

CONNOVATE 2025: INTELLIGENT, SECURE, AND SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS FOR CONNECTED WORLD



**Keynote: AI and Data Sovereignty
– Considerations and
Perspectives of the Global South**

Anthony Wong

President

International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP)

August 11th to 14th, 2025

Kano, Nigeria

WARM GOODWILL GREETINGS

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Honourable Minister of Communications & Digital Economy Dr. Bosun Tijani

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Ladies and Gentleman

Mission and UN connection

- IFIP established in 1960 under the auspices of UNESCO
- Incorporated in Austria
- IFIP holds consultative status with UN including UNESCO, ECOSOC, ITU, UNIDO and UNCTAD

Mission

The International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) is the global non-profit umbrella organization of societies of ICT professionals that aims at achieving a worldwide professional and socially responsible development and application of information and communication technologies

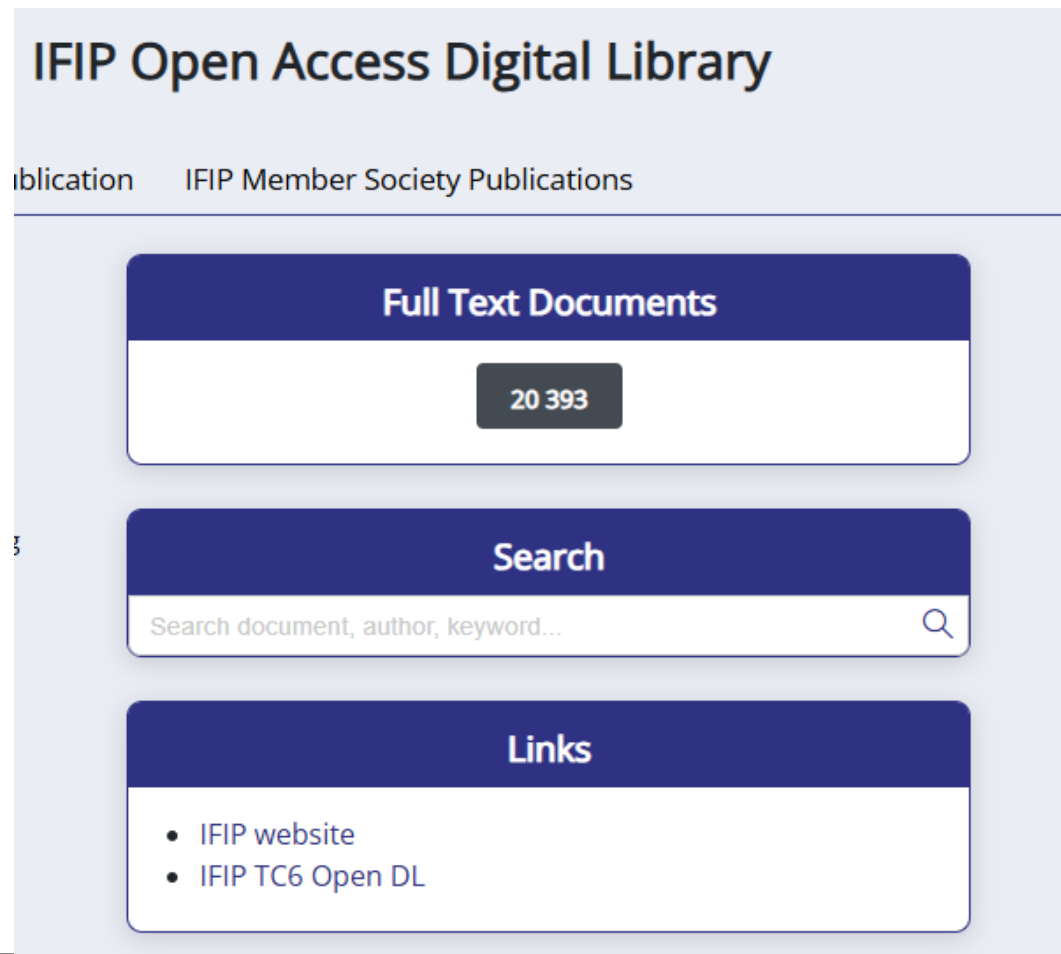
Some IFIP Member Societies covering five continents ...



