026: With AI for Good; GDC actions.

The global discourse on digital governance and technological advancement is significantly shaped by a series of critical multilateral forums and summits. These processes are fundamentally tied to the principles established by the **World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Action Lines**, particularly emphasizing robust frameworks for **digital inclusion**. A central theme across all these discussions is the practical, ethical, and beneficial deployment of Artificial Intelligence, frequently encapsulated under the umbrella term **"AI for Good."**

Several key initiatives drive this agenda:

1. **AI for Good Global Summit:**
    - **Leadership and Focus:** This preeminent initiative is spearheaded by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN's specialized agency for information and communication technologies.
    - **Core Mandate:** The Summit's primary function is to serve as the leading action-oriented platform for identifying and fostering how AI can be a direct tool for addressing complex global challenges.
    - **Strategic Alignment:** A specific and critical focus is placed on **SDGs alignment** (Sustainable Development Goals), ensuring that AI innovation contributes measurably to achieving the 2030 agenda. Furthermore, the initiative places a strong emphasis on **Global South inclusion**, aiming to bridge technological and socioeconomic divides by ensuring that the benefits of AI are accessible and relevant to developing nations.

- **Next Edition:** The next major edition is scheduled to convene in Geneva in July 2026.

2. **World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) +20 High-Level Event:**
    - **Purpose:** This event serves as a vital, two-decade review of the foundational goals and outcomes of the original 2005 WSIS summit.
    - **Modern Integration:** In recognition of the transformative shift in the digital landscape, the review process actively integrates the discussion of AI into the existing WSIS Action Lines. This is essential for modernizing the framework to address persistent and evolving challenges, most notably the deep-seated **digital divides** in terms of access, affordability, and skills.
    - **Future Policy Nexus:** The outcomes and declarations from the WSIS +20 event are explicitly designed to inform and link with the emerging policy principles of the **Global Digital Compact (GDC)**. Crucially, these findings will directly shape the agenda and policy discussions at the subsequent 2026 Internet Governance Forum.
3. **Internet Governance Forum (IGF):**
    - **Role and Structure:** The IGF remains the world's central and most inclusive **multi-stakeholder platform** for open dialogue on internet-related public policy issues. It brings together governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community, and international organizations.
    - **Current Policy Drivers:** The forum is instrumental in driving the most complex and critical discussions in the digital space, focusing on intricate policy areas such as **AI governance** (including risk mitigation and innovation promotion), upholding **human rights** in the digital sphere, and ensuring full **transparency** in the development and deployment of algorithms and digital services.
4. **Global AI Governance Dialogue (Ministerial Forum):**
    - **Level and Leadership:** This high-level forum convenes at the ministerial and senior official level, also under the

leadership of the ITU, signifying a direct commitment by UN member states.

- **Goal:** The primary objective is to achieve **policy alignment and coordination** among all relevant UN system partners, regional bodies, and key international stakeholders.
- **Strategic Function:** It is designed to operationalize and advance the actions called for under the proposed Global Digital Compact (GDC) specifically in the context of AI.
- **Next Session:** The next session is strategically scheduled to take place in 2026, alongside the AI for Good Global Summit, ensuring direct synergy between high-level political commitment and action-oriented implementation.

2.3 Major AI Conferences and Industry Summits

These drive technical advancements, influencing governance.

Process	**Description**	**Key Focus Areas**	**Upcoming Milestones**
NVIDIA GTC AI Conference	Tech event on AI hardware/applications.	Agentic AI, GPUs, healthcare.	March 2026, San Jose.
World Summit AI	Visionaries' epicenter; 10th anniversary.	Generative AI, startups, finance.	October 2026, Amsterdam.
AI Summit London	Enterprise-focused during Tech Week.	Transformation, ethics, security.	June 2026, London.
Global AI Show	Expo for innovators; emerging markets.	AI-for-good, gender equity.	February 2026, Riyadh.

The international landscape for Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance is characterized by a complex interplay of formal, state-led processes and influential, industry-driven initiatives. These formal processes, often spearheaded by global bodies such as the United Nations, consistently bring to light systemic challenges, notably **regulatory fragmentation**

across different jurisdictions and pronounced **North-South imbalances** in engagement and resource allocation. Data indicates a concerning disparity, with only seven developed nations reported to be fully engaged across the spectrum of major UN-led initiatives (United Nations, 2025c). This limited participation from a significant portion of the global community hinders the development of truly universal and equitable governance frameworks.

Distinct from these governmental endeavors, a series of **major industry summits and conferences** play an instrumental role in shaping the technical trajectory and practical implementation of AI governance principles. These events are crucial for driving cutting-edge technical advancements and are often the venue where consensus is forged on the future direction of the technology. Their focus is broad, encompassing critical areas such as **Agentic AI** systems, the provisioning of **GPUs** and compute resources, the rapid evolution of **Generative AI**, large-scale **enterprise transformation** facilitated by AI, and foundational discussions around **ethics and security**.

A standout example of this industry-led movement is the **Global AI Show**, which specifically directs its attention toward fostering innovation within **emerging markets**. This summit adopts a distinct agenda by prioritizing initiatives centered on **AI-for-good** and actively promoting **gender equity** within the technology sector. By targeting innovators and policymakers in these regions, the Global AI Show attempts to counterbalance the predominant North-centric focus of much of the current AI development and regulation.

Collectively, the outcomes of both the UN-led discussions and the influential industry gatherings underscore persistent and critical challenges for the future of AI. The evidence overwhelmingly points to enduring problems of regulatory fragmentation, where differing national standards create friction and uncertainty for global AI deployment. More profoundly, these processes reveal significant North-South imbalances, with a small number of developed nations dominating the discourse, investment, and standard-setting across all major global initiatives, thereby potentially

leaving the ethical and developmental priorities of the Global South underrepresented.

3. Base-of-the-Pyramid Priorities in Global AI Processes

BoP priorities focus on inclusion, capacity, and risk mitigation, aligned with GDC and SDGs.

3.1 UN-Led Governance Panels and Dialogues (BoP Focus)

These prioritize Global South capacity amid biases and funding gaps.

Priority	Description	BoP-Relevant Actions/Examples
Advancing Equity and Capacity-Building	Skills and infrastructure for inclusion.	Annual reports (2026) on open-source tools; GDC funds for 2.6 billion unconnected.
Transparency and Human Oversight	Accountable systems for vulnerable groups.	Panel evaluations on discrimination; UNESCO focuses on gender in datasets.
Openness and Interoperability	Democratize access to reduce dependency.	Dialogue advocacy for model passports; low-cost AI for agriculture.

The discourse within UN-led governance panels and international dialogues is increasingly focused on establishing Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) priorities. These priorities are critical, and explicitly designed to address systemic challenges facing the Global South, particularly pervasive biases, significant funding gaps, and the urgent need for enhanced local capacity in the rapidly evolving landscape of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital governance.

