Internet Governance Forum (IGF), 2022, Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia

Deadline: 03rd June'2022

Area: AI: Need for fundamental regulation for the Global South.

Topics:

    a.   Digital Common Goods
    b.   AI regulation
    c.   Global South marginalised and vulnerable population

Organizer 1: Ms. Lea Gimpel, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Organizer 2: Mr. Gaurav Sharma, Fellow – Artificial Intelligence at Academy of International Affairs, North-Rhine-Westphalia (AIA-NRW.org)

Speaker 1: Lucy Harris, Co-Lead Digital Public Goods Alliance
Speaker 2: Dr. Urvashi Aneja – Digital Futures Lab
Speaker 3: Chenai Chair, Senior Program Officer - Africa Innovation
Speaker 4: Rosa Tsegaye, Director of Natural Language Processing Division at Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute

Detailed Description:

The prospect of AI based technologies and their ability to solve and provide planning intelligence into key development challenges such as access to water, food security, and health services is being viewed as the next disruptive change. Developing economies place high hopes in AI as a gamechanger to achieve progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and economic growth in a globally networked digital economy. However, the rise of AI-based applications and AI-augmented use cases in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and education demand basic AI regulation frameworks to create public benefit. Besides discussions on how to put principles such as the UNESCO recommendations on ethical AI into practice and efforts to assess the risks of AI systems such as the European Commission's draft AI act, countries of the Global South need to ensure that AI does not exacerbate existing inequalities and local needs are met.

This session aims to discuss how to empower the Global South to create inclusive AI technology that serves the public interest. On a socio-technological level, we will explore the chances, limitations and use cases of digital public goods (DPG) for AI such as open AI training data and open AI models as well as community efforts to build, govern, and sustain these resources. On a policy level, we will discuss conceptual and normative frameworks that build and curate spaces for discussion around AI regulation. AI regulation must be fundamental to ensure a positive impact of AI technologies for the marginalised population, including but not limited to the questions of licenses, liabilities and capacity building

An overall AI regulatory framework that promotes and mandates open-source AI and open-AI models is needed. The discussion shall further progress the usability and utility and empower digital public goods institutional capacities in the global south. Promotion of open-source AI solutions are the need of the hour for a more equitable world and towards unlocking the global effort at access to basic public services.

Policy Questions:

AI systems governance is a complex discussion and developing nations must invest in basic conceptual and normative frameworks that are inclusive and safeguard the interests of the marginalised population. Risk identification with AI systems and serving the needs of a modern heterogenous society demands basic regulatory practices in place. A basic regulatory framework serves the fundamentals of society and safeguards and upholds the rights of its citizens. AI systems must serve the needs of and empower local communities. While AI governance provides the framework conditions to do so in a responsible way, digital public goods such as open AI models and open local AI training data serve as the technological foundations. The following policy questions shall be addressed:

1. What critical framework of AI system regulators is required to oversee and understand the overall nature of an AI solution or application, and monitors, evaluates, and assesses the AI adoption lifecycle?
2. What fundamental best practices including quality oversight on 'Ethics and AI' must adopted to balance the risks of AI and to ensure and prevent adverse impact on minorities?
3. How to build, govern, and sustain digital public goods for inclusive and localized AI systems?

Proposal mapped to the **SDG: SDG 17 (Partnerships to Achieve the SDG Goals)**

17.6: Technology

Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism

Our mapped proposal: Our proposal is enabling faster access and adoption of artificial intelligence in the Global South by creating a set of best practices in AI regulation and advancing the access of digital public goods to through facilitation and North-South and South-South cooperation and acting in a local context.

17.7: Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed

Mapping of the project proposal: The proposal is rooted in progressive development cooperation via the use of AI and shall provide actionable steps for policy adoption and creation of favourable regulatory frameworks that keeps a check that AI does not exacerbate inequality.

Expected Outcomes:
1. Shared lessons from the pilot or implementation projects in the Global South, that infer the current discussions with regards to AI regulation and inclusion debate. For example, open voice technologies and its impact in healthcare and showcasing the mandate of good practices for the development of digital public goods with regards to standards and global compliance frameworks in Africa
2. Debating the role of provincial governments and government administrative practices about AI regulatory frameworks and methods of developing human-centred, inclusive AI systems that build on the principles of responsible AI

3. Current discussion on data governance, privacy, transparency, and bias that shape the AI regulatory discussion in the Global South and how some these discussions reflect on the potential of digital public goods and contribute to the accessibility and utility of digital public goods in the AI space.
4. How bottlenecks in capacity building and knowledge-expertise are hindering the adoption of any form of AI based technologies.

Session Interaction and Participation in a Hybrid Meeting:
Yes, the event will be hybrid and one of the speakers would be online. The speaker would have sufficient bandwidth and connectivity is good. We would coordinate with the online and the offline teams and would structure the interactions and take measures that online participation is encouraged, and online participants are involved and engaged in the discussions and deliberations. The voice of the online participants shall be prioritised in the discussions.

Relevance to Internet Governance:
AI Governance requires investment and time in research, technical expertise, and sector specific knowledge – The internet governance forum provides a high-level discussion platform at identifying AI regulation challenges in the Global South and how some of these challenges are being addressed? IGF also presents an open outlook with regards to ethical and responsible AI and presents opportunities for supporting easier adoption of digital public goods via basic AI regulatory frameworks. The current debate on regulation of emerging technologies with a goal to build credible institutional capacities, domain expertise and technology partnerships that shall enhance and accelerate adoption of AI based technologies is still wide open and the IGF shall presents a policy forum to learn, infer and fast-track AI governance in the Global South. IGF shall facilitate the developmental agenda of the global South and inclusion of AI by identifying barriers to the adoption of AI technologies and by setting-up learning mechanism and partnerships that underline the benefits of AI for the marginalised population. IGF shall help in facilitating an integrated multi-layered ethical and responsible use of AI regulatory approach.