IFIP Technical Committees from 12 countries
manage around 6000 scientists in
Academia and Industry, across over 100
Technical Working Groups

Invitation to NCS experts to join these Technical Committees

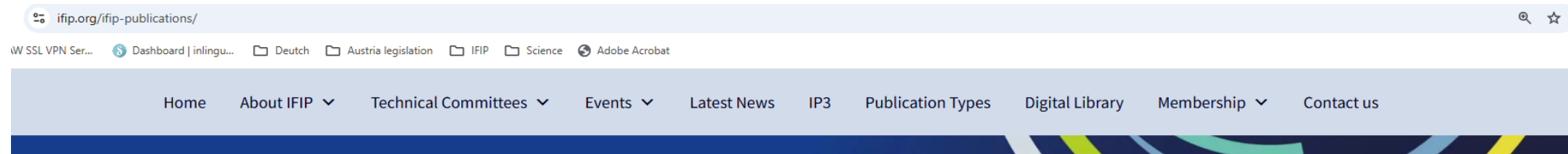
IFIP Open Access Digital Library <https://ifip.hal.science/>



The screenshot shows the IFIP Open Access Digital Library website. At the top, it says "IFIP Open Access Digital Library" and "Publication IFIP Member Society Publications". Below this, there are three main sections: "Full Text Documents" with a count of 20 393, a "Search" bar with the placeholder text "Search document, author, keyword..." and a magnifying glass icon, and a "Links" section with two bullet points: "IFIP website" and "IFIP TC6 Open DL".

The open access IFIP TC6 Digital Library, is accessible here: <https://opendl.ifip-tc6.org>.

IFIP Taskforce on “Sustaining relevant digital inclusive education for young people (5-18 years of age)”



Many IFIP conferences and events generate proceedings published by the IFIP publisher. Annually, some 50 books are published with more than 20,000 pages of valuable information. The [IFIP Library](#) contains more than 1000 books, many of them sold by [IFIP's publisher](#) and other book stores.

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The IFIP Open Access Digital Library

The IFIP Open Access Digital Library (dl.ifip.org), makes available the author's files of IFIP Springer publications (AICT, LNCS, LNBIP) from 2022 back to 2010. It also includes references to such publications up to and including 2024.



IFIP Springer publications

Springer Nature Link (<https://link.springer.com>) for IFIP Springer publications (AICT, LNCS, LNBIP) offers free access all articles 4 years old and older, almost completely backwards till 2005 and additionally many publications backwards till 1995, when Kluwer Academic Publishers (KAP) became the official IFIP publisher. NB: Not the books are free, but the individual articles. Just move on to the table of contents and download the articles individually.



IFIP Select

IFIP Select (ifip.org/select) are: papers from IFIP proceedings, selected to be of interest to a more mainstream audience, especially member societies' members, so that member societies can distribute this compendium as a service to their members. Papers are more overview papers than very specialized ones and in any case each accompanied by a cover paper of 2-3 pages that describes the related scientific paper and its relevance for a more mainstream audience.



United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

IFIP President Anthony Wong, IFIP TC3 Chair Don Passey and the IFIP General Secretary Anatolii Marushchak

The online panel discussion AI Governance: from Education to Regulations

UNIDO the Global Alliance on Artificial Intelligence for Industry and Manufacturing (AIM Global) Forum

IFIP ON DISPLAY AT WORLD SUMMIT FOR INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) 2025



IFIP ON DISPLAY AT WORLD SUMMIT FOR INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) 2025





WSIS+20
High-level Forum 2025
07 to 11 July 2025
Geneva, Switzerland

IFIP Events



10 July 2025 - 17:00 to 17:45 | Room G, First floor

Key factors and design features - successful national sustained relevant digital inclusive education

To consider and address Action Line C7, it is important to recognise key factors that enable sustained (i.e., long-term) relevant digital inclusive education for young people. Developed from the findings of the International Federation for Information Technology (IFIP) Task Force that explored and identified key factors from an international evidence base, a more specific national set of case studies has now identified a range of design features that have been and are critical in this respect. This novel and innovative approach, and the important outcomes identified that can support future development, will be described and discussed in this session. Whilst social media and generative artificial intelligence are often currently dominating concerns about the future of digital and computer education, the findings from these studies argues that taking a wider and sustained approach will be necessary if young people are to succeed not only in education, but also in employment and in society.