These BoP priorities are strategically concentrated on three interconnected core areas, each underpinned by concrete actions and measurable commitments:

1. Advancing Equity and Capacity-Building

This core priority moves beyond mere access to connectivity, focusing fundamentally on developing the essential human, technical, and institutional infrastructure necessary for genuine digital inclusion. The goal is to transform BoP populations from passive consumers of AI technologies into active creators, innovators, and beneficiaries.

- **Strategic Interventions:**
    - **Open-Source Commitment:** A key commitment is the publication of **Annual reports (starting in 2026)** detailing the adoption rates and efficacy of open-source AI tools. This directly counters the reliance on proprietary, often expensive, software and promotes a globally accessible knowledge base.
    - **Targeted Financial Allocation:** The strategic allocation of **Global Digital Compact (GDC) funds** is specifically dedicated to closing the staggering global connectivity gap, which currently affects an estimated **2.6 billion unconnected individuals**. This funding is targeted not just at infrastructure, but also at digital literacy and the development of locally relevant content and applications.
    - **Skill Development and Talent Pipeline:** This includes initiatives for setting up regional AI training hubs, fostering South-South cooperation, and integrating AI education into national curricula to cultivate a sustainable local talent pipeline equipped for the jobs of the future.

2. Transparency and Human Oversight

This priority mandates the construction of AI systems that are inherently accountable and ethical, with a primary focus on protecting vulnerable groups from algorithmic harm and discrimination. The emphasis is on mitigating biases inherent in AI models primarily trained on North-centric data and reflecting the cultural context of the Global North.

- **Concrete Mechanisms:**

- **Algorithmic Auditing and Evaluation:** The **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI** is tasked with rigorous evaluations specifically focusing on potential algorithmic discrimination. This involves developing international standards for bias detection, redressal mechanisms, and continuous monitoring of AI systems deployed in critical public sectors.
- **Gender and Equity in Data:** The **UNESCO Global Forum** strongly emphasizes the imperative for gender equity and cultural diversity in datasets and policy frameworks. This involves promoting data sovereignty, encouraging the collection of locally representative data, and implementing data governance policies that actively counter historical biases.
- **Human-in-the-Loop Systems:** Mandates for robust human oversight ensure that automated decisions can be challenged, explained, and overridden, maintaining adherence to universal human rights principles and ethical guidelines throughout the AI lifecycle.

3. Openness and Interoperability

This priority is fundamentally about democratizing access to AI technologies and significantly reducing the dependency of developing nations on costly, proprietary solutions offered by a few large global corporations. It seeks to create a competitive and innovative ecosystem.

- **Key Advocacy and Standards:**
  - **Model Passports and Standardization:** Dialogue advocacy is pushing for **model passports**—standardized, transparent documentation for all commercial and open-source AI models. These passports would detail the model's training data, performance metrics, limitations, and potential biases, allowing users in the Global South to make informed adoption decisions.
  - **Promotion of Low-Cost Solutions:** Significant effort is

directed toward the promotion and scaling of low-cost, open-source AI solutions tailored for critical sectors such as agriculture (e.g., precision farming tools), public health (e.g., diagnostic aids), and disaster response.

- **Interoperable Standards:** The push for interoperability ensures that AI tools and systems developed in different nations and by different vendors can seamlessly communicate and integrate. This fosters an environment where local innovation can thrive, ensuring AI tools are not only contextually appropriate and accessible but also easily adaptable and scalable to diverse local development needs. This ultimately builds resilience against vendor lock-in.

3.2 Summits and Forums for AI Innovation (BoP Focus)

These emphasize connectivity and ethics for development.

Priority	Description	BoP-Relevant Actions/Examples
Universal Connectivity and Digital Inclusion	Tackle unconnected populations.	AI for Good sessions on networks; WSIS+20 for broadband in Africa.
Ethical AI and Sustainability for Development	AI for SDGs, minimizing harms.	Awards for BoP projects; IGF for economic mobility.
Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Representation	Shape policies with BoP voices.	Inclusive forums; diverse data ecosystems.

The selected priorities establish a focused and action-oriented agenda for embedding the critical needs and perspectives of Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) populations within the rapidly evolving global AI governance landscape. This framework is designed to address core, structural, and

systemic challenges by strategically leveraging key multilateral and multi-stakeholder processes.

The three primary pillars of this agenda are:

1. Universal Connectivity and Digital Inclusion

This priority aims to resolve the most fundamental and persistent structural barrier to equitable AI adoption and benefit: the global digital divide. With over 2.6 billion individuals currently unconnected, addressing this gap is the necessary precursor to all other forms of digital equity and AI-driven development.

- **Objective:** To achieve tangible action to **tackle unconnected populations** by integrating this challenge into the highest levels of global policy and resource allocation.
- **Operationalization:** This is operationalized through a dedicated focus on infrastructure development, networking solutions, and policy incentives, particularly at crucial global events.
    - **AI for Good Global Summit:** Utilized as a platform to secure public-private partnerships and innovative financing models for affordable infrastructure deployment.
    - **WSIS+20 High-Level Event:** Positioned to drive ambitious political commitments and national-level pledges for the deployment of affordable, high-speed broadband, with a specific and urgent focus on underserved regions, such as the African continent. This effort ensures connectivity is treated not as a luxury but as a basic human right essential for participation in the AI era.

2. Ethical AI and Sustainability for Development

This pillar focuses on ensuring that the proliferation of AI serves as a powerful and ethical catalyst for human development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Simultaneously, it

emphasizes the proactive **minimization of harms** that AI technologies can introduce, particularly for vulnerable populations.

- **Objective:** To align **AI for SDGs** by fostering the creation and deployment of AI systems that are inherently accountable, ethically grounded, and locally relevant to the development contexts they serve.
- **Commitment & Policy Action:** The commitment to ethical and sustainable AI is driven by specific policy interventions and recognition mechanisms.
    - **Awards for BoP Projects:** Supporting global recognition and scalable funding for projects that demonstrate high-impact, ethical, and frugal innovation tailored to BoP needs, thereby creating positive feedback loops for responsible technology.
    - **Internet Governance Forum (IGF):** Leveraging this multi-stakeholder platform to develop robust and inclusive policy frameworks. These frameworks specifically address AI's instrumental role in advancing economic mobility, improving public services (e.g., health, education), and systematically reducing inequality across and within countries. This includes developing risk assessment and mitigation strategies focused on algorithmic bias and data exploitation in BoP contexts.

3. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Representation

This critical goal directly confronts the entrenched North-centric bias that currently dominates global AI development, policy, and regulation. The exclusion of voices from the Global South and BoP communities leads to technologies and policies that are misaligned with local needs, languages, and cultural contexts.

- **Objective:** To fundamentally **shape policies with BoP voices** by mandating their substantive inclusion and equitable participation at all levels of decision-making, from technical standardization to high-level policy setting.
- **Strategy:** This imperative is pursued through two core strategies:

- **Inclusive Forums:** Fostering truly **inclusive forums** at the United Nations (UN), including the Global Digital Compact (GDC) process, and other major global summits. This involves targeted capacity building and funding to ensure robust participation from civil society, grassroots organizations, local governments, and researchers from the Global South.
- **Diverse Data Ecosystems:** Promoting and investing in the creation of **diverse data ecosystems**. These ecosystems must be accurately reflective of local contexts, languages, cultural nuances, and the unique data needs of BoP populations. This strategic shift ensures that global standards, data governance frameworks, and resulting AI models are genuinely representative, culturally appropriate, and ultimately effective for the communities they are intended to serve in the Global South, thereby mitigating the risk of technology reinforcing existing power imbalances (United Nations, 2025c).

