Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Statistical Office FSO

UN WOMEN

UN Statistical Commission

Side event's concept note

23.01.2024

1. <u>Title of the session</u>

Exploring the Risks and Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence in Advancing Gender Equality

Where are the voices of female leaders and experts in AI world?

2. <u>When and where</u>

Wednesday, the 28th of February 2024 (8.15-09.30)

UN Women, 220 East 42nd Street, New Yor, NY, CR1920

3. <u>Abstract</u>

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rife with contradictions, while it has the potential to improve human existence, at the same time it threatens to deepen social divides. While AI tools do have the potential to improve diversity and inclusion, it doesn't come from AI itself but rather from their creators[1]. Indeed, AI appears neutral, but it's made by humans, which means it internalizes all the same bias as we have - including gender bias[2]. The models and systems created and trained are a reflection of our society. The gender bias reflects an outdated perception of women in our society that is not based in fact or equality.[3] The Harvard Business Review reminds that any examination of bias in AI needs to recognize the fact that these biases mainly stem from humans' inherent biases. In addition, the problem stems from a lack of diversity within the industry that is reinforcing problematic gender stereotypes[4]. According to McKinsey's [The State of AI in 2022](#) report, there is a gender imbalance in AI teams. Whether as developers, news editors or AI experts, women are largely absent from the AI world. Indeed, the systems are a reflection of broader gender disparities within the technology and A.I. sectors.

In the context of machine learning, bias can mean that there's a greater level of error for certain demographic categories. Because there is no one root cause of this type of bias, there are numerous variables that researchers must take into account when developing and training machine-learning models, with factors that include an incomplete or skewed training dataset: This happens when demographic categories are missing from the training data. Although, neutrality of primary data hardly exists in data nowadays. Models developed with this data can then fail to scale properly when applied to new data containing those missing categories.[5] Better data can improve AI's ability to spot correlations but will not ensure fairness[6]. Researchers at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) recommend broadening the scope of research into the source of these biases to the broader societal factors that influence how the technology is developed. The NIST[7] by taking this **socio-technical approach** into account

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[1] https://initiatives.weforum.org/ai-governance-alliance/home
[2] https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Missions/14458/Gender-and-AI-Addressing-bias-in-artificial-intelligence
[3] [4 Ways to Address Gender Bias in AI (hbr.org)](#)
[4] [I'd blush if I could: closing gender divides in digital skills through education - UNESCO Bibliothèque Numérique](#)
[5] [4 Ways to Address Gender Bias in AI (hbr.org)](#)
[6] [Human insight remains essential to beat the bias of algorithms (ft.com)](#)
[7] https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.1270.pdf

supports those discriminatory biases can be mitigated, whether they relate to gender, race, ethnic minorities, linguistic minorities, etc. Generative AI relies on processing vast datasets of text, images and video, all of which have featured overwhelmingly more men than women in the past.[8] If we want to develop trustworthy AI systems, we need to take into account all the factors that could undermine public confidence in AI. The aim to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment runs throughout the UN's 2030 Agenda; it is a universal value alongside the commitment to leave no one behind.

The side event will be the occasion to talk about opportunities AI offers but also the solutions we should take into account to lower gender gaps in the labor market as well as the gender representation within artificial intelligence thanks to better access to gender data. UN Women's role and mandate is to reaffirm the need to focus on diversity and inclusiveness when developing AI technologies. How can official statistics be aware of the data bias and how to take gender data into account while programming artificial intelligence? How can artificial intelligence transform gender gaps in the labor market and reduce gender inequalities? A more complete understanding of bias needs to take into account human and systemic bias in addition to pure technical and algorithmic bias.

4. <u>Timetable</u>

08:00-08:15	Welcoming breakfast
08:15-08:30	Key note speech
08:30-09:00	Panel discussion
09:00-09:30	Q&A

5. <u>List of potential speakers</u>

- Key note: **Eleonore Fournier-Tombs**, Head of Anticipatory Action and Innovation, United Nations University (invited) – Centre for Policy Research and **Ronald Jansen**, Assistant Director of the United Nations Statistics Division (invited)

- Moderation: **Papa Seck**, Chief of UN Women's Research and Data section (confirmed);

- **Georges-Simon Ulrich**, Chief Statisticians of Switzerland and Vice-Chair of the UN Statistical Commission (confirmed);

- Private sector – Microsoft AI for good (tbd);

- **Caitlin Kraft-Buchman**, the A+ Alliance (invited).

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[8] Where are all the 'godmothers' of AI? Women's voices are not being heard | Luba Kassova | The Guardian