11 July 2025 – 10:00 to 10:45 Room G, First floor

Importance of Professional standards for AI development and testing

AI is part of the skillset for ICT Professionals. What is their role in ensuring that standards and ethics codes are adhered to when working with AI, especially considering that data is used differently in various situations or siloes? ICT Professionals (supply side of ICT) must lead their organisation in the ethical use of AI. We will review the possibilities of Generative-AI, Agentic AI, AGI (Artificial General Intelligence) and ASI (Artificial Superintelligence). We will also consider why every company needs to allow an exploration of AI, but ensure that the workflow is in keeping with the company's brand and culture, etc. *The session will be very interactive!*

We hope you will join us at these important workshops to get the most out of the Forum

IFIP at WSIS 2024

WSIS is co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD and the Swiss Confederation, with the support of remote participation

- IFIP has gained significant visibility and recognition from ITU and UNESCO for its work over the years
- IFIP have contributed to the World Summit for Information Society (WSIS) as a “Supporting Partner”
- WSIS is co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD and the Swiss Confederation.
- IFIP hybrid sessions at WSIS 2024:
 - TC12 panel discussion on “Synergy Human-AI for complex problem-solving” on May 30 2024.
 - TC11 event “Building confidence and security in connected IT systems” on May 29 2024.
 - IP3 session “Re” Generative AI - Using Artificial and Human Intelligence in tandem for innovation” on 28 May 2024.
 - UNESCO panel on “The Future of AI in the Judiciary” on May 29 2024.
 - UNESCO panel on the importance of promoting universal access to information and knowledge on May 29 2024.
 - UNESCO panel WSIS Action Line C7 “E-science: Assessment of progress made over the last 20 years” on May 30 2024.

IFIP IN ACTION AT WSIS 2024



Visit IFIP website

<https://www.ifip.org/>

for more details

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CONNOVATE 2025: INTELLIGENT, SECURE,
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**AI and Data Sovereignty
– Considerations and
Perspectives of the Global South**

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My Journey with 'Data'

- Submission on the 1ST Privacy Law in New Zealand
- Chair of “*Big Data & Privacy Panel*”– ITECH LAW CONFERENCE 2013, Westin Kierland, Scottsdale, Arizona
- Conferences including *Sydney Business School conference* in 2015 leading to the publication:
Anthony Wong (2017), “Big Data Fuels Digital Disruption and Innovation: But Who Owns the Data?”, chapter 2 in David Chaikin (ed) Digital Disruption: Impact on Business Models, Regulation & Financial Crime, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne
- Submission to the Australian Productivity Commission on their 1st Issues Paper on “Data Availability and Use” on:
“Who should have the ownership rights to data that is generated by individuals but collected by businesses? For which data does unclear ownership inhibit its availability and use?”
- IGF 2017: Data Localization and Barriers to Crossborder Data Flows
- Privacy laws including EU GDPR
- Biometrics: Green Paper Analysis on the EU AI Act in 2021 with the International Technology Law Association

***“Digital Policy and the Battle
lines for Control and Use of
Data”***

40th National IT Conference (NITC) 2022-
Digital Policy
for Enriching Lives

Colombo, Sri Lanka

12th October 2022

Anthony Wong
*IFIP President
ICT Lawyer & CIO*

***#92 Ethics and Regulation of
Emerging Technologies & AI***

17th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2022

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
30 November 2022

Anthony Wong
*IFIP President
ICT Lawyer & CIO*

“Battle for Control and Use of Data”

**20TH AUSTRALASIAN DATA MINING
CONFERENCE 2022 (AUSDM'22)**

Western Sydney University, Australia,
12 - 15 December 2022

Anthony Wong
*IFIP President
ICT Lawyer & CIO*

Sources and Diversity of Data

1. Public Data
2. Private sector Data
3. Data about personal individuals
4. Data from device sensors, mobile and GPS devices, smart meters
5. Transactional data
6. Research data
7. Materials under copyright ...

