

The First UN Global AI Dialogue – July 6-7, 2026

Second Day: July 7, 2026

By Marianna Richardson

July 7, 2026 was the second day of the Global AI Dialogue. The discussion was a continuation of the same concerns and hopeful recommendations. There were even more opportunities for side events. The following are short summaries of three of the side events that I attended.

Side Event: Information Integrity in the Age of AI: Building Trust, Countering Disinformation and Protecting People Online

Speakers highlighted growing global concern about information integrity in the age of generative AI. Data from recent consultations showed that when people ask questions online, 45% encounter issues and 30% encounter major issues, across 18 countries and four languages. Delegates warned that AI accelerates misinformation, making fabricated content faster and cheaper to produce, eroding trust and creating systemic risks. Newsrooms are already struggling, prompting European broadcasters and G7 partners to launch the Global Trust Challenge, a multilateral effort involving IEEE, ECD, and UNESCO to strengthen information integrity and develop prototypes for safer AI systems. Importantly, 30% of proposals came from the Global South, signaling a shift away from top-down approaches dominated by major AI infrastructure providers.

Children's online safety emerged as a critical theme. UNICEF reported that children adopt AI three times faster than adults, with harms worsening for non-English speakers. Between 2022 and 2025, children's exposure to AI-related risks doubled, and 90% of gender-based misinformation targeted women and girls. Speakers warned that current systems are optimized for engagement rather than safety, allowing deepfakes, manipulation, and harmful design choices to proliferate. They argued that children cannot opt out of AI, and therefore systems must embed safety by default, undergo independent testing, and meet standards comparable to medicine, food, and aviation.

Participants stressed that no single government can address these challenges alone. Trust must be treated as a public good, supported by global collaboration, open-source innovation, and shared oversight mechanisms. AI literacy is now essential, as media literacy alone cannot equip people to understand how AI generates information. Public service media, journalists, and technologists must work together to ensure content can travel safely across languages and borders. Ultimately, speakers called for empowering people, strengthening democratic resilience, and ensuring AI becomes a force for inclusion rather than division and distrust.

Side Event: AI Governance for Latin American and Caribbean Nations

This side event highlighted that the region remains far from effective AI use, despite rapid global transformation. Delegates from the Cayman Islands noted a growing trap: AI companies are arriving, but citizens are not trained to take the jobs, leaving opportunities to outsiders, including

workers from the United States. Participants agreed that three elements are urgently needed: (1) knowledge and monitoring, (2) policy dialogue, and (3) assistance and training.

Speakers emphasized the importance of regional AI governance and a collective voice to shape global discussions. Costa Rica was cited as a precedent for launching clear AI policies and road maps through open, inter-agency processes. The regional body ICLAC stressed that state leadership is essential for legitimacy and that success will depend on what countries accomplish after dialogue, building governance from the ground up.

Side Event: Pathways to Inclusive AI Governance Learning from the Past, Co-building the Future

Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and Chair of The Elders, urged immediate action to steer AI in the right direction. She emphasized that multilateralism must not be abandoned and that a multi-stakeholder approach—as demonstrated in the Future of Life Institute’s project with MAPAI-India—is essential for building plural, democratic AI systems. Robinson stressed that trust must be grounded in data and evidence, not rhetoric, and that legitimacy grows when more people participate. She noted that global cooperation has succeeded before, and despite today’s low point in multilateral trust, verification systems and neutral technical processes can help rebuild confidence. She called for a pathway toward an AI governance agency and “quick wins” to restore momentum.

Ambassador Philip Thigo of Kenya highlighted the need for countries in the Global South to step up and ensure everyone is at the table. Ambassador Ioannis Ghikas of Greece stressed the practical work ahead: embedding values into frontier models, strengthening accountability, and pressing the EU to advance a regulatory framework for its own frontier AI systems.

During the panel discussion, **Urvashi Aneja, Paulina Ibarra, and Benjamin Prud’homme** emphasized the importance of credible evidence, local research ecosystems, and inclusive reporting that reflects communities most affected by AI. They warned against overestimating scientific certainty and called for civil society to be bold, co-creative, and adequately funded. Countries should have their own AI regulations but there needs to be an international standard allowing for a trust between countries, stopping unfair advantages of a few countries.

In closing, **Jorge Cancio of Switzerland** underscored the need for realistic expectations ahead of the Geneva AI Summit. He encouraged focusing on tangible deliverables and small, steady steps that expand trust and capability, ensuring AI becomes a force for inclusion rather than division.

UN AI Resource Hub Launch

When the group came back together in the plenary room, the UN AI Resource Hub was launched. [Browse UN AI Activities - Filter by Agency, Country & SDG | UN AI Resource Hub](#)

Interagency work on AI across the UN system is expanding rapidly, but it remains dispersed across numerous UN bodies rather than consolidated into a single structure. Current mapping shows 581 AI-related mentions and 508 tools in use, demonstrating strong knowledge and

growing capacity building, especially in peace and development work. However, these tools and initiatives are difficult to locate, and duplication persists. To address this, the UN is developing the UN AI Resource Hub as a unified entry point that consolidates practical tools, strengthens capacity building, and connects the UN system into a more coherent ecosystem of support. The hub is designed to make resources easier to find, avoid redundancy, and enable agencies to learn from one another. A call to action invites all UN entities to contribute their AI tools, knowledge, and practices to the Hub so the entire system can benefit from shared expertise and coordinated governance.

