

Forum: Security Council (SC)

Issue: Exploring Strategies for Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Enhance United Nations Systems

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Introduction

The constant flow of new technology, with its by-the-minute improved procedures and modern-day advancements, not only modernizes society, but equally presents opportunities to implement such intelligence for the betterment and refinement of today's systems. For the United Nations, artificial intelligence (AI) gathers much attention. Its functions and features are coterminous with agenda goals, in particular, enhancing the UN's operational systems, and proper sessions, reports, and actions have been taken to begin the successful adoption and implementation of AI into improving the UN's systems. Despite these benefits, however, artificial intelligence possesses various drawbacks that could potentially become the downfall of the organization's operation systems' functionality and efficiency. This document seeks to present the United Nations' current relationship with AI's involvement in its operations and to provide plausible means by which system enhancements can be wholly achieved for both the benefit of the UN's future performance as a unit and the states and bodies it will interact with.

Definition of Key Terms

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

A division of computer science aimed at developing systems and programs that can function at a human-intelligence level.

Leveraging

To exploit a resource to obtain a desired benefit or result.

General Overview

Though the majority of society became acquainted with AI only post-pandemic, AI caught the attention of the United Nations before 2019 upon discovering how its technological advancements could help in enhancing systems as well as resolving modern struggles with inequality and inclusivity. When the prospect of implementing AI within the UN's inner workings was first proposed, the organization's fundamental priority was working towards preventing AI's downsides from meddling with the benefits it could bring. The UN's exploration of AI in regards to its systems started in 2017 when both the opportunities for and the dangers of its implementation officially commenced. A series of submissions and endorsements by special agencies were executed following this examination which solidified the UN's decision of utilizing AI. This includes the publication of principle documents regarding the use of AI among members and the holding of discussions and sessions among assemblies discussing its further use in delegations. All of these results were unified in 2023 during a session between two agencies active in the UN's AI implementation, discussing the steps needed for responsible adoption. The committees agreed upon two major goals to accomplish such adoption: to cultivate a standardized framework for artificial intelligence's use within the UN's systems and to share mechanisms for which harnessing AI's information sharing and overall capabilities can be recognized.

Major Parties Involved

The United States of America

- The United States proposed a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on March 21, 2024, advising the nations of the assembly to monitor AI's risks to ensure the protection of human rights and personal data and simultaneously confirming the nation's efforts to create a secure and trustworthy framework for complete AI adoption with fellow governments;
- The delegation has also signed an agreement with the United Kingdom to test artificial intelligence to confirm the safety of its related language models and tools;
- The United States' initiatives within the UN's walls and its public statements voicing their future agendas in AI adoption establishes the nation as an active participant in the ongoing process of complete AI acceptance, regulation, and operation.

The United Kingdom

- The United Kingdom is the second party in the bilateral agreement with the United States in investigating the capacities of AI in their respective governments and in reference to the general masses' use;
- The delegation also hosted an artificial intelligence summit in 2023 intended to understand and control its capabilities and to avert its dangers with the aid of policymakers and professionals;
- The United Kingdom's investment into both discussions of AI adoption and holding a globally-welcome conference supporting such implementation names this country a crucial contributor and aid to the cause.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
November 2017	During its conference, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) begins investigating means by which rising technology (i.e. artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and cyberspace) can be sustainably developed through studying the challenges and benefits associated with such development.
May 2019	“Artificial Intelligence, the Future of Work and Innovative Education”, an interlinked tri-strategy formulated by the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), is submitted to the CEB for approval.
September 2023	Secretary-General António Guterres promotes the United Nations’ use of artificial intelligence in its systems via the vision highlighted in the UN 2.0 Policy Brief.
October 2023	The Joint Session of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) and HLCP is held in Copenhagen, resulting in the establishment of the “Task Force under the HLCM”

Previous Action Taken

1. In September of 2022, the CEB published and endorsed the “Principles for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the United Nations System”, a document that outlines the guidelines for ethical and secure adoption of AI and how the organizations agencies and members can “develop, design, deploy, and use AI systems” and all of its subsidiaries;
2. The Task Force under the HLCM resulted from the October 2023 Joint Session between the HLCM and HLCP. The establishment of this force was to formulate a mutually-recognized and practiced framework for the adoption of AI into the UN’s systems that aims to delve into the opportunities for such implementation and to approach such action harmoniously and coherently;
3. The General Assembly made fundamental progress in the adoption of AI into the UN’s systems on March 21, 2024. Drafted by the United States, the resulting resolution consisted not only of opportunities for artificial intelligence to achieve the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but also of promises to cultivate and promote trustworthy AI systems.

Possible Solutions

1. Periodic Updates

Holding (minimally) bi-annual sessions discussing the impacts, both positive and negative, and relaying any points of improvement to endorse the use of AI within the UN;

2. Updating Frameworks and Principles

Amending and updating globally-followed principle guidelines during sessions in which said documents were created to ensure all delegations are following up-to-date improved guidelines;

3. Member States Experience Sharing

Sharing the means that are both effective and ineffective within delegations' AI integration via past experiences and endorsing prominent progress in their individual AI growth to better both neighboring countries' and the UN's journey to AI adoption;

4. Crediting AI in Successful AI-Based UN Interactions

Advocating for artificial intelligence as the source of success after favorable outcomes in organization interactions to encourage international cooperation to develop other means through which AI can be leveraged.

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