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T +41 22 919 41 50
F +41 22 919 41 60
E postbox@ipu.org
www.ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland

Speech by Anda Filip
Secretary General of the IPU

Online briefing session on *Artificial intelligence as a tool to guarantee children's right to inclusive and quality education: opportunity and risks*

Online, 21 September 2026

Madam Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child,
Honourable members of parliament,
Representatives of UNESCO and the ITU,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to address this important discussion on artificial intelligence and its potential to advance every child's right to an inclusive, high-quality education. A longstanding commitment prevents me from joining you online today. I wish to thank you all for your interest in this critical issue related to the future of children, and by extension the sustainability of our society.

The world is undergoing a profound technological transformation. Artificial intelligence is already changing the way we work and communicate, as well as the way we teach and learn.
In the field of education, the possibilities are vast. But so are the risks.
Our starting point must therefore be very clear: *technology must serve children and their rights, not the other way around*.

Artificial intelligence can be a powerful tool for inclusion. It can help tailor educational content to each child's abilities, languages, and specific needs. It can facilitate learning for children with disabilities, reduce certain language barriers, and provide educational resources to communities where qualified teachers and educational materials remain in short supply.

When used responsibly, AI can also help teachers identify learning difficulties more quickly and provide more personalized support. It can lighten certain administrative burdens and allow teachers to devote more time to what is at the heart of their mission: teaching, supporting, and helping children grow.

These opportunities are particularly important for countries facing shortages of teachers, insufficient educational resources, and inadequate infrastructure.

But we must be vigilant: we must not create a new divide while seeking to reduce another.
Millions of children still lack access to a reliable internet connection, electricity, digital devices, or the skills needed to use these technologies.

If access to artificial intelligence becomes a prerequisite for a better education, children who are already disadvantaged – due to poverty, disability, gender, conflict, or displacement – risk being left even further behind. The digital divide must not become an artificial intelligence divide. That is why the issue of investment is crucial.

Governments, parliaments, development partners, and the private sector must join forces to mobilize the resources needed to develop connectivity, digital infrastructure, teacher training, and educational solutions accessible to all.

Investing in artificial intelligence for education must never mean investing less in teachers or in public education systems. On the contrary, these investments must reinforce one another.

That said, we must also face the risks head-on.

Children's personal data must be protected. Artificial intelligence systems must not expose children to surveillance, profiling, commercial exploitation, or discrimination.
We must also be mindful of the risks associated with misinformation, inappropriate or harmful content, and excessive reliance on digital tools. Children must acquire the skills needed to understand that an answer generated by a machine is not necessarily the correct one.

Above all, education cannot become merely a relationship between a child and an algorithm. Teachers, schools, and human interactions remain essential to children's intellectual, emotional, and social development. Artificial intelligence must support teachers, not replace them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is where parliaments have a crucial role to play.
Through legislation, they must establish robust safeguards regarding data protection, privacy, algorithmic transparency, non-discrimination, and child safety.

In the same vein, through their budgetary prerogative, parliaments must ensure that the digital transformation benefits not only the best-equipped schools, but also children in rural areas, children with disabilities, refugees, displaced children, and all those at risk of being left behind.

As part of their oversight role, lawmakers must ask the right questions: Who develops the AI systems used in our schools? What data do they collect? How is that data used? Are these technologies safe and accessible to everyone? And above all, who is held accountable when they infringe on a child's rights?

Finally, children themselves must be able to participate in this discussion. We must listen to their experiences, expectations, and concerns. The policies that shape their digital future cannot be developed without them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The question, therefore, is no longer simply whether we should use artificial intelligence in education. It is already present and will continue to evolve.
The real question is what kind of education we want to build in the age of artificial intelligence.

At the IPU, we have anticipated all these questions and are working resolutely to promote best practices in support of parliamentary efforts to advance children's rights. We have adapted our ongoing efforts to promote quality education to adjust to the new environment as well as meet the related challenges posed by artificial intelligence. At this juncture, I would like to reiterate our deep gratitude to our partners, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNESCO, and the ITU – for their invaluable support in our work towards the noble goal of quality education for children in a context where AI predominates and shapes almost everything.

We have a unique opportunity to use this technology to expand access to knowledge, support teachers, overcome barriers to learning, and advance every child's right to quality education. But this will only be possible if our choices remain guided by human rights, inclusion, equity, and accountability.

Our goal must be simple: every technological advance in education must translate into more opportunities for every child. No child should be left behind because they are on the wrong side of the digital divide. It is up to parliaments, governments, educators, the private sector, and international organizations to make this a reality.

Parliaments have a vital role to play in ensuring that artificial intelligence becomes not a new source of inequality, but a powerful tool in support of every child's right to learn, develop, and reach their full potential.

I wish you successful deliberations and thank you for your kind attention.