

GOVERNING AI TOGETHER

Multistakeholder Convening on AI Governance Summary

8 July 2026 • Palais des Nations, Geneva



INTRODUCTION

On 8 July 2026, **180** practitioners, policymakers, and advocates from across sectors and regions gathered at the Palais des Nations in Geneva for the *Multistakeholder Convening on AI Governance*, a full-day program hosted by organizations spanning civil society, academia, and the UN.

THE SPLIT OF THE **180** ATTENDEES:



70
CIVIL SOCIETY



39
SDOs &
FOUNDATIONS



24
ACADEMICS



17
INDUSTRY



19
GOVERNMENT
REPRESENTATIVES



11
THINK TANKS

Across sessions, participants launched a new OHCHR B-Tech and BSR workstream on embedding human rights due diligence into AI product design; discussed how to anchor human rights-based priorities and benchmarks in global governance processes following the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance (UNGDAI); reviewed early findings from the first independent report on AI safety risks and infrastructure needs across the Global Majority; explored redlines for AI, discussed the AI start-up ecosystem in Asia, and worked to co-design a Citizen's Track for AI governance linking distributed public dialogue to those same institutional processes. The day closed with a networking reception in the city.

SESSION SUMMARIES

AI Product Design Launch Event: (OHCHR B-Tech and BSR)

OHCHR B-Tech Project and Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) launched the B-Tech 2.0 AI Product Design Workstream, which will focus on downstream AI products, customized or fine-tuned from foundation models.

The workstream aims at a) producing practical human rights due diligence tools for AI product teams, and b) increasing civil society capacity to engage at the design stage. Industry speakers described human rights considerations moving from policy commitment into product workflows and agreed that governance has to be engineered into the product configurations.

Stakeholders shared their expectations for the workstream: a focus on the UNGPs rather than creating separate processes, treating representativeness in training and evaluation data as a condition of scientific validity, and writing human rights requirements into technical product specifications. A practical HRDD guide, one-pager briefs and further consultations are planned for release early 2027. Read a comprehensive summary of the session [here](#).

Designing AI Governance: Human Rights and Multistakeholder Leadership (MAP-AI, Global Network Initiative and Centre for Communications Governance NLU Delhi)

This session strategized on embedding human rights-based processes, priorities, and commitments into global AI governance. A fireside chat with UNGDAI co-chairs, Ambassador Egriselda Lopez of El Salvador and Ambassador Rein Tammsaar of Estonia, moderated by Rumman Chowdhury, took stock of the process that drew participation from over 100 countries and some 2,200 participants, while acknowledging the voices it had not yet reached. Scene-setting remarks from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and UNESCO previewed preparations for the 2027 Swiss AI Summit and drew lessons from the implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI. Participants then divided into four breakout groups, held under the Chatham House Rule, before reconvening in plenary for closing remarks from OHCHR.

The breakouts converged on a consistent diagnosis: Multilateral AI governance has **succeeded in creating platforms for exchange**, but it has **fallen short of its promise of transparency about how stakeholder input shapes outcomes** and of moving from symbolic inclusion to actual agency for affected communities.

Recurring priorities included:

- Clearer process modalities and selection criteria;
- Financing as the largest and least-discussed dimension of the AI divide;
- Language equity and the ability of countries to run AI in their own context;
- And a safety architecture that does not concentrate expertise and resources in the West.

On substance, participants pressed for **agreed-upon red lines, developer obligations regarding controllability, explicit recognition that international human rights law applies across the AI lifecycle, and workable accountability, liability, and remedy mechanisms** — including the judicial capacity-building needed to enable them. Read a comprehensive summary of the session [here](#).



Centering human agency and dignity: Operationalising AI red lines with a global perspective (Global Digital Rights Coalition, Global Digital Justice Forum, and OHCHR)

This interactive discussion centered on expanding and moving forward the conversation on AI red lines.