4. WSIS Priorities for BoP Markets in December 2025

As the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting approaches (15–17 December 2025), priorities for BoP—4 billion in Africa, Asia, Latin America—focus on ICTs for poverty reduction, per the Zero Draft (United Nations General Assembly, 2025b).

WSIS Action Line	**Priority Focus for BoP Markets**	**Rationale and December Actions**
C2: Infrastructure	Affordable connectivity via partnerships.	Addresses 33% unconnected; endorse ITU catalyser.
C3: Access to Information	Multilingual digital goods.	Reduces biases; commit to content tracks.
C4: Capacity Building	Skills for women/youth.	Closes 17% gender gap; integrate CSTD reports.
C5: Security	BoP cybersecurity frameworks.	Protects vulnerabilities; task forces for norms.
C7: ICT Applications	E-platforms for agriculture/health.	Drives SDGs; renew prizes for innovations.
C11: Cooperation	South-led partnerships.	Counters fragmentation; adopt WSIS Plus framework.

These contextually-tailored priorities reflect the urgency of digital inclusion, linking the foundational WSIS goals to the new global governance structures of the GDC and feeding into subsequent policy processes in 2026. The upcoming WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting in December 2025 marks a pivotal moment for digital policy, especially concerning the Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) markets, which encompass an estimated four billion people across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The selected WSIS Action Lines serve as the prioritized, concrete agenda to leverage Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for accelerated poverty reduction and genuinely inclusive development within these regions. This strategic focus ensures that the foundational principles

of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) are directly integrated into the evolving global digital governance landscape, particularly in relation to the emerging Global Digital Compact (GDC). The key imperatives and their elaboration are as follows:

1. Infrastructure (C2): Bridging the Connectivity Divide

- **Priority:** Ensuring **affordable connectivity via partnerships**.
- **Context and Urgency:** A staggering **33% of the global population** remains unconnected, with the majority residing in BoP markets. This lack of access severely limits educational, economic, and social opportunities.
- **Elaboration and Action:** The immediate focus is on mobilizing public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships to lower the cost of access and deployment. A concrete, high-impact action planned is the **endorsement and utilization of the ITU catalyser** as a critical financial mechanism. This fund is specifically designed to de-risk investments in high-cost, low-return environments, thereby accelerating the deployment of broadband infrastructure, including satellite and terrestrial networks, to the hardest-to-reach communities. The goal is to establish tangible, quantifiable targets for reducing the global unconnected percentage within the WSIS+20 review period.

2. Access to Information and Knowledge (C3): Ensuring Linguistic and Cultural Relevance

- **Priority:** The development of **multilingual digital goods**.
- **Context and Urgency:** Digital content bias, where the vast majority of online information is available in only a handful of global languages, creates a significant barrier to effective digital participation and reinforces data biases against BoP communities.
- **Elaboration and Action:** This strategy involves a significant commitment to supporting specific content tracks focused on localization and linguistic diversity. This includes fostering open-source initiatives for machine translation, investing in digital

literacy programs that integrate native-language content creation, and promoting public domain data. The objective is to make online information, educational resources, and essential services genuinely accessible and meaningful to BoP communities, ensuring that language is an enabler, not a barrier, to knowledge acquisition.

3. Capacity Building (C4): Closing the Digital Skills and Gender Gaps

- **Priority:** Fostering **skills for women and youth**.
- **Context and Urgency:** The persistent digital skills gap, exacerbated by a significant **17% gender gap** in internet use, directly hinders economic empowerment and inclusive growth in BoP markets. Youth unemployment and lack of job-relevant digital skills pose a structural challenge.
- **Elaboration and Action:** Policy actions will integrate recommendations and reports from authoritative bodies, such as the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD). This will guide the design of targeted educational programs that move beyond basic digital literacy to include advanced skills in areas like coding, data analytics, and digital entrepreneurship. Special emphasis is placed on vocational training and mentorship programs tailored for young women to achieve parity in digital professions and leadership.

4. Building Confidence and Security (C5): Tailored Cybersecurity for Vulnerable Markets

- **Priority:** Establishment of **BoP cybersecurity frameworks**.
- **Context and Urgency:** BoP users and small enterprises face unique and often severe cybersecurity vulnerabilities due to low-cost devices, limited software updates, and a lack of awareness, making them disproportionately susceptible to digital fraud and exploitation.
- **Elaboration and Action:** This involves the formation of expert task forces composed of regulators, civil society, and technical experts. Their mandate is to define appropriate and proportionate cybersecurity norms, protocols, and best practices specifically designed for low-resource environments. The frameworks will

prioritize user-friendly security solutions, promote basic cyber hygiene education, and establish clear reporting mechanisms that protect individual and national digital assets without imposing prohibitive regulatory burdens.

5. ICT Applications (C7): Driving Sectoral Progress through E-Platforms

- **Priority:** Promoting high-impact **E-platforms for agriculture and health**.
- **Context and Urgency:** ICT applications in agriculture (AgriTech) and health (eHealth) represent the most direct pathways to achieving core Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to food security, poverty eradication (SDG 1 & 2), and good health and well-being (SDG 3).
- **Elaboration and Action:** The focus is on catalysing local innovation by renewing and expanding prizes, incentives, and seed funding for locally relevant, high-impact innovations. This includes supporting the development of mobile-based platforms that provide real-time climate data, market price information for smallholder farmers, and telemedicine services for remote communities. The goal is to move beyond pilot projects to large-scale, sustainable E-platform ecosystems that integrate into national development strategies.

6. Regional and International Cooperation (C11): Promoting South-Led Governance

- **Priority:** Advocating for **South-led partnerships**.
- **Context and Urgency:** The digital governance landscape is often dominated by norms and regulations originating from the Global North, which may not adequately address the unique development challenges or policy needs of the Global South. Furthermore, growing regulatory fragmentation threatens global digital integration.
- **Elaboration and Action:** This action line directly counters regulatory fragmentation by promoting the **adoption of the WSIS**

Plus framework as a cohesive standard for digital development policies. It emphasizes fostering robust, peer-to-peer cooperation and knowledge transfer among nations in the Global South. The aim is to ensure that future governance frameworks, particularly the GDC, are genuinely inclusive and responsive, giving a strong voice to BoP priorities and promoting a cooperative, rather than competitive, approach to global digital development.

These contextually-tailored priorities reflect the urgent need to ensure digital inclusion and directly link the foundational WSIS goals to the new global governance structures of the GDC. They are designed not only to guide the December 2025 meeting but also to feed into subsequent, critical global policy processes in 2026 and beyond.

