CALL FOR PROPOSALS

For the UNESCO Chair in "Emerging Practices in Technology and Communication for Development" Bordeaux-France, at the Ebonyi State University of Information and Communication Technology, in Oferekpe, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Title: AI and the Future of the Global South: Green Economy, Security and Sustainable Development

Introduction:
Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the global economy, public and private institutions and social relations; however, its benefits and capacities remain unequally distributed with the Global South facing not only a persistent digital divide but also an expanding AI divide, resulting in unequal access to computing infrastructure, investment, data, skills and knowledge production (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2025).These disparities create both a digital and an economic divide, making it imperative for Global South countries to develop the capacity to participate meaningfully in the emerging AI economy. Against this background, this colloquium, *AI and the Future of the Global South: Green Economy, Security and Sustainable Development*, provides a timely forum for examining how AI can support locally relevant development while avoiding the reproduction of technological dependency, inequality and asymmetrical global governance.

The implications of AI extend across environmental sustainability, security and human development. AI can support climate action, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation and natural-resource management (Ding et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025; Silvestro et al.,2022), while also contributing to healthcare, education, infrastructure, financial inclusion and other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Ngene &Uzochukwu,2025; Chavalala, 2025; Rajagopal et al. (2025); World Economic Forum, 2025; Ogbonna, 2026).

Additionally, as security becomes a global challenge, Nsude (2022) notes that AI can be used to combat security challenges provided it is deployed appropriately with proper oversight. At the same time, AI introduces emerging challenges, including cybersecurity threats, deepfakes, disinformation, cybercrime and the environmental costs of AI infrastructure (Schipper, 2025; Mandal et al., 2026; Mithu et al,2026). These opportunities and challenges provide the basis for this colloquium's thematic focus on the green economy, national security, sustainable development and digital transformation.

This colloquium also recognises that the future of AI in the Global South must be shaped by ethical, inclusive and context-sensitive governance. Questions of data sovereignty, cultural and linguistic inclusion, indigenous knowledge, algorithmic bias, labour, entrepreneurship and economic competitiveness are therefore central to discussions about responsible innovation. UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* emphasises human dignity,

human rights, transparency, fairness, human oversight, environmental sustainability and respect for cultural diversity across the AI life cycle (UNESCO, 2021). By bringing these themes together, this colloquium invites interdisciplinary and transnational papers on how countries and communities of the Global South and others can become not merely consumers of AI, but active contributors to its design, governance and socially transformative future.

1.1.1 Thematic axes

Proposals may fall within the following axes:

1. AI and the Green Economy: Climate Action, Energy and Environmental Sustainability

This thematic area explores how artificial intelligence can contribute to transition towards environmentally sustainable, climate-resilient and low-carbon economies. The papers may examine the application of AI in addressing climate change, improving energy efficiency, strengthening food systems, conserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable management of natural resources. The area also considers the environmental costs of AI infrastructure and the need to develop energy-efficient, green data centres and environmentally responsible AI systems.

2. AI, National Security and Emerging Security Threats

This thematic area examines the opportunities and risks presented by artificial intelligence to national, digital, human and societal security. Papers may explore how AI can strengthen cybersecurity, intelligence, border management, crime prevention and emergency response, while also considering emerging threats associated with autonomous systems, deepfakes, disinformation, cybercrime and AI-enabled conflict. Particular attention can be given to the challenges of balancing security imperatives with privacy, human rights, democratic values and public trust. Digital crime can be explored.

3. AI, Sustainable Development and Digital Transformation

This thematic area explores the capacity of artificial intelligence to accelerate sustainable development and improve the quality of human life. It focuses on the application of AI to healthcare, education, poverty reduction, financial inclusion, infrastructure, public services and human-capital development. The area places particular emphasis on ensuring that the benefits of AI reach rural, underserved and marginalised communities and that technological development contributes meaningfully to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Papers may address digital inclusion, African languages and equitable technologies.

4. Ethical, Responsible and Inclusive AI

This thematic area examines the ethical, cultural, legal and social dimensions of artificial intelligence. It considers how AI can be developed and deployed in ways that respect human

dignity, fundamental rights, cultural diversity and social justice. The area is particularly concerned with algorithmic bias, digital inequality, data ownership, privacy, data sovereignty and the representation of languages and indigenous knowledge in AI systems. Papers can explore approaches to AI governance and the development of trustworthy, transparent, explainable and accountable AI.

5. AI, Economic Transformation, Governance and Global South's Future

Papers in this thematic area can explore the role of artificial intelligence in economic and technological transformation. It focuses on AI as a driver of innovation, entrepreneurship, industrial transformation, employment, digital transformation and economic competitiveness. The area considers how Global South countries can develop the infrastructure, research capacity, human capital, investment ecosystems and policy frameworks required to participate meaningfully in the global AI economy while ensuring that AI-driven transformation creates inclusive and sustainable opportunities for their populations.

Submission guidelines

Proposals (3000 words, excluding bibliography) must be submitted no later than March 31, 2027. Authors should specify the chosen thematic axis, the disciplinary and theoretical framework, the research questions, the methodology, and, where applicable, the studied fields.

Each submission must also include the following elements: author's name and surname, email address, academic or professional status, institutional affiliation, a biographical note of about five lines, the title of the paper, as well as a list of keywords.

Schedule

March 31, 2027: deadline for submitting proposals to the following address: unesco2027@gmail.com

April 25, 2027: notification to authors regarding the acceptance or rejection of proposals.

Practical Information

This colloquium is scheduled for October 27, 28 and 29, 2027 in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. All the papers will be published in the conference proceedings.

Registration Fee

1. Foreign Participants

A. Researchers : €130, CFA85,274 (This includes Gala Night.)
B. Students: €70, CFA 45,917 (This includes Gala Night.)

C. Virtual : €70 CFA 45,917

2. Local Participants

A. Researchers: ~~₦40,000,~~ *Gala Night: ~~₦10,000~~*
B. Students: ~~₦20,000,~~ *Gala Night: ~~₦10,000~~*
C. Virtual: ~~₦20,000~~

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