International human rights law requires drawing red lines, and the international human rights community and affected communities have spent decades defining unacceptable harm. Despite this, a huge accountability gap exists and is widening in the context of AI development, deployment, use, and governance. **Accountability remains fragmented, local, and ineffective.**

Participants shone a light on the persistent barriers that make accountability for the most severe AI-related harms elusive, including regulatory gaps, uneven institutional capacity, corporate monopolies, and power asymmetries.

Looking ahead, participants stressed the need for a shared understanding of what constitutes a red line.

This should be drawn from international human rights law and emphasize AI uses, applications, or characteristics that are fundamentally incompatible with human rights and dignity, and that they should be prohibited or subject to moratoriums. Participants also emphasized that delineating red lines must be grounded in the knowledge of diverse and affected communities, taking into account impacts across economic, social, cultural, and civil and political rights.

Participants noted that scale matters: cumulative impacts, such as hyperscale data center construction or mass surveillance, can push a use or application into inherently objectionable territory. They also emphasized the need to be informed by civil society's work to ensure stronger prohibitions and to close loopholes in frameworks like the EU AI Act. Finally, participants called on policymakers to focus on the existing work by human rights and public interest actors documenting and analyzing AI harms, rather than waiting for scientific consensus to act. Additionally, diverse actors must continue collaborating to define AI thresholds and ensure their concrete application through accountability mechanisms.

AI Governance and the Start-Up Ecosystem in Asia: Big Tech, SMEs, and Human Rights (OHCHR B-Tech Project)

The consultation, “AI Governance and the Start-Up Ecosystem in Asia: Big Tech, SMEs and Human Rights,” brought together Big Tech companies, AI start-ups and SMEs, academics, industry representatives, experts, and international organizations to **examine how smaller AI actors can meet their responsibilities under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).**

Participants highlighted the highly interdependent yet unequal relationship between Big Tech and smaller companies: start-ups often rely on Big Tech for foundational models, computing power, data, and platforms, while facing significant resource, technical, infrastructure, and regulatory constraints in implementing human rights due diligence and responsible AI practices.

The discussion underscored that while the **responsibility to respect human rights applies regardless of company size, the capacity to operationalize that responsibility varies significantly**, creating a need for more accessible tools, expertise, and institutional support:

- **Big Tech companies** were encouraged to share practical governance and security tools, expertise, mentoring, and testing resources with SMEs;
- **Governments** were urged to invest in digital public infrastructure, technical support, open-source assurance tools, responsible AI use cases, and human-rights-aligned public procurement; and
- **International organizations** were encouraged to support multilateral expert networks, interoperable technical standards, and communities of practice connecting the UNGPs with AI engineering and product governance.

Looking ahead, participants welcomed further workshops, including opportunities to connect Swiss companies with Asian start-ups to exchange practical tools, expertise, and approaches to responsible AI governance. Read a comprehensive summary of the session [here](#).





AI Safety in Context: Voices from the Majority World: Global South Network for Trustworthy AI

This session addressed a critical blind spot in AI safety research, which has focused predominantly on frontier model capabilities while overlooking the risks created by how, where, and under what conditions AI systems are actually deployed. **In the Global Majority, these deployment conditions systematically amplify risk.**

Limited institutional capacity makes failures harder to detect and accountability harder to enforce.

Dependence on the Global North actors, who control compute, infrastructure, and safety expertise, creates structural vulnerabilities.

Safety also breaks down across languages — models are significantly easier to jailbreak in low-resource languages, exposing billions of users to harms that benchmark-driven frameworks do not measure.

To address this gap, the Global South Network for Trustworthy AI is developing the **Global South AI Safety Report**, a comprehensive assessment of safety risks, governance gaps, and infrastructure needs across the majority of the world.