5. Comparative Analysis of AI Initiatives in the Global South versus North

The global landscape of Artificial Intelligence (AI) investment and regulation is currently defined by a stark and widening geopolitical disparity, often conceptualized as the gap between the Global North and South. This asymmetry is profoundly rooted in financial and technological dominance.

The Financial and Technological Chasm

The concentration of financial resources in the Global North provides a crucial foundation for its AI supremacy. In 2025 alone, AI investments in the North were projected to reach a staggering **$108.3 billion**. This massive outlay stands in sharp contrast to the Global South's total investment of only **$12 billion** for the same period. This represents a near ten-fold financial disparity, according to data from sources like the Future Investment Initiative (2025) and the OECD (2025). This financial chasm is not merely a quantitative difference; it directly translates into a qualitative technological lead.

The Global North holds a commanding position in the intellectual property landscape, securing an estimated **90% share of AI patents**. This deep and protected pool of intellectual property solidifies the North's control over foundational AI innovation, from core algorithms and neural network architectures to sophisticated hardware for model training. The resultant technological lock-in makes it challenging for the South to compete in the creation of general-purpose AI systems, often forcing reliance on technologies developed elsewhere.

The Global South's Strategic AI Engagement and Systemic Hurdles

Despite the systemic resource asymmetry, the Global South is demonstrating an increasingly proactive and strategic engagement with AI.

The commitment to sovereign AI development is evidenced by the rapid surge in the number of Southern countries with dedicated national AI strategies, which has grown from a mere five in 2018 to **over twenty in 2025**.

These national strategies are generally distinguished by a focus on **contextualized, localized AI applications**. The priority is not merely replicating Northern AI models, but rather adapting the technology to address specific, urgent regional challenges. Key areas of focus include:

- **Climate Resilience:** Developing AI models for early warning systems for floods, droughts, and extreme weather events.
- **Precision Agriculture:** Optimizing crop yields and resource allocation through localized data analysis.
- **Public Health Systems:** Improving diagnostics, disease surveillance (as championed by organizations like the African Union, 2024), and resource distribution in under-served areas (UNESCO, 2025).

However, the execution of these ambitious, context-aware plans is severely hampered by **systemic limitations**:

1. **Data Scarcity and Quality:** There is a persistent scarcity of high-quality, representative, and appropriately labeled datasets for Southern contexts. This is a crucial bottleneck, as AI models are only as effective and fair as the data they are trained on.
2. **Infrastructure and Energy Constraints:** The continuous training and deployment of complex, large-scale AI models require significant computational power and reliable energy access. Persistent infrastructure constraints and unreliable power grids in many Southern nations pose a substantial impediment to scaling up AI initiatives.

Divergence and Risk in AI Governance and Regulation

The regulatory approaches to AI also show a marked divergence. The Global North, exemplified by frameworks such as the **European Union's**

AI Act (European Commission, 2024), has established comprehensive regulation focused on ensuring safety, transparency, and the protection of fundamental human rights. These frameworks are designed to govern the full lifecycle of AI systems, with a particular emphasis on high-risk applications.

Conversely, while the Global South is actively developing its own governance models, there is a significant and often underappreciated risk of **regulatory harmonization defaulting to Northern standards**. This phenomenon, if not carefully managed, could inadvertently lead to new forms of technological and policy dependencies. Adopting regulations that primarily address the concerns of technologically advanced nations might stifle homegrown innovation and fail to adequately mitigate the unique ethical and societal concerns pertinent to the Southern context (Mamun, 2025c).

The core imperative for the Global South is the development of **sovereign, context-aware AI governance**. This approach must achieve a dual objective: fostering local innovation and technological self-determination while simultaneously mitigating the risks of **technological neocolonialism**, where economic, regulatory, and technical dependencies perpetuate global power imbalances.

6. Case Studies from the Global South

6.1 AI-Blockchain in Bangladesh's Sundarbans

Mamun's (2017, 2020, 2021, 2025c) innovative approach, termed the Multi-Value Integrated Enterprise (MVIE), has been successfully applied to supply chains within the honey industry. A cornerstone of this MVIE model is the strategic integration of blockchain technology to create transparent, secure, and traceable honey chains. This technological intervention is proving to be a powerful mechanism for economic upliftment, specifically targeting populations at the Base of the Pyramid (BoP).

The implementation of blockchain-enabled traceability and provenance assurance has yielded significant economic benefits for the BoP stakeholders. Specifically, the model has demonstrated an impressive increase in their reported revenues, showing a substantial boost ranging from 15% to 20%. This revenue growth is directly attributable to the system's ability to ensure fair pricing, reduce intermediation losses, and verify the authenticity and quality of the honey, thereby commanding premium prices in the market.

Furthermore, the MVIE is not solely focused on economic gains; it is also designed as a practical and effective tool for climate change adaptation. By enhancing supply chain visibility and linking producers directly to end-consumers with verified information, the system encourages sustainable practices. The documented chain of custody can reward producers who employ environmentally responsible harvesting and farming techniques, making the overall enterprise more resilient to climate-related shocks and shifts in agricultural conditions (Mamun, 2025b). This multi-faceted benefit positions the MVIE as a holistic and impactful development intervention.**The Multi-Value Integrated Enterprise (MVIE): A Blueprint for Sustainable and Equitable Supply Chains**

The intellectual and practical innovation spearheaded by Dr. Mamun,

known as the Multi-Value Integrated Enterprise (MVIE), represents a paradigm shift in structuring and managing complex supply chains, particularly within the agricultural sector. This model has been successfully piloted and applied to the honey industry, serving as a powerful case study for its broader applicability. At the core of the MVIE model is a commitment to not only maximize economic value but also to integrate principles of transparency, security, and sustainability—a "multi-value" proposition.

Blockchain as the Cornerstone of Trust and Traceability

A non-negotiable cornerstone of the MVIE architecture is the strategic and comprehensive integration of blockchain technology. This technological intervention is deployed not as a mere novelty but as a foundational mechanism to establish a **transparent, secure, and fully traceable** honey supply chain. By recording every transaction, custody transfer, and quality assurance step on a distributed, immutable ledger, the blockchain creates a single source of truth. This unprecedented level of transparency and immutability is proving to be a highly effective tool for targeted **economic upliftment,** specifically benefiting populations situated at the Base of the Pyramid (BoP). The MVIE, therefore, transforms a traditionally opaque system into one defined by verifiable trust.

Tangible Economic Empowerment for the Base of the Pyramid (BoP)

The direct implementation of blockchain-enabled traceability and verifiable provenance assurance has translated into significant, quantifiable economic benefits for the BoP stakeholders, primarily the small-scale producers and harvesters. The data is compelling: the MVIE model has demonstrably led to an impressive increase in their reported net revenues, showing a substantial boost ranging from **15% to 20%**. This remarkable

revenue growth is directly attributable to several key functions facilitated by the MVIE system:

- **Ensuring Fair Pricing:** By removing layers of unnecessary intermediaries and making the final market price transparent, the system prevents predatory pricing and ensures that a significantly larger share of the profit flows back to the producers.
- **Reducing Intermediation Losses:** The direct link created between producers and verified buyers minimizes losses traditionally siphoned off by excessive middlemen.
- **Verifying Authenticity and Quality:** The immutable record confirms the origin, purity, and quality of the honey, allowing it to command **premium prices** in discerning national and international markets that value certified, authentic products.

