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ORAL STATEMENT

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Inaugural United Nations Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance
Thematic Breakout Cluster 4: Respecting, protecting and promoting human rights
Palexpo, Geneva, Switzerland

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Excellencies, colleagues, co-Chairs, thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this Thematic Breakout Cluster 4. Access Now is a grassroots to global civil society organization dedicated to defending and extending the digital rights of people and communities at risk. I will focus my intervention on four main points:

First, and foremost, the objective of this Global Dialogue is to foster international cooperation on AI governance while ensuring that the perspectives of the Global Majority are reflected alongside those of leading AI powers. Human rights-centered AI requires the rights-respecting collection and processing of data, alongside robust governance and oversight of automated systems. Model development and sharing practices must balance necessary safeguards with meaningful openness, so that Global Majority countries can build their own technical capacity and overcome a historic dependence on externally held expertise.

Second, AI tools are supercharging surveillance and suppression of protestors, journalists, human rights defenders, and other communities at risk. We therefore echo calls for the adoption of human rights-centered, binding legal standards and global governance mechanisms to regulate digital surveillance technologies and AI, addressing chilling effects.

Third, we call for a halt to the development and use of AI tools that are facilitating violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, especially in contexts of conflict or war.

Finally, the current geopolitical landscape presents an opportunity for global majority regions, as well as middle powers, to seek and foster collaboration and join resources in an unprecedented fashion.

There is nothing magical about AI development, it is a governable technology, but we need alternatives to the dominant paradigm being pushed by a handful of companies who are prioritising AI acceleration over all other concerns. Fundamentally, people around the world do not only need access, but most importantly, they need agency. We trust all those gathered here understand the urgency, and the unique opportunity and responsibility we share, in meeting this challenge.

Thank you.



Access Now (<https://www.accessnow.org>) defends and extends the digital rights of people and communities at risk. As a grassroots-to-global organization, we partner with local actors to bring a human rights agenda to the use, development, and governance of digital technologies, and to intervene where technologies adversely impact our human rights. By combining direct technical support, strategic advocacy, grassroots grantmaking, and convenings such as RightsCon, we fight for human rights in the digital age.

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