High-level Committee on Management
Task Force to Develop a System-wide Normative and Operational Framework on the use of AI in the UN System

TERMS OF REFERENCE *(Final as of 11 January 2024)*

I. Background and Mission

The United Nations (UN) system recognizes the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI). UN system organizations are employing AI technologies to support their efforts towards achieving sustainable development, promoting and protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian assistance, supporting peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations, augmenting crisis management efforts, and enhancing their overall effectiveness in delivering on all of their mandates. These initiatives continually face novel challenges in a rapidly changing environment, necessitating a shared AI governance framework to ensure services align with UN values, obligations and commitments.

At the Joint Session of the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) held on 4 October 2023 in Copenhagen, members decided to develop a "*system-wide normative and operational framework on the use of AI in the UN System, to establish appropriate knowledge sharing mechanisms for ideas and experiences, including the possibility of developing a generative AI platform for the UN system, as well as to pool the necessary technical capacity, so that we move in an integrated and coherent manner as a system in this dynamic and evolving field.*"

In response to this imperative, a Task Force is established to develop guidance that aligns with existing UN principles and standards on ethical AI use. Its mission is to facilitate the responsible adoption of AI technologies across UN entities, emphasizing adaptability to dynamic future needs. This initiative seeks to cultivate a capable and ethical AI ecosystem across the UN system that complies with existing norms and anticipates and responds to emerging technological advances and ethical considerations. The overall work of the Task Force aims to contribute towards the safe and ethical use of AI across the UN system.

II. Objectives and Tasks

This Task Force is convened with a critical mandate to navigate the complex landscape of AI and establish a system-wide normative and operational framework across the UN system that aligns with existing UN frameworks, principles on the ethical use of AI and binding standards on personal data protection. This collective effort seeks to foster knowledge sharing among UN entities, explore the potential of a generative AI platform, and join forces to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach.

Additionally, the Task Force endeavours to promote ethical, trustworthy, safe, and sustainable AI applications, enhancing UN system-wide coordination and policy coherence. Pursuing these objectives, the Task Force aims to contribute to a responsible, unified, and future-ready approach to AI adoption within the UN system, including with respect to the impact of AI on the UN workforce. In particular, the Task Force will focus on the following outcomes, *in order of priority, and two sub-groups of the Task Force will be established to deliver these two outcomes*:

1. **Develop a normative guidance/model policy for the UN System on the use of AI;**
2. **Identify and promote mechanisms for pooling technical capacity and knowledge sharing on AI.**

1. Develop a normative guidance/model policy for the UN system on the use of AI

The Task Force will formulate a normative guidance/model policy for the use of AI within the UN system, describing methods to evaluate, direct, and monitor the use of AI to assist entities in adopting adequate processes to maximize reusability, standardization, and reliability. In the process of developing the guidelines, the Task Force will review existing and emerging policies, guidance, frameworks and approaches relevant to AI to ensure consistency and build upon established principles and practices relevant to AI use within the UN system. The document outline could include the elements listed in Annex 1.

The Task Force will ensure that the developed policy/framework aligns with the [Principles on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the UN System](#) as well as the other working groups on data governance and data protection/sharing within the HLCM and HLCP, to uphold the values and principles of the United Nations, emphasizing human rights, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in AI applications, and given the fast-changing pace of the technology landscape, the end product will be future-looking and a living document that allows for periodic reviews and updates.

2. Identify and promote mechanisms for pooling technical capacity and knowledge sharing on AI

The Task Force will also explore and recommend strategies and mechanisms for information sharing and pooling technical capacity among UN system organizations, including exploring the feasibility of developing a **UN Generative AI platform**. It also aims to promote an integrated and coherent approach to AI implementation, considering the diverse needs of UN system entities. Partnerships with external organizations and academia will also be explored to enhance technical expertise and foster innovation in the UN's AI endeavours. The Task Force will propose mechanisms that encourage active collaboration, fostering a unified approach to AI technologies and strengthening related data initiatives, contributing to a more cohesive and forward-looking framework that reflects the collective strength and shared goals of the UN system. Established workstreams to be involved in the work include the following (non-exhaustive) list:

- **Digital Technology Network (DTN) Community of Practice on AI (CoP-AI).** Focus placed on sharing and evaluation of AI related business cases, in so doing develop a UN system-wide framework of AI business cases.
- **Inter-Agency Working Group on AI (IAWG-AI).** Focus on enhancing UN system policy coherence and programmatic coordination on AI, including as it relates to the governance of AI.
- **UN Innovation Network (UNIN).** Focus on use cases of informal applications of AI at an individual/team level.

III. Operating Modalities

1. **Membership:** The Task Force is open to all interested HLCM members, with each organization expected to nominate up to two lead representatives at Director level. The lead representative can be supported by a team of multi-disciplinary experts that are actively working on integrating AI in their organization. The lead representatives are expected to actively contribute to the work of the Task Force, as well as to coordinate inputs internally to their own organization. Collectively, the Task Force will identify opportunities to actively engage with relevant stakeholders on AI.
2. **Chairs:** This Task Force will be co-led by **Ms. Kelly T. Clements**, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, **UNHCR**; **Mr. Guoqi Wu**, Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department, **IFAD**; and **Mr. Bernardo Mariano Junior**, Chief Information Technology Officer (CITO), Assistant Secretary-General, OICT, **UN Secretariat**.
3. **Working Modalities:** The Task Force may adopt working modalities most appropriate to specific objectives and tasks. It will carry out its duties and functions using electronic means, and it will convene virtually at regular intervals to be decided by the Task Force. When deemed necessary and appropriate by the members of the Task Force, physical meetings may also be held on the side-lines of other relevant UN meetings.
4. **Timeframe:** The Task Force will report on progress at the **Spring 2024** session of HLCM and conclude its work by the **Fall 2024** session.