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UN Promotion of Abortion and Gender Ideology Through Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations is devoting increasing attention to the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN advocates for "ethical governance" of AI, leads research on the intersection of AI and human rights, builds "capacity on utilizing AI tools to support civil society organizations and other stakeholders,"¹ and mobilizes stakeholder partnerships.

Many parts of the UN system have strayed from their original mandates by expanding their understanding of human rights and "ethics" to include "sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights" (SRHR) in their SDG and human rights programming. SRHR is understood by the UN system to include access to abortion services, comprehensive sexuality education, and affirmation of gender ideology. However, SRHR is not accepted UN language in any negotiated treaty or resolution, and does not have an agreed definition by member states. Nevertheless, UN agencies and the Secretariat are actively using AI to promote SRHR, under the broader SDG and human rights umbrella, including, and perhaps especially, in countries where public opinion is largely conservative on these topics.

UN agencies use AI to monitor and analyze societal attitudes toward contraception, abortion access, and sexual identity in the global South and target individuals with information that is intended to change their views on these topics. UN agencies support the development of apps and online platforms featuring AI bots that answer questions on SRHR and sexuality education, thus flooding the information space

with a single-sided view on these controversial topics.

The purpose of this factsheet is to showcase several UN-led initiatives that promote SRHR and gender ideology through AI, despite the clear lack of consensus among member states that it should do so. Apart from concrete examples of problematic programs, the factsheet also features communication from the UN Secretariat and UN agencies showcasing a system-wide commitment to ramping up efforts on AI and SRH.

UN Secretary-General

UN Global Pulse Scale Accelerator: Introducing the First Cohort – UN Global Pulse, an initiative of the UN Secretary-General, launched the accelerator as "a system-wide service that serves as a structured programme for unlocking the potential of innovative solutions from the pilot stage to scale."² Some of the sponsored programs work on SRHR issues:

The Global Pulse Scale Catalyst: UNFPA Case Study –

"Thirteen UNFPA country teams from across Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East took part in three workshops, where [they] looked at their piloted innovations and gave guidance on how they could expand their reach. Teams were working on diverse innovations, including training solutions for young social impact leaders, funding mechanisms to give mothers access to sexual and reproductive healthcare [...]."³

EmpowerU – "An out-of-school digital sexual education project for adolescents hosted on Instagram with a strong emphasis on adolescents' physical and mental health in humanitarian settings and the provision of expert psychological advice in complex humanitarian contexts. Through animated videos and interactive social media content based on the gender-neutral character Pubertat, it engages adolescents as co-creators, fostering resilience, challenging stereotypes, and promoting relevant knowledge for informed decision-making in the face of adversity. Anchored on expert psychological support, it emphasises topics such as personal safety, healthy relationships, and reproductive health."⁴

Spotlight Initiative – Mining Gender Perceptions from Public Radio Discussions (2019- ongoing) – "UNGP in Kampala is using its AI-powered public radio social listening tool to mine data

on perceptions around Gender Based Violence (GBV), Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Harmful Practices (HP), Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), and Violence Against Children (VAC) in Uganda."⁵

Governing AI for Humanity (2024) – The report developed by the AI Advisory Body flags disinformation as a top risk and recommends that, beyond tackling deepfakes, policymakers also implement "rapid notice and take-down procedures for content that is likely to deceive in a way that causes harm or societal divisions..."⁶ The reference to "content that is likely to deceive in a way that causes harm or societal divisions" is ambiguous enough to include online speech or content that contradicts the UN position on abortion and gender ideology.

Inter-Agency UN AI Projects

The role of artificial intelligence in sexual and reproductive health and rights (2024) – In March 2024, the UN Special Programme on Human Reproduction (HRP), led by WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank, released a technical brief exploring the use of AI for SRHR, including "applying AI to: facilitate access to health information, education and promotion; support screening and triage of health conditions; tailor treatment and care regimens; monitor personal and population health; assist in health system management needs; and accelerate clinical research and drug discovery."⁷ When it comes to AI bots, the brief mentions that "AI models can be leveraged to develop interventions for health education and to promote health behaviours. For example, virtual conversational agents or chatbots can provide information in what may be perceived as a more anonymous and non-judgemental manner compared with personal interactions."⁸

Joint UN statement calling for sexual and reproductive health and rights for all (2024) – Delivered on behalf of UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS, and UN Women, the statement urges the use of AI to combat "technology-facilitated gender-based violence" (TFGBV) and "systematic biases embedded in tech design."⁹ TFGBV, while presented as a term coined to address actual online threats and harassment against women and girls, goes much further than that. It is used to describe online threats and harassment based on "actual or perceived sex or gender identity," according to USAID's definition of the term, and this includes "gendered disinformation and misinformation." In other words, anyone who, in their online speech, fails to acknowledge marriage can be between two persons of the same sex or who refuses to address a biologically male transgender-identified person as a woman can be considered a perpetrator of gender-based violence. "Systematic bias" is a loosely defined term

that could also be used to stifle conservative viewpoints on SRHR, such as opposition to abortion.

