

Position Paper - Somalia

Committee: United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

Topic: Regulating Artificial Intelligence to Prevent Digital Colonialism

Country: Somalia

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Topic Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer just a futuristic concept-it is already shaping global governance, development, and daily life. However, the benefits of AI are unequally distributed. The Global South, particularly Africa, faces the threat of digital colonialism, where powerful states and tech corporations exploit our data, control our digital infrastructure, and impose biased technologies that do not reflect our cultures or contexts.

AI development is largely concentrated in the Global North, with little inclusion of African voices. This imbalance leads to algorithmic systems that often fail to recognize African languages, faces, and social realities, making AI not just exclusionary but discriminatory. Somalia is deeply concerned about the use of foreign-developed AI systems in public services like policing, education, and welfare without adequate oversight, transparency, or consent.

Past International Action

The United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Body on AI has called for the creation of a global, inclusive AI governance framework. Experts like Jimena Sofía Viveros Álvarez have highlighted how AI systems risk replicating structural inequalities unless checked.

UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) is a key document promoting inclusive, transparent, and human rights-based AI development. Additionally, the Global Digital Compact, currently in negotiation, is expected to address the issue of data justice and AI fairness.

However, no binding framework currently exists that specifically regulates the cross-border imposition of AI tools or ensures the digital sovereignty of developing nations like Somalia.

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Country Policy

Somalia believes that without regulation, AI risks becoming a new tool of domination. We emphasize the importance of:

- Digital Sovereignty: Nations must have the right to control their data and decide what AI systems are used within their borders.
- Bias Audits: All AI systems deployed across borders must be independently tested for racial, linguistic, and cultural bias.
- Transparency and Accountability: Developers must disclose training data, algorithms, and impact assessments for AI systems deployed in other countries.
- Capacity Building: Developed nations and tech companies must invest in African AI infrastructure, research, and skill development-not just AI export.
- UN-Led Framework: We call for a UN Binding Convention on AI that ensures fairness, equity, and accountability in global AI deployment.

Proposed Solutions

1. Establish a UN body on AI Oversight, with equitable Global South representation, to monitor AI ethics, bias, and international AI exports.
2. Mandate algorithmic transparency, requiring all governments and companies to reveal how decisions are made when AI is used in sensitive areas like policing or welfare.
3. Create a Global AI Equity Fund, supported by developed nations and Big Tech, to assist African countries in building local AI capabilities and digital literacy.
4. Require AI Impact Assessments before any technology is deployed across borders, similar to environmental impact assessments.
5. Incentivize ethical AI trade agreements, where AI products meet global standards on human rights and local inclusion.

Conclusion

Somalia firmly believes that regulating AI is not only a technological issue-it is a justice issue. If the world

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allows AI to be governed solely by market forces or powerful countries, we risk creating a future where technology becomes another tool of oppression. We must act now-through binding international law, inclusive governance, and ethical development-to ensure that the digital age empowers all, not just a few.