*As varied as the colours of
flowers*

Wisdom



Application of knowledge
at the right time
in the right way

Knowledge



Application of information
with experience
with skills

Information



Value added service
User wants it
User understands it

Data

The 4 Pyramid Levels

What is Data?

- No universal agreed concept of data...leading to confusion and increase complexity in analyses and policy debates
- New South Wales Data Sharing (Government Sector) Act 2015 defines data as
 - *“any facts, statistics, instructions, concepts or other information in a form that is capable of being communicated, analysed or processed (whether by an individual or by a computer or other automated means)”*
 - *In another view, data is raw (with no context) and information is data in context.*
- UNCTAD definition*:
 - *“observations that have been converted into a digital form that can be stored, transmitted or processed, and from which knowledge can be drawn”*
 - Any form of information or facts about the world, captured through various means, such as sensors, human inputs and automated systems

****Source: UNCTAD, Digital Economy Report 2021- Cross-border data flows and development: For whom the data flow)***

What is Data?

For many in
the Global
South
includes

- Information, Insights and Knowledge on biodiversity, medicinal plants and agricultural knowledge, medicinal knowledge, traditional ecological wisdom, environmental stewardships, collective cultural innovations and artistic works (**Indigenous Data**)
- Traditionally, Global North institutions and structures in the past have not considered **Indigenous Data** as objects of value and importance
- That changed with the Patent System
- AI with its ability to mine Indigenous Data will revolutionise innovation and knowledge and are critical to a range future scientific and technical innovations

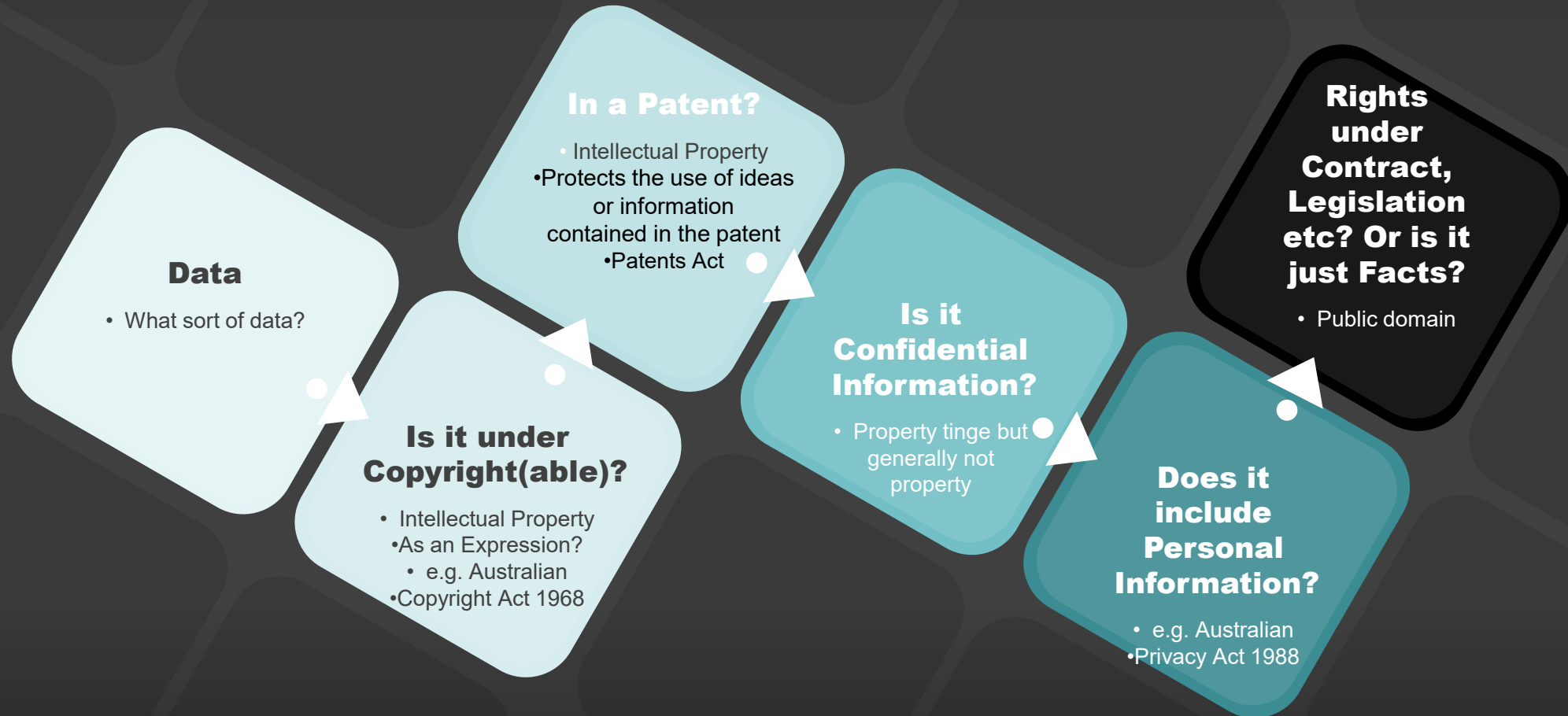
Data the new currency or the new 'oil' of the Digital Economy

