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## Global governance of AI: How prepared is the UN?

*Briefing for MPs on UN Processes #12.*

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the most transformative technologies ever created. While the risks of AI - to the human mind, to the environment, to the economy, to national security, and ultimately to democracy - remain open to debate, one thing is certain: AI is here to stay.

A few tech companies in a handful of countries have invested trillions of dollars in all stages of AI development. Millions of investors all over the world have bet their financial future on AI growth. Institutions of governments, business enterprises and households everywhere have all come to rely on some form of AI-supported service. New AI tools are being developed at an exponential rate in a race for market dominance. AI development has also become a new terrain of geopolitical rivalry.

With so much at stake, creating a level playing field of binding rules and safeguards to govern the development and use of AI has become a major preoccupation of policy-makers and experts alike. As the leading organization of global governance and multilateral negotiation, the UN made a major attempt at bringing order to the scattered AI global governance landscape with the establishment, in last year's [Global Digital Compact](#), of two new bodies: an multi-disciplinary **Independent International Scientific Panel** “to promote scientific understanding” of AI development in its various dimensions, and a **Global Dialogue on AI Governance** involving governments and all relevant stakeholders to be convened yearly.

While these new UN bodies provide a welcome addition to the existing constellation of AI governance initiatives nationally and globally, and may even assume a leading role, their mandate is primarily consultative and does not include any authority to set binding rules for governments or for the AI industry at large. While many countries may be supportive of a strong AI global governance system, some countries are of the view that AI development should be allowed to proceed as freely as possible in response to market needs.

This briefing will consider the pros and cons of the two new UN bodies of AI governance as well as other AI governance structures that may exist at the international level, most notably, the [Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence](#), to ask the question: do they suffice to counter the risks that AI poses to human well-being, social justice, and democratic decision-making?

### Leading questions

- Is the current AI global governance system properly equipped and empowered?
- Should an international treaty on AI be contemplated?
- What scope is there for a new international body for AI to be created?
- Within the existing global system, do governments and parliaments have sufficient autonomy to impose strong rules on AI?

Presenters

[H.E. Ambassador Egriselda Lopez](#), Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the 2026 Global Dialogue on AI Governance (*invited*)

[Ms. Lucia Velasco](#), Lead of AI Policy and Governance, United Nations

**Mr. Maxime Fournes**, CEO, [Pause AI](#)

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