

The 4th UNESCO GLOBAL FORUM ON THE ETHICS OF AI 2026



Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
14 - 17 September 2026

PROGRAMME

Provisional Draft as of June 2026

DAY 0 14 September 2026

The preparatory day of the Global Forum features parallel working meetings of key stakeholder networks of UNESCO engaged in the implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, as well as expert workshops and working meetings of global and regional UN coordination mechanisms. It also includes a private strategic briefing on AI developments for ministerial participants with leading scientists, policy experts, senior policymakers, and UN Resident Coordinators, as well as a closed-door ministerial dialogue on international cooperation.

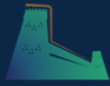
DAY 1 15 September 2026

09.30 – 10.15 **OPENING CEREMONY**

High Level Ministerial Dialogue Session

10.15 – 12.00 **AI, Multilateralism and Diplomacy**

This high-level dialogue will explore how multilateral processes can help bridge fragmented approaches to AI governance and support more inclusive participation across regions. It will examine how global norm-setting can be connected with practical implementation, drawing on UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI and related initiatives. The discussion will also situate the Forum within the broader landscape of international cooperation and diplomacy.



DAY 1 15 September 2026

12.00 – 13.30 **LUNCH BREAK**

High Level Ministerial Dialogue Session

13.30 – 15.15 **Five Years of the Recommendation: Where We Are, Where We Go Next**

This session will take stock of how the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI has been implemented since its adoption in 2021. It will reflect on progress made by Member States, including through the RAM process, while highlighting institutional, technical, financial, and political considerations. It will also consider how the Recommendation can continue to guide the next phase of ethical AI governance.

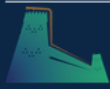
15.15 – 15.30 **BREAK**

High Level Ministerial Dialogue Session

15.30 – 17.00 **Financing Ethical AI Governance for the People**

The discussion will focus on how ethical AI governance can be supported through sustained investment and coordinated partnerships. It will examine how governments, development partners, and other actors can finance the systems needed to move from readiness to implementation, including regulatory capacity and public-sector preparedness. Attention will also be given to ensuring inclusive participation and long-term sustainability.

UNESCO AI Ethics Art Residency Screening



DAY 2 16 September 2026

09.30 – 10.45

A New Phase of AI Readiness: Evidence from RAM and the Road Ahead

This plenary will present key insights from the Meta-Analysis of 55+ Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) reports, reflecting a shift from principles to implementation. It will examine how this global evidence base informs the development of RAM 2.0 as a more inclusive and action-oriented tool. The session will also explore how countries can move from assessment to follow-up action through policy guidance and partnerships.

Launch: RAM Meta-Analysis and RAM 2.0

10.45 – 11.00

BREAK

11.00 – 12.15

*Parallel
Sessions*

Building Institutional Capacity for AI in Public Administrations

The session will explore how governments are using AI to strengthen public service delivery while ensuring legality, accountability, and transparency. It will highlight practical approaches to responsible public-sector AI, including procurement, institutional capacity, and literacy. It will also examine mechanisms such as Ethical Impact Committees for translating ethical principles into decision-making processes.

At Speed or at Risk? Ethics, Governance and Accountability in Humanitarian AI

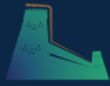
This discussion will examine the increasing use of AI in humanitarian contexts and the pace at which deployment is outstripping governance safeguards. It will explore risks such as biased data, opaque systems, and weak oversight, particularly in relation to vulnerable populations. It will also consider how existing ethical frameworks can guide more transparent and accountable approaches.

AI, Youth Mental Health and Digital Well-being

The session will explore the growing impact of AI on the mental health and well-being of young people in digital environments, grounded in the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee's (IBC) report on the [Ethical considerations for youth mental health in the digital environment](#). This session will explore the growing impact of AI on the mental health and well-being of young people, addressing the specific impact of generative AI tools, algorithmic amplification of harmful content and AI companions in children and adolescents.