MVIE: A Dual Mandate for Climate Resilience and Sustainability

Crucially, the MVIE is designed to be more than just a mechanism for economic gain; it serves as a practical, effective, and forward-looking tool for **climate change adaptation and mitigation**. The enhanced supply chain visibility provided by the blockchain directly links producers to end-consumers with verified, data-rich information about the product's journey. This connectivity fosters and rewards **sustainable practices** in a meaningful way.

The documented and verifiable chain of custody is utilized to incentivize and reward producers who employ environmentally responsible harvesting, bee-keeping, and farming techniques. For instance, producers adhering to strict organic or biodiversity-enhancing methods can have this certification logged and verified on the blockchain, justifying the premium price and securing long-term contracts. This inherent incentive structure makes the overall enterprise more **resilient** to the inevitable shocks and shifts in agricultural conditions brought about by climate change (Mamun, 2025b). By promoting practices that maintain ecological health, the MVIE positions itself as a robust, holistic, and deeply impactful development intervention that balances prosperity with planetary well-being.

6.2 AI for Farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa

The widespread adoption and meticulous deployment of advanced predictive agricultural tools have instigated a fundamental paradigm shift, profoundly reshaping traditional farming practices and bolstering food security across critical regions within the African continent. This technological revolution is particularly evident in pivotal nations such as Kenya and Nigeria, where the strategic integration of these sophisticated technologies has led to quantifiable and dramatic improvements in agricultural performance - leading to reducing food insecurity and strengthening food security.

These advanced toolsets are comprehensive, often incorporating cutting-edge innovations such as:

- AI-Driven Weather Forecasting: Providing hyper-localized, minute-by-minute predictions that go far beyond conventional weather services, allowing farmers to plan fieldwork with unprecedented accuracy.
- Satellite Imagery and Remote Sensing Analysis: Offering detailed, spectral data for continuous monitoring of soil moisture content, nutrient deficiencies, and overall crop vitality across vast tracts of land.
- Precision Pest and Disease Detection: Utilizing machine learning to analyze high-resolution imagery and identify the earliest signs of infestation or blight, enabling pre-emptive and targeted intervention.
- Precise Resource Allocation Models: Generating data-driven prescriptions for the variable application of water, fertilizers, and pesticides, ensuring optimal delivery only where and when needed.

The collective impact of these technologies has been a substantial surge in agricultural output. Empirical data confirms that staple crops in these regions have experienced a dramatic and reliable increase in yields, averaging a significant 20-30% boost. This substantial improvement in productivity is not merely an economic metric; it translates directly into a measurable and profound effect on the well-being of the population by

significantly reducing prevailing levels of food insecurity (FAO, 2025; Digital Planet, 2025).Core Mechanisms Driving Success

The exceptional success witnessed in these nations is inextricably linked to several key capabilities inherent in the predictive agricultural tools themselves:

1. Optimized and Sustainable Resource Management:
   These systems empower farmers with timely, highly actionable recommendations regarding the precise moment for crucial operations: planting, irrigation scheduling, and fertilizer application. This level of precision ensures that resources—often scarce and costly—are utilized with maximum effectiveness. The result is a sharp minimization of waste, reduced environmental run-off, and a greater overall sustainability of the farming operation.
2. Robust Early Warning and Proactive Mitigation Systems:
   The core strength of these tools lies in their predictive capabilities. They function as sophisticated early warning systems, continuously monitoring for and anticipating systemic risks. This includes the ability to forecast impending climatic crises like drought, predict the migratory paths and outbreaks of pest infestations (such as the Fall Armyworm), or identify the nascent stages of plant disease. By detecting these threats weeks or even months in advance, farmers can implement preventative measures, effectively mitigating catastrophic crop losses before they have a chance to occur.
3. Democratization of Informed Decision-Making:
   Critically, access to detailed, localized, and easily interpretable information empowers smallholder farmers—the backbone of African agriculture—to shift from relying on tradition or guesswork to making truly data-driven decisions. This level of informational parity was historically the exclusive domain of large, well-capitalized commercial operations. By democratizing access to superior agronomic data, these tools effectively level the playing field, drastically increasing the overall efficiency and resilience of the smallholder sector.

Broader Socio-Economic Impact

The resulting higher yields do more than just fill silos; they provide a multifaceted boost to the entire socio-economic structure. By increasing farm output, they not only bolster national food reserves against future shocks but also directly and substantially increase the income and financial resilience of farming communities. This improved economic standing contributes significantly to broader socio-economic stability, leading to a sustained reduction in vulnerability to regional food crises and fostering a more prosperous and food-secure future.

6.3 Multilingual AI in India

The integration of AI-powered market segmentation is fundamentally reshaping the landscape of economic development, marking a pivotal paradigm shift that promises substantial and quantifiable benefits, particularly in the critical domain of addressing the systemic challenges prevalent in underserved and marginalized markets. This revolutionary technology's strength lies in its unparalleled capacity to meticulously deconstruct and analyze intricate market dynamics, complex consumer behaviors, and latent demand signals with a precision and granularity far exceeding the capabilities of traditional human-led analysis.

A compelling and tangible proof point of this technological success is meticulously documented in a recent, high-impact study published in the prestigious journal ScienceDirect (2025). This landmark research provided explicit empirical evidence of the profound, transformative effect resulting from the strategic implementation of sophisticated AI-driven segmentation methodologies. Crucially, the study demonstrated a direct causal link that led to a remarkable 25% expansion of e-commerce activities specifically for rural Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs).The Mechanism of AI-Driven Economic Empowerment

This significant and measurable growth is far more than a simple statistical anomaly; it serves as a powerful testament to the inherent ability of highly

tailored and context-aware artificial intelligence solutions to systematically unlock previously inaccessible or untapped commercial potential. The mechanism of this success is multifaceted:

1. Optimized Market Access: AI algorithms are capable of identifying the most efficient and cost-effective channels for rural MSMEs to reach their target audience, bypassing traditional, expensive, and often unreliable intermediary structures.
2. Refined Consumer Targeting: By analyzing vast datasets—including demographic, behavioral, and geographical information—AI crafts hyper-accurate consumer profiles. This allows MSMEs to focus their limited marketing resources precisely on individuals most likely to purchase, drastically reducing marketing expenditure waste.
3. Personalized Digital Storefront Experience: AI dynamically adjusts the presentation, product recommendations, and promotional offers on a digital platform based on individual user data. This personalization fosters a stronger sense of connection and relevance, which directly correlates with increased conversion rates and customer loyalty.
4. Dismantling Barriers: Collectively, this level of optimization and personalization effectively neutralizes the severe geographical and infrastructural constraints (such as poor logistics and lack of physical market access) that have historically isolated small-scale businesses operating outside of major metropolitan and urban centers.

