

## **Commission on Science and Technology for Development**



### **Promoting the Ethical Development and Use of AI in Warfare with Focus on the Prevention of Misuse and Discrimination in Developing Countries**

*-Committee Guide-*

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# **1) Introduction**

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The Commission plays a key advisory role by:

- Analyzing global trends in science and technology
- Assessing the impact of new technologies (such as artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and green technologies) on sustainable development
- Promoting technology transfer to developing countries
- Supporting capacity-building in science, technology, and innovation in less developed regions
- Providing policy recommendations to ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly, especially in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The CSTD meets annually in Geneva and is composed of 43 Member States, elected for four-year terms with equitable geographical representation. It brings together not only governments, but also UN agencies, academic experts, the private sector, and civil society to shape inclusive and forward-looking STI policies.

## **I. Topic**

We live in a time where Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an integral part of our daily lives. Whether through voice assistants, personalized advertising, automatic translations, or facial recognition. Today, hardly anyone uses digital services without AI operating in the background.

While this technology offers many advantages, one crucial aspect is often overlooked: the risks and potential for misuse of AI.

The greatest dangers include the abuse of personal data such as through deepfakes, as well as the use of AI in warfare, for example through autonomous drones.

These applications can have serious consequences for privacy, human rights, and global security if left unregulated.

## 2) **Facts**

- AI is used in many countries for mass surveillance (e.g., China, Russia, Iran).
- In developing countries like Vietnam, facial recognition is used to monitor activists and journalists.
- Facial recognition systems are significantly less accurate for people with darker skin tones.
- In hiring processes, people with "non-Western" or foreign-sounding names are often discriminated against by automated systems.
- Deepfakes are used to create highly realistic fake videos or voices of well-known individuals.
- These fakes are often used for political manipulation, hate campaigns, or to damage reputations.
- Over 90% of all deepfake content online is related to sexual exploitation or disinformation.
- AI is increasingly used in autonomous weapons and drones.
- In 2020, an autonomous drone is reported to have carried out a lethal attack without human command in Libya (according to a UN report).

### **3) Who, What and which region is affected?**

#### **Kongo:**

A well-known example of the misuse of artificial intelligence is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congo is a huge country in Central Africa, rich in valuable resources like cobalt and coltan, materials that are used in almost every smartphone, computer, and also in AI technologies. But despite its natural wealth, the country struggles with political instability, poverty, and ongoing violent conflicts. In such an environment, the use of AI can quickly become harmful.

One major concern is digital surveillance. The Congolese government has started using AI-powered systems to monitor social media and keep track of political opposition. These technologies often come from foreign countries, such as China, and are used to silence critics or activists. For many people in the Congo, this means that speaking out comes with real risks. Privacy and freedom of expression are barely protected.

AI can also be misused in military conflicts. In the eastern part of the country, armed rebel groups regularly clash with government forces. In these areas, there is a risk that AI-powered drones or surveillance systems will be used without proper control or oversight. If machines make life-or-death decisions without human judgment, innocent civilians could easily become unintended targets.

Another growing threat is the spread of deepfakes, fake videos or images created using AI. These can be used to spread lies, manipulate public opinion, or damage the reputation of political opponents. In a country where many people have limited access to reliable information, such false content can be extremely harmful and divisive.

The biggest issue is that the Congo has very few laws or systems in place to regulate AI. There are no strong data protection laws, and very little public awareness of how these technologies work. This creates a dangerous power imbalance, where governments, companies, or foreign powers can use AI to control and exploit people without consequences.

## **Vietnam:**

Another well-known example of the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) is Vietnam. One major issue the country faces is the growing use of deepfakes, which are used to spread false information and manipulate public opinion.

In addition, the government carries out widespread online censorship with the help of AI. Social media content is monitored, filtered, and removed, leading to the systematic suppression of freedom of speech.

AI is also used in public spaces for surveillance, particularly through facial recognition systems in major cities. This widespread use of surveillance technology points to insufficient legal regulations governing AI in Vietnam.

Overall, Vietnam demonstrates how AI can be used in authoritarian systems not just for control, but also for manipulation and the suppression of civil liberties.

## **4) What is the issue and why is it problematic?**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) brings many problems with it. AI can even lead to war and discrimination. Through deepfakes, false information can be spread. Videos or images of important political figures can be faked, which can eventually lead to conflicts between nations. In the worst-case scenario, this could escalate into war which brings us to another major issue with AI.

AI is often used in autonomous drones. Since AI continues to learn, it can also "learn" discriminatory behavior, which can result in innocent people being harmed or killed. Many people think this is unlikely to happen but in reality, such incidents are already occurring frequently in developing countries. Since legal systems in these countries are often not well-developed, there are many loopholes that allow these kinds of abuses to happen.

Another serious issue is that these legal gaps are exploited by powerful nations. Because most AI technology is developed and produced in economically strong countries, it is often exported to weaker, developing nations, where it is used without proper regulation. This puts those countries at a huge disadvantage, especially when it comes to data privacy, surveillance, and digital sovereignty.

## **5) What has been done so far to make a difference?**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing our world at a rapid pace. It brings many opportunities, but also serious challenges. This is especially true in developing countries, where clear laws, oversight, and technical knowledge are often still lacking. That's where UNESCO steps in. The organization wants to make sure that AI is used in a fair, responsible, and human-centered way, especially in places where there's a high risk of misuse.

In 2021, UNESCO published a major recommendation on the ethics of AI, which was supported by almost 200 countries. The goal is to create shared guidelines that help ensure AI doesn't violate human rights, reinforce inequality, or operate without transparency.

UNESCO also points out that technologies like surveillance systems and facial recognition can become dangerous tools especially in countries with weak institutions. In those places, AI might be used to monitor people, silence free speech, or control the population. Instead of helping society, it could do real harm.

Another key concern for UNESCO is that developing countries shouldn't be left behind in the AI race. Many of them don't have the resources or expertise to build their own systems. That's why the organization is pushing for international cooperation supporting access to education, training, and fair technology sharing.

Even though the recommendation isn't legally binding, it's still a big step forward. It helps raise awareness about the risks of AI and encourages governments and companies to use it in ways that protect people and not control them.

## **6) Who needs to handle this issue?**

All countries are affected by artificial intelligence, and all countries should work together to ensure that AI does not lead to discrimination. However, it is especially important that well-developed and powerful nations take responsibility and act to prevent the misuse of AI.

They should help ensure that human rights are protected, particularly in developing countries, where legal systems and safeguards may still be weak. At the same time, these powerful nations must not use their influence to exploit poorer countries or use AI for their own benefit at the expense of others.

True progress in AI can only happen if global cooperation, fairness, and respect for human dignity are at the center of technological development.

## **7) Useful Links**

- <https://unric.org/de/unesco-globales-forum-zur-ethik-von-kuenstlicher-intelligenz/>
- <https://unctad.org/topic/commission-on-science-and-technology-for-development>