12.15 – 13.45

LUNCH BREAK



DAY 2 16 September 2026

13.45 – 15.00

Parallel
Sessions

AI, Environment, Ecosystems and Energy: From Readiness to Action for AI, and the Tools that Will Get You There

This session will examine the environmental implications of AI systems, including their demand for energy, water, and critical resources. It will explore both the potential of AI to support sustainability and the risks it poses to ecosystems and climate goals. The discussion will focus on helping decision-makers move from readiness to action through concrete policy steps and tools.

Launch: AI Environment and Ecosystems Toolkit

Turning the Gender Lens for AI Governance into Action

A [Women4Ethics of AI Network Session](#)

The session will provide a space for exchange on gender-responsive AI governance and practical collaboration. It will highlight approaches to addressing gendered impacts of technology, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence. It will also reflect on how successful practices can be adapted and scaled across different contexts.

Shaping a Responsible Future in Life Sciences: The Age of AI-Enabled Synthetic Biology

Grounded in the UNESCO [International Bioethics Committee's \(IBC\) report on the \[Ethical Issues of Synthetic Biology \\(2025\\)\]\(#\)](#), this session will explore the growing convergence between AI and synthetic biology (SynBio), examining how AI can both amplify risks and strengthen safeguards in the research, development and application of SynBio. Discussions will address implications for innovation, biosecurity and public policy, including dual-use risks, laboratory automation, access to data, benefit-sharing, and the need for anticipatory governance frameworks that enable scientific progress while protecting human rights, safety and the public good.

15.00 – 15.15

BREAK



DAY 2 16 September 2026

15.15 – 16.15

Parallel
Sessions

The Role of International Collaboration in AI Supervision

A Global Network of AI Supervisory Authorities (GNAIS) Session

This session will examine how cooperation between supervisory authorities across jurisdictions can support effective AI oversight, including through information-sharing, joint approaches, and practical coordination in cross-border scenarios.

From Research to Decision: Navigating the Ethics and Governance of AI Across Four Health Domains

A World Health Organisation (WHO) Session

AI is reshaping medical research, drug development, public health, clinical diagnosis and treatment, and the public's use of AI for health information. This session will examine the ethical and governance challenges across these domains, including accountability, safety, oversight, and trust, and discuss how regulatory and governance frameworks can adapt to the rapid evolution of AI in health.

[Programming under progress]

16.15 – 17.15

Parallel
Sessions

A Network for Implementation: How UNESCO Category 2 Centres and Partner Institutions Are Turning the Recommendation into Practices

This session will explore how UNESCO Category 2 Centres and partner institutions can support the implementation of the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI. It will focus on capacity-building, research, training, regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing, including how centres can work together to provide practical support to Member States.

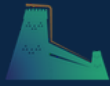
Human-Machine Relationships in the Design of AI-Enabled Workflows

A UNESCO Business Council for Ethics of AI Session

This session will explore how AI systems are being integrated into workplace environments as collaborators. It will examine emerging questions around human-machine relationships, including roles, responsibilities, and evolving forms of interaction. It will also consider how such relationships can be designed and governed in line with ethical principles.

Who Bears the Costs? Addressing Social Inequalities from the AI Revolution

This session will explore the social impacts of AI-driven transformations, asking a central question: who gains, and who bears the costs? Drawing on the Inclusive-by-Design approach developed under the UNESCO Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme, the discussion will highlight how inequalities in digital access, labour conditions, and participation in governance can be reinforced, or reduced, through policy choices. Bridging social science insights and policy practice, the session will offer concrete examples of how governments can anticipate and address these challenges early in the policy design process.



DAY 3 17 September 2026

9.30 – 10.45

Parallel
Sessions

Rethinking Sciences in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

This session will examine how AI is transforming scientific research, including how knowledge is produced, validated, and shared. It will explore both opportunities and challenges, including issues related to integrity, transparency, and inequality. It will also consider the institutional and governance implications of these changes.

Enhancing Inclusion and Access to Justice in the Age of AI

The session will explore how AI is affecting justice systems and access to justice across different contexts. It will examine implications for legal frameworks, fairness, and rights, including women's rights. It will bring together judicial and expert perspectives to reflect on governance challenges.