- **'Data' the new commodity –like spices** were in the days of the spice trade wars in the East between the 15th and 17th centuries
- “The world’s most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data” (The Economist, 6 May 2017)
- **AI unlocks and discovers new forms of value, novel innovative products and services, improve productivity, new business models and revenue, connect previously unseen linkages and provide insights** to stimulate growth and innovation in the Digital Economy
- **Investments in data, AI, outpacing physical assets; Software and data emerges as the fastest growing category of intangibles** (WIPO World Intangible Investment Highlights 2025 Better Data for Better Policy)
- Data as the most valuable and riskiest assets

Geopolitical Debate on Information Propertization

- **Debate on data ownership rights has intensified** as the use and control of data assets become more and more critical to future economies and ability to innovate
- Debate on property rights not new, the issue has taken on renewed importance in the context of 'Data'. Refer to debate: [Data and Intellectual Property \(wipo.int\)](https://www.wipo.int)
- At one extreme, property proponents argue for stronger property right protections on Data to support the development of new digital information
- Geopolitical tensions as Big Tech advocates for less property rights in Data to avoid stifling AI development and other innovative uses in the Digital Economy, including 'technological transformative use' of existing data assets
 - *Risks undermining the incentives and rights of other creative workers*

Who owns and control the use of 'Data'?



Can you use Copyright- protected data to train AI models?

- Law is NOT CLEAR
- Factually based 'Data' is unlikely to be protected under traditional intellectual property laws
- Books, photos, drawings, sounds recordings, film, compilations used for machine learning may be protected by copyright
- Copyright laws may impede the use of Data requiring authorisation when copyrighted content is used in machine learning processes
- If so, illegal to use for machine learning- a hurdle for the development of AI
- Many types of Data are not protected because they lack the qualities necessary to sustain a property right under existing intellectual property law
- What is the right balance between the people building AI systems and those whose data is needed to create them?

Different
customary and
legal systems with
different
understandings of
“ownership” and
treatment of
Indigenous Data

- Concerns about placing sensitive information into databases that are accessible to the public
- Different peoples have distinctive histories, legal systems and customary norms
- Is it appropriate to share and use images and information in different customary and legal systems?
- With different understandings of “ownership” and how aspects of cultural heritage should be treated

**World Intellectual
Property Organization
("WIPO") concluded
the Treaty
on Intellectual
Property, Genetic
Resources and
Associated Traditional
Knowledge ("GRATK)
May 24, 2024**

Main Points:

- Mandatory disclosure requirement to the patent system
- Must identify the country of origin and source of the genetic resources ("GRs") or associated traditional knowledge ("TK") on which the applicants' claimed inventions are based
- Nigeria played an important role in the Africa Group's proposal WO/GA/55/11, helping to kick-start the formal treaty negotiations at WIPO
- Role for Nigeria on AI and Data Sovereignty for the Global South

Difficult questions — for nations and communities of the Global South

Among the most pressing concerns is Data Sovereignty:

- Who owns the data that trains AI models?
- Who gives consent for its use?
- Who benefits — and who is left behind?