This comprehensive optimization translates directly into tangible commercial benefits: a significant reduction in marketing overhead, a sustainable increase in conversion rates, and, most critically, the foundation for self-sustaining economic empowerment for entrepreneurs and their communities in rural and peri-urban environments.Extending Beyond Commerce: Social and Service Inclusion

Furthermore, the utility of AI segmentation extends far beyond the confines of e-commerce. This technology is increasingly being strategically leveraged to fundamentally improve access to essential public and social services, addressing critical gaps in:

- Microfinance and Financial Inclusion: AI models assess non-traditional data points (such as mobile phone usage or community reputation) to accurately gauge creditworthiness in populations lacking formal financial histories, enabling tailored micro-loan products.
- Healthcare Access: Segmentation identifies localized health needs, prevalent diseases, and access barriers, allowing health providers to optimally allocate mobile clinics, essential medicines, and specialized personnel to meet the precise, localized demands of marginalized populations.
- Education and Skills Development: AI analyzes local employment trends and individual educational attainment to design and deliver highly relevant vocational training and educational content, ensuring that skills development directly leads to local employment opportunities.

The Imperative for Global Scaling and Policy Frameworks

These consistently compelling outcomes, which emphatically validate the profound potential of highly tailored and context-specific AI applications, are driving genuine, inclusive economic development and social inclusion. The success is measurably consistent across a diverse range of sectors, from the observed e-commerce growth for rural MSMEs to demonstrable, efficiency-driven improvements in resource allocation within critical public services.

Given the clear, verifiable success and the validated utility of these models in diverse and often challenging contexts, the logical and necessary next strategic step is the global scaling and systematic dissemination of these effective AI models and the deployment strategies that support them. This critical transition from limited, localized pilot programs to a global, systemic policy framework demands a concerted, multi-stakeholder effort.

As emphatically highlighted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in its 2025 analysis, maximizing the global, inclusive

impact of this transformative technology is not merely a task of technical transfer. It demands a robust, integrated approach comprising:

- Robust International Cooperation: Establishing shared standards, data governance protocols, and collaborative platforms to facilitate the exchange of successful AI models and best practices across national borders.
- Significant Financial Investment: Allocating dedicated capital, both public and private, to support the development of localized AI infrastructure, training for local experts, and the subsidization of initial technology adoption costs in underserved regions.
- A Commitment to Localization and Adaptability: Ensuring that customized AI solutions are not just technically accessible but are rigorously designed to be culturally relevant, linguistically appropriate, and technically adaptable to the vastly diverse economic, regulatory, and infrastructural landscapes found across the world.

The ultimate strategic goal is the establishment of a comprehensive, global governance framework that actively fosters the equitable distribution of this powerful, analytical technology. This framework aims to transform isolated, localized success stories into a sustained, global engine for inclusive prosperity, ensuring that the benefits of the AI revolution reach every corner of the global economy.

6.3 AI-Blockchain in Chinese Meat Supply Chains

The pioneering integration of blockchain technology into Walmart's meat supply chain in China represents a transformative approach to enhancing transparency, authenticity, and efficiency in agricultural product distribution. This initiative, developed in collaboration with IBM, leverages Hyperledger Fabric to create an immutable ledger that records every step from farm to retail, addressing longstanding issues of trust and fraud in the Chinese meat market. By enabling the upload of certificates of authenticity and real-time data sharing among stakeholders, this system not only combats counterfeit products but also empowers small-scale farmers

at the base of the supply chain through fairer pricing and reduced waste (Kamath, 2018; Sharma and Kumar, 2021).

The blockchain-enabled traceability has delivered substantial economic advantages for producers and retailers alike. Tracking time for meat origins has been drastically reduced from days to mere seconds, allowing for rapid identification of issues and targeted recalls. This efficiency minimizes broad product discards, preserving inventory value and protecting farmer incomes. Quantifiable outcomes include the ability to trace over 25 products across multiple suppliers, with meat serving as a flagship example where authenticity verification has boosted market confidence and premium pricing for verified organic or high-quality products. Farmers report increased revenues due to decreased losses from contamination scares and intermediary exploitation, aligning with broader goals of economic empowerment for rural communities (Kamath, 2018).

Beyond economics, this model functions as a resilient tool for sustainability and food security. The decentralized ledger supports precise monitoring of environmental practices, such as feed sourcing and animal welfare, incentivizing farmers to adopt eco-friendly methods through verifiable certifications. In a market prone to chemical misuse and environmental degradation, the system's transparency reduces fraud, promotes resource-efficient farming, and mitigates risks from supply disruptions, fostering a more sustainable meat industry amid climate challenges (Sharma and Kumar, 2021). This holistic framework positions blockchain as a cornerstone for equitable and resilient agricultural ecosystems in China.

Blockchain as the Foundation for Authenticity and Efficiency

At the heart of Walmart's meat traceability system is Hyperledger Fabric, an enterprise-grade blockchain platform that ensures decentralized trust and immutability. Suppliers input data via web interfaces integrated with GS1 standards, capturing details like farm origins, processing, and transportation. For meat specifically, certificates of authenticity are digitized and stored on the ledger, creating a tamper-proof record accessible to all parties (Kamath, 2018).

This technological backbone has yielded impressive gains for base-of-the-pyramid stakeholders, including smallholder farmers. By eliminating opaque intermediaries, the system ensures fairer profit distribution and reduces losses from unverifiable claims. Economic data shows enhanced revenue streams, with faster traceability enabling premium market access and reducing waste during recalls (Sharma and Kumar, 2021).

Tangible Economic Empowerment for Rural Producers

The implementation has led to a paradigm shift in supply chain dynamics:

- **Authenticity Verification**: Immutable records confirm meat quality and origin, commanding higher prices in trust-sensitive markets.
- **Reduced Waste and Losses**: Targeted recalls prevent unnecessary discards, safeguarding farmer livelihoods.
- **Efficiency Gains**: Tracking reduced to 2.2 seconds from days, streamlining operations and cutting costs (Kamath, 2018).

Dual Role in Sustainability and Resilience

The system incentivizes sustainable practices by logging environmental data, rewarding low-impact farming. This builds resilience against climate shocks, ensuring long-term viability for China's meat sector (Sharma and Kumar, 2021).

6.4 AI for Farmers in China's Precision Agriculture

The deployment of AI-driven tools in China's rural farming landscapes has revolutionized traditional practices, particularly through initiatives like Alibaba's ET Agricultural Brain and competitive pilots in crop and livestock cultivation. These technologies harness big data, IoT sensors, and machine learning to provide predictive insights, optimizing crop and animal management and boosting productivity in regions such as Sichuan and beyond. By democratizing access to advanced analytics, AI empowers smallholder farmers to transition from experience-based methods to

data-informed strategies, significantly enhancing yields and food security (Alibaba Cloud, 2018; Standaert, 2020).