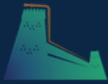
Whose Language Does AI Speak? Advancing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in AI

A UNESCO Coalition for Linguistic Diversity in AI Session

This session will explore the importance of linguistic diversity in AI, by drawing on the work of the UNESCO Coalition for Linguistic Diversity in AI. It will address key challenges such as data, language representation, ethical AI development, and preservation of Indigenous, endangered, and underrepresented languages. A dedicated part of the session will focus on Arabic language and its role for the diffusion of knowledge, dialogue, and cultural exchange.

10.45 – 11.00

BREAK



DAY 3 17 September 2026

11.00 – 12.15

Parallel

Sessions

Neural Data and Mental Privacy: AI Challenges in the Commercial Uses of Neurotechnology

The convergence of neuroscience and AI is accelerating the development of consumer neurotechnologies, raising important ethical and human rights concerns related to mental privacy and neural data protection. Drawing on the [2025 UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology](#), this session will explore governance approaches for the responsible development and use of neurotechnologies across sectors.

Sustaining the Public Purpose of Education in the Age of AI

This session will explore the challenges of sustaining the public mission of education in the age of AI, with particular attention on higher education. It will examine the implications of AI for curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and how institutions can prepare learners for an uncertain future. Discussions will explore how education systems can harness the opportunities offered by AI while advancing equity, inclusion, solidarity, teacher & student agency, and human flourishing.

The Ethical Use of AI in Museums

This session will present the results of the UNESCO-ICOM 2026 Survey on the [Use of AI in Museums](#), followed by a panel discussion featuring three museum professionals from different regions. They will share how their use of AI was guided by ethical considerations highlighted in the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI and the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums.

12.15 – 13.45

LUNCH BREAK



DAY 3 17 September 2026

13.45 – 15.00 Parallel Sessions

Shaping the Future of Work for Culture in the Age of AI and Digital Technologies

This session examines how artificial intelligence is transforming the culture sector and explores how to ensure this transition is ethical, inclusive, and human rights-based. It combines policy dialogue on the future of cultural heritage, creative work, and skills with showcases of UNESCO's AI-driven initiatives, including tools for museums and cultural institutions, heritage digitisation, and virtual platforms. Bringing together diverse stakeholders, the session highlights culture's role in shaping the future of work and reinforces UNESCO's leadership in ethical AI governance.

Global Civil Society Organizations and Academic Network on AI Ethics and Policy

A Global Civil Society Organizations and Academic Network Session

The UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI) recognises the importance of multistakeholder collaboration in AI governance. Building on the launch of the Global Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Academic Network on AI Ethics and Policy at the 3rd Global Forum on the Ethics of AI in 2025, this year's Forum is an opportunity to showcase the operationalisation of the Network. The session will highlight how the Network has since structured collective work across five thematic subgroups - IP and Culture, Empowering Citizens and Civil Society in AI Governance, International AI Red Lines, AI in the Public Sector, and Environment and Ecosystems - and will present how co-created outputs are contributing to global AI ethics discussions.

Ethical Implications of Physical AI

This session will examine the ethical implications of AI systems that act in physical environments, including robots, embodied agents and autonomous systems used in workplaces, care, education and public spaces. It will consider safety, responsibility, human agency, dependency, accessibility, dignity and the social conditions for trustworthy deployment.

15.00 – 15.15 BREAK

15.15 – 16.45

AI for the People: Towards a Shared Future

High Level Dialogue

As AI becomes increasingly embedded in public policy, economies and social systems, its governance can no longer be treated as a stand-alone technology issue. This plenary will examine how AI intersects with shared global challenges, including climate resilience, health, food security, inequality, crisis response, social protection and sustainable development. It will ask how ethical AI governance can help countries anticipate systemic risks, strengthen institutional resilience, and mobilise AI in ways that serve the public good, especially in contexts where existing development pressures are already acute. The discussion will also consider what forms of international cooperation, financing and capacity-building are needed to ensure that AI does not deepen existing vulnerabilities, but contributes to more inclusive, sustainable and human-centred responses to global challenges.

16.45 – 17.15 CLOSING SESSION