- As Generative AI technologies rapidly gain traction, humanity finds itself at a pivotal crossroads
- The nature of work, creativity, and knowledge is being fundamentally reshaped
- These tools are enhancing productivity, enabling new artistic expressions, and democratizing access to complex tasks
- As with all transformative innovations, they also bring a host of ethical, legal, and cultural challenges

What is Data sovereignty?

- “Data Sovereignty” has been used in many ways, and would benefit from some clarification
- Data sovereignty is a **legal and political principle** asserting that:
 - **Individuals, organizations, and governments** should have control over **how data is collected, stored, accessed, and used**, based on their **national or local laws**
 - Often includes **data localization** requirements—mandating that data about a country’s citizens or operations be stored on servers **physically located** within that country
 - It may also involve ensuring that **foreign entities (like multinational tech firms)** cannot process or transfer that data without consent

Why Does It Matter?

- **Personal Privacy protection** - AI systems often rely on **large-scale data harvesting**, frequently scraping public content without consent or acknowledgment
- **National security** (e.g., preventing foreign surveillance)
- **Digital independence** (e.g., resisting dominance by Big Tech or foreign cloud providers)
- **Large-scale data harvesting** undermines the **data sovereignty** of individuals, creators, and communities — particularly where content includes **cultural expressions, indigenous knowledge, or oral traditions** unique to regions including Africa
- **Global South's epistemologies** — rooted in **collective memory, storytelling, language diversity, and traditional ecological wisdom** — are vulnerable to misrepresentation when reproduced without cultural context or ethical governance
- **Economic value** (Data should be a national resource)

AI and Data Sovereignty – Considerations & Perspectives of the Global South

- Many creators see generative AI as a helpful assistant, while others argue that it undermines human labour by monetizing creative outputs without appropriate attribution, recompense, or fair use frameworks
- As lawsuits mount globally and creators voice their growing frustrations, a new question emerges: Are we building AI on a foundation of collaboration or exploitation?
- **Who defines knowledge?**
- Are modern data practices continuing the patterns of "coloniality of power through data"?
- Countries in the Global South often rely on foreign platforms and infrastructure (cloud services, software, algorithms), deepening technological dependence and limiting data sovereignty
- Data is often gathered from users in the Global South by platforms based in the Global North
- Resource extraction, but now it's data instead of gold, salt or labour

What Policy(s) should we have on 'Data'?