Empirical results from these applications demonstrate remarkable yield improvements, with AI-assisted farming achieving higher output compared to conventional techniques. Farmers benefit from precise recommendations on planting, irrigation, and pest control, leading to revenue increases through higher-quality produce and reduced input costs. This surge in efficiency—averaging notable yield boosts in staple crops and livestock—directly combats rural poverty and strengthens national food reserves (Alibaba Cloud, 2018).
Moreover, AI serves as a vital instrument for climate adaptation, enabling proactive responses to environmental threats and promoting sustainable resource use. Tools like monitoring systems and remote sensing facilitate real-time assessments, minimizing waste and fostering biodiversity, thus building resilient agricultural systems in the face of changing conditions (Standaert, 2020).

Core Mechanisms Driving Success

The effectiveness stems from integrated features:

- **AI-Optimized Management**: Systems like ET Agricultural Brain analyze data for tailored planting and fertilization plans, reducing resource overuse.
- **Predictive Analytics**: Early detection of pests and weather risks via sensors prevents losses.
- **Democratized Access**: User-friendly apps allow farmers to query via text or images for instant advice on crop health and yields (Alibaba Cloud, 2018; Standaert, 2020).

Broader Socio-Economic Impact

Higher yields translate to increased incomes and community stability, with pilots showing improvements in production metrics. For instance, in livestock farming, annual production per sow increased by three more newborns, with reduced unnatural deaths by 3% and elevated pigs per sow

per year to 32. In crop applications, operating cost savings reached RMB20 million annually for large orchards. This fosters economic resilience and reduces vulnerability to food crises (Alibaba Cloud, 2018).

7. Contextualized Policy Propositions for BoP Markets

The urgent need for a new global digital order is not a theoretical aspiration, but an imperative driven by systemic failures and profound inequalities embedded within the existing digital landscape. This mandate is fundamentally anchored in a set of five interconnected and highly ambitious propositions. These propositions serve as the bedrock for a restructured global digital governance framework, each one meticulously designed to tackle a critical challenge that the current system has failed to adequately address.

These are not merely abstract ideals or aspirational goals. Instead, they represent concrete, actionable strategies formulated through a pragmatic and data-driven understanding of the global digital divide and its cascading effects on economic development, social cohesion, and political stability. The expansion of the global digital order must be rooted in equity, resilience, and inclusivity, ensuring that the benefits of technological progress are shared universally, rather than being concentrated among a few powerful actors or nations. The overarching aim is to move beyond the current fragmented and often exploitative digital environment to establish a truly open, secure, and beneficial digital commons for all humanity.

The Five Pillars of Inclusive Digital Governance:

1. **Universal Connectivity (Targeting 80% Global Coverage):**
   The first and most fundamental proposition calls for **universal connectivity**, moving beyond aspirational goals to set a pragmatic and achievable target of **80% global coverage**. This objective recognizes that true digital inclusion is impossible while billions remain offline, often concentrated in the Global South and remote regions. The focus is not just on infrastructure deployment but on ensuring **affordable, reliable, and meaningful access**, addressing the often-overlooked adoption gap alongside the access gap. This includes prioritizing low-cost, sustainable technologies and public-private partnerships specifically targeting the last mile.
2. **Digital Public Goods (Countering Biases and Fostering Open**

Innovation):
The second pillar is the robust development and promotion of **Digital Public Goods (DPGs)**. These are essential open-source software, data, content, and AI models that are explicitly designed to **counter entrenched biases** embedded in proprietary Western-centric technologies. By focusing on open, inclusive innovation, DPGs serve as a critical countermeasure to the monopolistic control and algorithmic biases that often marginalize diverse populations. This initiative fosters technological sovereignty, allowing nations and communities to build locally relevant and ethically aligned digital ecosystems.

3. **Capacity Building (Closing Digital and Technical Gender Gaps):**
The third proposition mandates **extensive capacity building**, with a crucial and intense focus on **closing significant digital and technical gender gaps**. This goes beyond basic digital literacy to include advanced technical training, policy development expertise, and leadership roles for women and marginalized groups. Acknowledging that the digital future cannot be equitable if half the world's population is systematically excluded from its creation and governance, this proposition aims to create a pipeline of diverse talent that can actively shape the digital transformation.
4. **Equitable Governance (Addressing Base of the Pyramid (BoP) Vulnerabilities):**
The fourth pillar calls for the establishment of truly **equitable governance** structures. A core focus here is specifically addressing the **heightened vulnerabilities of the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) populations**. These groups are often the first to suffer the negative consequences of technological disruption—from exploitative gig-economy platforms to predatory digital financial services and surveillance. Equitable governance necessitates regulatory frameworks that prioritize data protection, consumer safety, and economic fairness for the most vulnerable digital users worldwide.
5. **Representation (Mandating 50% Global South Seats):**
The final proposition is a fundamental demand for **equitable representation**, mandating that at least **50% of all decision-making seats** in critical global digital governance bodies be allocated to the

Global South. This is a necessary structural correction to the current imbalance, where rules governing the global digital space are overwhelmingly set by a small number of developed nations and powerful corporations. This mandate ensures that the lived experiences, policy priorities, and development needs of the majority world are central to shaping the digital future.

Contextualization and Theoretical Underpinning

The foundational relevance of these five propositions is not rooted in mere theoretical speculation. Instead, they are deeply contextualized by an unvarnished and critical assessment of two pervasive and persistent global failures that continue to obstruct equitable digital progress.

The first failure is the continuous and often systemic inclusivity gap within existing digital development processes. This refers to the structural exclusion of marginalized communities—including women, indigenous populations, those in rural areas, and people with disabilities—from the design, access, and benefits of digital infrastructure and services. Current initiatives often fail to address the root causes of this exclusion, resulting in a self-perpetuating cycle of digital marginalization.

The second, equally critical failure is the widening South-North technological and economic disparity. This chasm is characterized by the Global North's near-monopoly on high-value data, advanced technological manufacturing, intellectual property, and platform governance, leaving the Global South primarily as a consumer of technology. The current trajectory, left unchecked, acts as a powerful accelerant to global economic and social inequality, consolidating power and wealth in the hands of a few nations and corporations.

Therefore, the development of this framework is a direct and deliberate counter-action to this existing trajectory, which inherently exacerbates inequality. Its primary objective is to fundamentally reverse this trend, establishing a new paradigm for a truly shared and equitable digital future.

This comprehensive and dynamic approach to reversing these entrenched failures is theoretically underpinned by the concept of fluid governance developed by Mamun (2025a). Fluid governance is a pioneering political and policy philosophy that moves decisively beyond the limitations of traditional, rigid regulatory models. It advocates for inherently adaptive and responsive policy frameworks that are not designed to be static solutions but rather continuous processes.

This methodology is essential because it acknowledges the rapid, often unpredictable, and exponential evolution of digital technologies—from artificial intelligence and blockchain to pervasive connectivity—and their complex, multifaceted societal impacts. In the digital age, where technological cycles are measured in months, static, rigid policies become obsolete almost as quickly as they are enacted, failing to anticipate or mitigate emerging risks while stifling innovation.

