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Sustainable development of artificial intelligence technology based on global digital human rights

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As the pandemic accelerates the pace of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies, we are entering a phase fraught with huge risks for global human rights. Artificial intelligence (AI) and other new technologies hold great promise, but need to be paired with ethical oversight to ensure they don't exacerbate social inequality or lead to human rights violations.

The best way to achieve this is by committing to a Declaration of Global Digital Human Rights, which updates international law to take into account developments such as globalization and 4IR technologies. Such a declaration will fully articulate current international legal obligations of states in the field of human rights in the digital age.

For decades, human rights have been protected by the International Bill of Human Rights, a set of five human rights treaties developed by the United Nations to advance fundamental freedoms. Two of these treaties, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and The Covenants on Human Rights (1966), shaped a system of universal values and made the person a subject of the law. It is worth remembering that they were adopted after two world wars and were a belated decision in defining and legalizing these universal values.

When the drafts of the Declaration and the Covenants were developed, the world had only just begun to move from the second industrial revolution to the third. The second revolution in the early 20th century involved an explosion of innovations such as cars, new communication technologies, and assembly lines that facilitated mass production and standardization. The third, in the late 20th century, was driven by computers and digital technologies. The documents that define our idea of human rights were tied to those eras and the technologies people used at the time. They were groundbreaking and necessary, but they do not answer a simple question that is becoming ever more pressing: 'What does it mean to be a human being in the modern world?'

Today, new technologies are merging the physical, digital and biological worlds. This fourth revolution affects all disciplines, countries and sectors. Inventions such as self-driving cars, smart robots and gene editing are challenging us to define what we really mean when we talk about qualities previously associated with humans, such as intelligence, or individuality. Added to that is our ever-tightening global interdependence.

We must fully renew the international human rights obligations of states to meet these challenges, and overcome the lag of socio-political and legal global processes.

Global digital human rights are opportunities for everyone from birth, through access to the digital benefits of civilization. They should be ensured by the consolidation in the system of forms of international law and national law [1, 2]. Their elements include:

1. The right to exercise personal, social, economic, political, and cultural rights based on new technologies, without barriers built on the basis of new technologies.

2. A global ban on the production and use of these new technologies for warfare and human rights violations (including autonomous combat systems, AI, big data technologies, biotechnologies, and other digital technologies).

3. A ban on the use of these technologies for total supervision and control (including technologies such as the Internet of things and face recognition).

4. The right to personal data protection, including the protection of genetic information and health data (in the context of the rapid advances in biotechnology, bioengineering and telemedicine, for example).

5. The priority of human beings - and their interests, integrity and quality of life - in the context of the creation, use, introduction, and development of artificial intelligence.

6. Equal access to the opportunities offered by these technologies, including access to education, labor, healthcare, and basic social services based on new technologies.

7. The right to take part in the management of social processes at the global, regional and national levels through digital technologies.

8. The right of access to the global Internet for everyone.

Such change will not happen with a broad and sustained common effort. Universities, research centers [3], and individual scientists must join forces to develop and harmonize the theoretical and legal model underpinning the updated concept of human rights. Their input is crucial for consolidating current drafts of the Declaration of Global Digital Human Rights, as developed by the Global Digital Human Rights Project, a joint project by with Global Shapers Moscow (World Economic Forum) and the Global Law Forum.

Mechanisms for their monitoring and enforcement will also need to draw on new technologies to be effective. Finally, an effective digital society with human rights at its centre will need a functioning media and civil society that informs people of these rights and holds governments and institutions to account.

Global digital human rights are a fundamental principle of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the adoption of AI. Therefore, global digital human rights should be laid down as a predetermined goal, introducing itself as a legal global imperative principle for public law relations, a deviation from which is not permissible. In addition, they must be reflected at the level of code, algorithm and language of machine processes. It is equally important that global digital human rights be adopted as an educational standard in the era of global digitalization[4] of public relations.

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