EU Center for Human-Centered AI

Germany announced the creation of a European Union Center for Human-Centered AI, which will serve as a shared platform for all European nations to work together on the future of responsible AI. The center is designed to support a uniform, risk-based governance framework across the EU, ensuring that AI systems are developed and deployed with safety, accountability, and human dignity at their core. It will also collaborate with independent partners to strengthen technical expertise and reinforce democratic oversight. Germany emphasized that the center will address both sustainable development priorities and regional needs, reflecting Europe's shared commitment to shaping AI in a way that benefits all communities while safeguarding fundamental rights.

Highlights from Individual Statements

Katy Strickland, representing the United States, emphasized that AI is creating a transformative new industry with significant benefits if adoption is widespread and responsible. She noted that governments are key adopters of AI and play an essential role in establishing public trust. Strickland argued that government action must be paired with pro-development policies that support workers, build tools and infrastructure, and rely on industry as a full partner. She stressed that companies often understand the scope of AI development better than governments, making it important for countries to use AI actively and involve industry in shaping standards.

Brad Smith, Vice Chair and President of Microsoft, described this moment as critical for global AI governance. He recalled that less than four years have passed since the release of ChatGPT, yet generative AI has already reshaped global dynamics. Smith highlighted a widening digital divide, noting that AI diffusion is 27% in the Global North versus 15% in the Global South, meaning the gap is growing rather than narrowing. He argued that countries—not machines—will decide whether AI expands or limits economic opportunity. Smith warned that AI has raced ahead while governance has fallen behind, increasing the risk of harm. The only way to catch up, he said, is through inclusive, multistakeholder cooperation. He called for interoperability, shared values, and coordinated action across sectors, stressing that the UN, ITU, and UNESCO have essential roles. Smith concluded that the world deserves hope and that bridging divides through real programs and international collaboration can ensure AI becomes a force for building a better future.

Final Plenary

The United Nations must play a central role in bringing all 193 member states together, because the momentum for cooperation comes from nations themselves. Speakers noted that more than 150 written submissions, including one from IF20, demonstrate broad engagement and the need for the UN to consolidate efforts across business, civil society, and governments. The UN's comparative advantage lies in its legitimacy and inclusivity, and its ability to connect global initiatives such as the G20 and G7 with UN-led processes. The Secretary-General's priorities of transparency, child safety, and practical governance will inform upcoming reports and the May UN meeting, where high-level ideas must become operational.

Participants stressed that countries move at different speeds but share common interests in sustainable development, truth, and cooperation. They outlined three priorities: helping states build effective national laws, expanding digital financing and public awareness, and strengthening skills and capacity—especially for the Global South's young population. A flexible but shared governance framework is needed to ensure visible capacity gains.

Several leaders, including the current President of Ireland, warned that top AI companies are advancing toward recursive self-improvement, increasing autonomy and reducing human control. They argued that only the UN has the legitimacy to prevent AI from crossing dangerous thresholds. Many countries lack AI expertise and risk being left behind, creating two frontiers: rapidly advancing AI capabilities and uneven national readiness.

The President of Iceland emphasized that public trust must be rebuilt through practical mechanisms that link global conversations and ensure inclusion. Across interventions, speakers agreed that the UN is the critical venue where dialogue can converge, risks can be anticipated, and global governance can be shaped to protect people while enabling innovation.

Final Thoughts

From the beginning of this dialogue, the thematic groups writing the initial Report for this body emphasized that AI governance must prioritize wisdom over speed, noting that the real contest is not who deploys AI first but who deploys it responsibly and with human accountability. They stressed that most AI will flow from “big AI to small AI,” making local context, cultural benchmarks, and community-centered design essential as we move forward. Delegates highlighted that access alone does not create wealth, but capacity does. That strategy must be treated as a collective movement built on openness and inclusion. African representatives raised concerns about systemic exclusion, including high visa refusal rates that prevent African experts from participating in global dialogues, proposing ideas such as “AI passports” to ensure equitable access. Speakers urged building AI systems for communities, drawing on principles like *Ubuntu*, and recognizing the role of creatives, democracy advocates, and civil society. They noted that many African nations sign treaties but fail to operationalize them domestically, and that stakeholders often work in isolation rather than through coordinated national processes. Submissions to [UNDIALOGUEAI.ORG](https://undialogueai.org)—including “Faith and AI”—reinforced that human capabilities, rights, and lived perspectives must be integral to the global AI agenda. Across all interventions, participants called for international innovation grounded in human needs, rights-based design, and inclusive participation.

Across the entire dialogue, a clear consensus emerged that AI governance must be global, inclusive, and grounded in human dignity. Countries repeatedly stressed that capacity, not mere access, determines whether AI becomes a tool of empowerment or exclusion. Delegates warned that geopolitical divides, unequal participation, and rapid frontier development risk leaving many nations behind. They called for multilateral cooperation, shared standards, and mechanisms that allow all regions, especially the Global South, to shape AI's trajectory. The dialogue underscored that AI is a paradigm shift touching culture, democracy, rights, and identity, and that governance must reflect the voices of communities, creatives, youth, and civil society. Ultimately, the collective message was that AI must be built with people, for people, and that global governance must ensure AI becomes a force for inclusion, justice, and shared human flourishing.