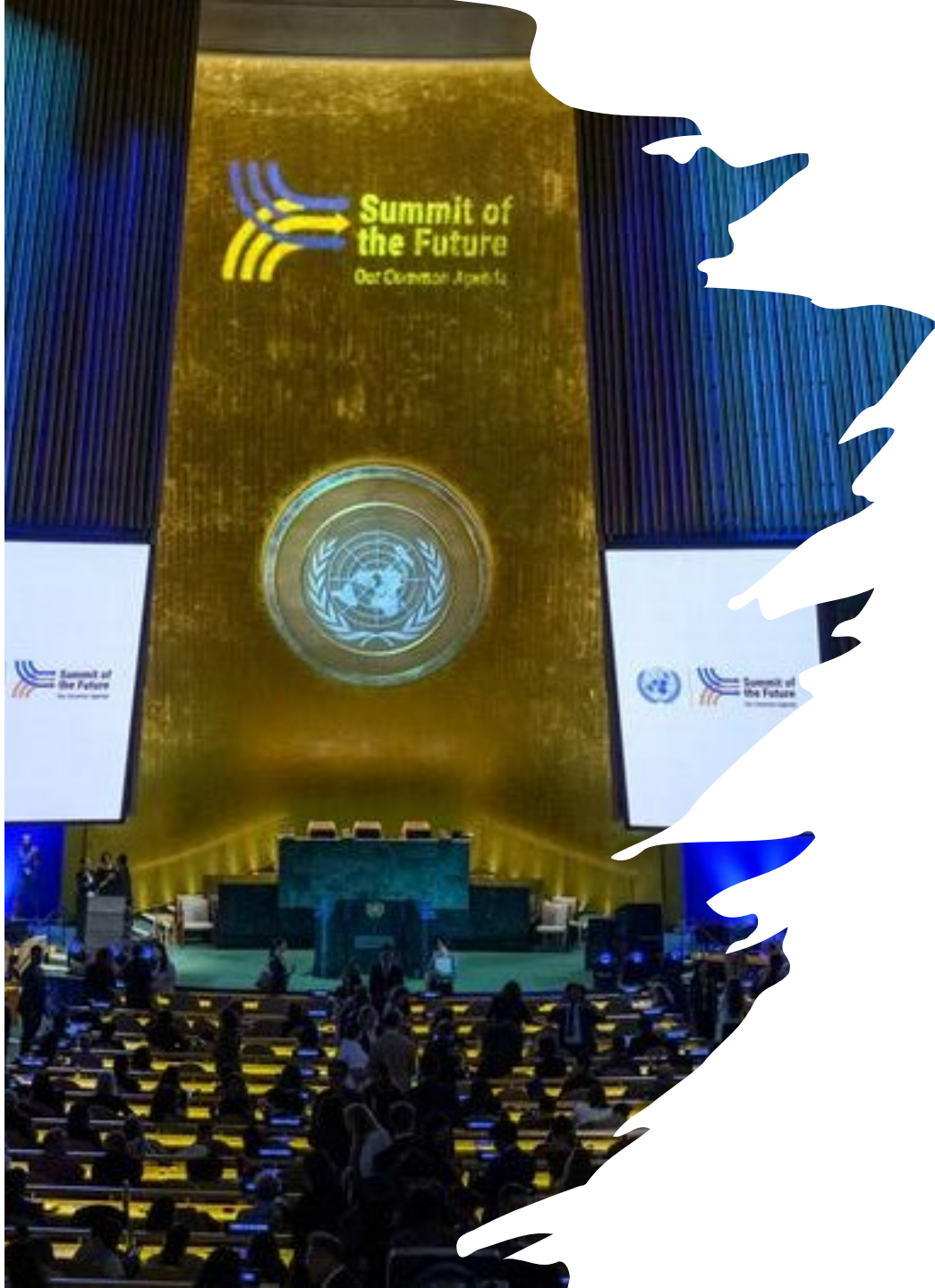
**Data is now a
policy issue in
and of itself**

- Global South Thought leaders and practitioners to consider the complex dynamics of AI and Data Governance — examining issues of technological and data sovereignty, intellectual property, creative rights, and digital equity— from their vantage point
- Many countries have adopted measures that restrict the cross-border transfer of data, such as data localization laws, and personal data protection laws
- “Current regulatory landscape is patchy, reflecting starkly different approaches adopted by different countries, with strong influences from the major economic powers” (UNCTAD Digital Economy Report 2021, Cross-border data flows and development: For whom the data flow)
- Currently, there is no global agreement or convention, and regulators take different approaches within national borders
- We need to work to adopt some levels of international agreement or convention for data governance for the balanced protection of 'Data' and fair use
- Nation-state could define data sovereignty under its law and within its territory

Summit of the Future in New York, UN Member States adopted the Global Digital Compact

22 September 2024

- Compact aims to strengthen global data governance and AI governance for the benefit of humanity and advocates for interoperable data governance frameworks.
- By 2030, the Member States committed to several objectives around interoperable and responsible data governance, including:
 - Drawing on international guidelines to protect privacy in data governance (relating to all SDGs).
 - Strengthening support for developing national data governance frameworks (related to all SDGs).
 - Empowering individuals with control over their data, including consent mechanisms and privacy protections (SDGs 10 & 16).
 - Ensuring that data practices are secure, legitimate, and compliant with international law (all SDGs).
 - Developing a skilled workforce to handle data securely while protecting privacy (SDGs 8 & 9).



A Need to Address Foundation Data Challenges

- Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2024 reported on “**Data for development**” on the challenges in harnessing the benefits of data in the current data ecosystem:
- Necessitates the fulfilment of several prerequisites that encompass a range of areas, from **the quality of data**, **to data management and security**
- The adage “**garbage in, garbage out**” applies: without high-quality data, any derived insights or decision-making would be flawed or, at worst, detrimental.
- ***It is not enough for data to just be plentiful – it must be accurate, complete, timely, relevant and consistent***



Need to Address Foundation Data Challenges

- UN report emphasized that only when all these prerequisites are met can countries hope to fully harness the power of data in driving decision-making, innovation and overall societal progress.