The fluid approach is therefore not a luxury but a strategic necessity. It serves as the essential mechanism for transforming the five core propositions from static goals—aspirational statements on paper—into dynamic, actionable strategies. It provides the continuous feedback loops and structural flexibility required for policies to perpetually adjust to new technological realities, diverse national contexts, and evolving human needs. This persistent adaptiveness is the engine for constructing a truly inclusive, equitable, and sustainable global digital future, ensuring the framework remains relevant and effective for generations.

8. Conclusion and Way Forward

The current trajectory of global Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance presents a significant and imminent risk of exacerbating existing socio-economic and digital divides unless systemic, Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP)-centric reforms are urgently implemented. This divergence is not theoretical; a recent 2025 UNDP report warns that unmanaged AI could spark a new era of global divergence, potentially reversing decades of progress toward convergence by widening economic gaps between nations. Developing countries, in particular, face the prospect of falling further behind due to limited access to the requisite AI infrastructure, computational resources, and specialized expertise (UNDP, 2025).

A parallel UN assessment echoes this concern, issuing a stark warning that AI threatens to dramatically increase inequalities among states. Projections indicate that by 2030, this technology could affect up to 40% of global jobs, with the impact disproportionately hitting low-skilled workers in the Global South. In these regions, automation risks displacing millions without the safety net of adequate governmental or private sector reskilling programs (Al Jazeera, 2025; UNCTAD, 2025a).

Furthermore, the Stanford AI Index 2025 highlights profound regional divides in both AI optimism and actual adoption. While 83% of respondents in China and 80% in Indonesia view AI's impact positively, adoption rates in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America lag by a significant margin of 20-30%. This disparity fuels a massive, projected $5 trillion global AI market by 2035 that is overwhelmingly dominated by the US, China, and Europe, leaving the Global South with less than 10% of global AI investments. This concentration of capital and innovation deepens the structural disadvantage of developing nations (Stanford HAI, 2025).

Crucially, prevailing global governance frameworks often fail to adequately address these concerns. Global South participation in key AI forums, such as the G20 or official UN AI dialogues, remains consistently below 25%. This underrepresentation leads to the formulation of policies

and norms that disproportionately benefit developed nations and entrenched interests, thereby actively undermining global development goals and the principles of equity (CSIS, 2025; South Centre, 2025).The Path Forward: A Call for BoP-Centric Reforms

To mitigate this impending crisis and foster an inclusive, equitable AI future, a clear and decisive path forward centered on BoP needs must be adopted.

1. Immediate and Substantial WSIS+20 Amendment:

The drafts related to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 processes require immediate and substantial amendment. This directive stems from the November 2025 outcome document, which emphasizes the necessity of seizing AI opportunities for high-quality development within the information society (UN, 2025a). This crucial revision must be completed with urgency by **mid-December 2025** to ensure alignment and timely integration with the UN General Assembly's high-level review. The amendments must explicitly incorporate AI governance principles that prioritize equity, access, and capacity building for developing countries, drawing on frameworks like the ethical AI discussions held at the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in July 2025, which specifically called for strengthening AI governance to safeguard human rights and reduce digital divides (ITU, 2025a; DiploFoundation, 2025).

2. Seamless Integration with Global AI Bodies:

These amended WSIS principles must be seamlessly integrated with the mandates and operational frameworks of key global AI bodies. This includes specialized agencies like UNESCO, which has issued its Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (UNESCO, 2021), and multi-stakeholder forums such as the ITU's AI Governance Dialogue, which in 2025 convened over 53 UN partners to promote inclusive

innovation (ITU, 2025b). This synergy is non-negotiable to prevent fragmentation of efforts and ensure a unified, coherent global approach to AI regulation and development, particularly as the Global South pushes for sovereign initiatives like Pan-African AI strategies aimed at building self-reliant infrastructure and reducing dependency on established AI leaders (African Union, 2024; Carnegie Endowment, 2025).

3. Continuous Monitoring and Accountability:

Continuous monitoring and accountability are paramount to ensuring the reforms translate into tangible impact. Progress on these governance changes and the subsequent impact of AI deployment must be rigorously tracked and regularly reported to both the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. These periodic UN reports—such as the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, which stresses harnessing AI to close digital divides and tackle poverty, and the UNCTAD Technology and Innovation Report 2025, which highlights AI's potential for advancing SDGs while warning of widening inequalities without inclusive policies—will serve as vital mechanisms. They are essential for transparency, identifying emerging systemic risks (like the projected 40% of AI-related data breaches by 2027 stemming from misuse), and holding all stakeholders accountable for advancing AI equitably (UN, 2025b; UNCTAD, 2025b; Gartner, 2025).The Dual-Core Model: An Equity-First Framework

A core and essential component of this forward-looking governance structure involves the adoption of 'dual-core models,' as proposed by Mamun (2025a). This model represents a deliberate shift away from unipolar or narrowly-focused governance structures.

The dual-core model emphasizes a balanced, multi-stakeholder approach characterized by:

- **Strong State Oversight:** Ensuring national sovereignty, protection of public interest, and strategic direction aligned with development

goals.

- **Robust Civil Society and Multi-stakeholder Participation:** Guaranteeing inclusivity, embedding ethical considerations, and promoting bottom-up innovation.

This framework is posited as the most effective mechanism to ensure that AI development and deployment actively and equitably advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By decentralizing power, promoting inclusive innovation, and embedding ethical considerations from the outset—the model has the potential to accelerate progress on nearly 80% of the SDGs, as per UN estimates. The dual-core model offers a practical, actionable framework for realizing the transformative potential of AI without widening global inequalities, especially given that AI is forecasted to profoundly influence health (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and global partnerships (SDG 17) (UN, n.d.; Vinuesa et al., 2020).

4. Fortune Favours the Brave

As we stand on the precipice of accelerated AI integration into global systems, the period spanning 2025-2026 emerges as a pivotal epoch for establishing robust normative frameworks that will shape the trajectory of AI deployment. This timeframe is critical for embedding a congenial, beneficial, non-maleficent, and balanced epistemology at the heart of AI's evolution, ensuring that technological advancements foster human flourishing rather than exacerbate divides. Key events, such as the AI for Good Global Summit 2026 organized by the ITU, which emphasizes building standards and skills for AI to serve humanity, alongside initiatives like the IAPP AI Governance Global North America 2026 and the AI Governance & Compliance Summit, will set the stage for harmonized regulations and ethical guidelines. These efforts, building on the foundations laid by the Global Digital Compact and WSIS+20 outcomes, must prioritize equitable access in Base-of-the-Pyramid markets to prevent the entrenchment of digital inequalities and promote AI as a catalyst for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Central to this normative push must be an unwavering commitment to safeguarding the individual's autonomy, agency, and franchise. Whether through UN-led multilateral processes or industry-driven innovations, all interventions should place human-centered principles at the forefront, empowering individuals—especially in underserved BoP communities—to actively participate in and benefit from AI ecosystems without compromising their rights or dignity. By fostering inclusive governance that amplifies diverse voices from the Global South, we can steer AI toward a future of shared prosperity, where technology augments rather than supplants human potential. The way forward demands urgent, collaborative action to translate these imperatives into actionable policies, ensuring that the AI revolution uplifts all of humanity equitably.

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