This session presented the report's concept and outline for multistakeholder feedback and outlined gaps in existing safety frameworks, tools, and institutions as they apply to the Global Majority contexts. It also opened a dialogue on what AI safety must mean for governments, civil society, and researchers in these regions. Finally, it identified the priorities and evidence needed for the report's first full edition, which will be released in time for the 2027 AI Summit in Switzerland.

Citizens' Track on AI Governance: From Theory to Practice (PAIRS and Global Governance Centre Geneva Graduate Institute)

The session “[A Citizens Track on AI Governance: From Theory to Practice](#)” **explored proposals to embed citizen voice in the future of the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance** by:

1. **Supporting flexible, distributed and culturally aligned grassroots community assemblies on AI** across the world in order to develop critical AI literacy and allow communities to express their views on AI; and
2. **Building links between community assemblies and national, regional, thematic and global AI governance decision-making** through an institutional interface, and establishing ‘docking points’ into AI governance processes.

Responding to the [Citizens Track whitepaper](#), a panel of speakers and break-out groups explored questions of:

- **Community assembly design** - Meet people where they are; support people in better understanding AI; adapt to and account for local customs on discussion dynamics, time, recruitment and communication
- **Institutional interface** - Public participation as a corrective to the systemic concentration of power in frontier labs/few countries; learning from SDG consultations; prioritising Global Majority representation; agile and continuous infrastructure matching rapid tempo of AI development
- **Funding and sustainability** - Diversified sources; funding locally for independence; exploring innovative funding models; focus on movement-building; and
- **Partnerships and governance** - Focus on amplifying communities; maintain feedback loops; co-design process and governance.

The session **closed with a call to action: inviting participants to partner in the next stage of the development of the Citizens' Track on AI**, which aims to support 100s of community assemblies and advance the creation of docking points for public voices to be meaningfully heard in the next UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance and Geneva AI Summit. Read a comprehensive summary of the session [here](#).



CONCLUSION

Throughout the day, the sessions approached AI governance from different angles but converged on the same problems: a persistent accountability gap where regulatory coverage is uneven, institutional capacity is thin, and mechanisms to remedy this remain largely fragmented. There continue to exist deep asymmetries of power and resources, with start-ups dependent on BigTech for models and compute, Global Majority institutions dependent on Global North actors for infrastructure and safety expertise, and affected communities holding the least degree of influence over these systems that increasingly shape their lives. There is a clear distance between participation and agency, evidenced by the lack of certain community voices across AI governance spaces where there is also little clarity on how stakeholder inputs actually shape outcomes. Participants also highlighted that we must treat international human rights law and the UNGPs as the framework to build on, rather than a parallel track, and pursue priorities such as language equity, judicial and institutional capacity building, developing accessible tools and shared expertise, and sustained financing and local infrastructure for public participation.

The Convening's central message was that the intersessional period of the UNGDAI should be used to move from diagnosis and dialogue to mechanisms and outcomes, reinforcing that the actors and evidence needed to enable this already exist.



ANNEX:

MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONVENING ON AI GOVERNANCE AGENDA

Session	Organizer	Time
Launch of the AI Product Design Workstream	OHCHR B-Tech and BSR	9:00 - 10:30 AM
Designing AI Governance: Human Rights and Multistakeholder Leadership	MAP-AI, Global Network Initiative and Centre for Communications Governance, NLU Delhi	10:45 AM - 12:45 PM
Centering human agency and dignity: Operationalizing AI red lines with a global perspective	Global Digital Rights Coalition, Global Digital Justice Forum, and OHCHR	2:00 - 3:00 PM
AI Governance and the Start-Up Ecosystem in Asia: Big Tech, SMEs, and Human Rights	OHCHR B-Tech	3:00 - 4:00 PM
AI Safety in Context: Voices from the Majority World	Global South Network for Trustworthy AI	3:15 - 4:00 PM
Citizens' Track on AI Governance: From Theory to Practice	PAIRS and Global Governance Centre Geneva Graduate Institute	4:15 - 6:00 PM