What is Data Governance?

Perfect definition does not exist

- “Systemic and multi-dimensional approach to setting policies and regulations, establishing leadership for institutional coordination and national strategy, nurturing an enabling data ecosystem, and streamlining data management”: **UN**
- Consists of four main tasks: strategic planning, developing rules and standards; developing mechanisms of compliance and enforcement, and generating the learning and evidence needed to gain insights and address policy challenges: **World Bank**
- “Exercise of authority, control and shared decision-making (planning, monitoring and enforcement) over the management of data assets” (2nd edition): **Data Management Body of Knowledge from DAMA**



Global perspectives on Data Governance

- Current main approaches: US, China and European Union – each reflecting distinct societal values
- US model favours private sector control, viewing data as a competitive business asset
- China model leans towards State-centric governance
- European Union prioritizes individual data control, emphasizing personal data protection
- Models highlight the importance of cultural and political contexts in data governance
- Concerns on fragmentation in global data governance, particularly with differing regulations impacting cross-border data flow and Internet operations

Source: UNCTAD, Digital Economy Report 2021- Cross-border data flows and development: For whom the data flow)

A vertical image on the left side of the slide shows a white and red robotic hand at the top and a human hand at the bottom, both reaching towards the center. The background is dark with a blue and red light gradient.

THE UN DATA GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

REPORT ON ITS PROGRESS TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK, BY NO LATER THAN THE EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION (SEPTEMBER 2026), ON RECOMMENDATIONS ON EQUITABLE AND INTEROPERABLE DATA GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING:

1. fundamental principles of data governance at all levels as relevant for development;
2. proposals to support interoperability between national, regional and international data systems;
3. considerations of sharing the benefits of data;
4. and options to facilitate safe, secure and trusted data flows, including cross-border data flows as relevant for development (all SDGs).”



UN DATA GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP:

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- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Republic of the Gambia
- Rwanda
- United Republic of Tanzania

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- Ms. Claire Melamed, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
- Ms. Linda Bonyo, Lawyers Hub Africa
- Ms. Lorryne Porciuncula, Datasphere Initiative
- Mr. Mohamed Sayed Mohamed Farahat, African Digital Rights Network
- Ms. Natalya Carfi, Open Data Charter
- Ms. Renata Ávila, Open Knowledge Foundation
- Mr. Talla Ndiaye, Digital Impact Alliance

OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:



UN Data Development Report

- Data Governance has become a central concern on the global political agenda
- Major driver of sustained competitive advantages and a response to various modern challenges
- Failures pose a significant danger to social well-being and can exacerbate inequality
- Balancing the benefits and challenges of data economy through effective policy measures is essential to ensure equitable and sustainable growth
- Necessity for a more inclusive data governance, where benefits are not confined to a selected few and where every individual has an equitable opportunity to shape, and be shaped by, the digital future

Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo to host

**CONSULTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT
DIMENSIONS OF INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL
KNOWLEDGE, CULTURAL HERITAGE &
BIODIVERSITY DATA**

in Asia Pacific in October 2025 for the UN



Executive Summary

Host

Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA)

On behalf of Government of Sarawak, Malaysia

Main Purpose

Regional Consultation Dialogue (Asia-Pacific)

Contribute to the UN Consultation on Data Governance

Key Focus Areas

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge

Cultural Heritage

Biodiversity Data

Aligned with Global Frameworks:

UNDRIP

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

CBD

Convention on Biological Diversity

UN 2030 Agenda

Sustainable Development Goals

Objectives

Gather regional perspectives & recommendations, addressing:

- **Protection and ethical use** of Indigenous and traditional knowledge
- **Equitable data benefit-sharing** mechanisms
- **Integration** of biodiversity and cultural heritage data
- **Operationalising CARE principles** and data sovereignty in the Asia Pacific context

Scope and Coverage

The consultations will target multi-stakeholder participation across the Asia Pacific region, including:

- Indigenous and tribal communities
- National and regional policy-makers
- Civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Academic and research institutions
- Private sector technology and data providers
- UN and international development agencies



Thank you !

Have a Successful & Fruitful Conference

Anthony Wong

IFIP President

12rd August 2025