UNFPA

AI-based Early Warning System (EWS) – UNFPA ran EWS from 2022 to obtain "real-time information" on SRHR "dialogues [and] social media behavior" of adolescents in Zambia, Rwanda, and Namibia. EWS was used to "address the root causes and/or prevent further escalation of the early signs of opposition/backlash against ASRH deduced from the data analysis" and to "facilitate timely action in response to growing opposition [to SRHR and CSE] before it escalates and allow relevant UNFPA's offices to counteract misconceptions and opposition to SRHR."¹⁰

UNFPA ESARO's iSAY (2023-present) – Developed by UNFPA's East and Southern Africa Regional Office, iSAY is an AI platform that "employs advanced machine learning and natural language processing to monitor and analyze public dialogues and social media trends related to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR)."¹¹ iSAY is collecting daily data from online conversations carried out on social media platforms and conducts "temporal analysis of conversations, intent detection, sentiment analysis, gender gap analysis, age filtering, and geographical analysis, making it a comprehensive tool for understanding and addressing ASRHR issues."¹²

Big Data for Family Planning Inequalities Analysis (BiDaFPInAs) (2019-2022) – The BiDaFPInAs project "aims to capture social media conversations of Filipinos about family planning and develop a machine learning (ML) algorithm that converts those conversations to insights."¹³

TABOO (2019-2021) – TABOO "[o]ffers users relevant information and to easily obtain and visualize disaggregated and significant data about myths and misconceptions of sexual and reproductive health contained in the genuine opinions of the Spanish-speaking population on Twitter." Some taboos listed by UNFPA include that "[a]bortion is never medically necessary", that "[m]ore babies die from abortion in two days than all deaths from COVID-19," and that "[o]ccasionally, you should stop taking contraceptives to "clear" or "take a break" from hormones."

Hayati Chatbot (2022-2023) – Hayati is "a mobile application being developed by Men4Women in collaboration with UNFPA South Sudan [...] to provide young people with a platform where they can access SRH and GBV information confidentially from wherever they are."¹⁴

SophiBot (2016-present) – "Sophi Bot is an AI application that directly answers SRHR questions in a private and confidentially" seeking to "address poor SRH outcomes among young people attributed to inadequate access to comprehensive and correct information on SRH."¹⁵

Just Ask! Khulke Poocho! AI Chatbot (2023-2025) – "Launched by UNFPA in India, [the chatbot] is an AI-driven digital platform tailored for adolescents, young adults and couples, aimed at enhancing their understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This initiative offers a safe, confidential, personalized, and non-judgmental space for individuals aged 15-29 to access reliable information, dispel misconceptions, and seek services related to their sexual and reproductive well-being [...] The chatbot is designed to encourage informed decision-making and foster interest in often misunderstood or stigmatized topics such as puberty, menstruation, sexual and gender identity, safe sex, and contraception."¹⁶

UN Women

Partnering for Gender-Responsive AI (2025) – In this brief, UN Women mentions that it "aims to strengthen its partnerships with the private sector to [...] [f]oster opportunities for women entrepreneurs, startups and feminist innovators to adopt and harness AI's transformative potential" and "build gender-responsive AI."¹⁷ Due to UN Women's understanding of gender as a social construct disconnected from biological reality, the terms "gender-transformative" and "gender-responsive" can be used to include affirmation and special protections for sexual orientation or gender identity.

Action Coalition for Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality (2021-2026) – Launched in 2021, the Action Coalition aims to "generate innovative ideas for policies and initiatives needed to accelerate progress for more gender-responsive AI." Within this framework, UN mentioned that its "role and mandate is to reaffirm the need to focus on diversity and inclusiveness when developing AI technologies."¹⁸

Innovation and Technological Change, and Education in the Digital Age for Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls (2023) – Addressing world and grassroots leaders, the guidance promotes investment in gender-transformative and feminist technology to "create solutions that leverage technology for social impact."¹⁹ It advocates for initiatives "to prevent and eliminate online and tech-facilitated GBV and discrimination to allow women and girls in all their diversity to use digital spaces safely" and mentions "the benefits of the "FemTech" revolution - software,

diagnostics, products, and services that use technology to focus on women's health. For example, using digital tools for providing access to mobile health or e-health services, such as information on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), are effective and suitable to reaching youth as they reduce stigma and enhance confidentiality, and can be cost-effective."²⁰ The guidance also mentions that "regulators should require technology companies, including social media platforms, to commission independent human rights impact assessments on incidents of OGBV and gendered disinformation, including number of incidents, reports, and resolution of cases, which are broken down by gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, and other important demographic categories."²¹

The World Health Organization (WHO)

Unpacking artificial intelligence in sexual and reproductive health and rights (2024) – "AI is already transforming technology for sexual and reproductive health. If we're aware about the potential dangers, and cautious about implementation, and recognize AI as a tool and not a solution, we have a great opportunity to make sexual and reproductive services and information more accessible to all," said Dr Pascale Allotey, Director of HRP and WHO's Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health.²²

Global Initiative on AI for Health GI AI4H – GI AI4H was launched in July 2023 by the WHO, ITU, and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) as a "long-term institutional structure, grounded in its mission to enable, facilitate, and implement AI in healthcare."²³ One of the listed goals of the initiative is to "establish robust governance structures, policies, and normative technical guidance, policies, and standards, that guide the evidence-based adoption of AI for health, ensuring trust and ethical practices."²⁴ By dictating "normative" standards, the WHO is essentially imposing its value judgments that reflect its pro-abortion, pro-gender ideology views, rather than leaving such judgments to sovereign states or individual patients and providers.

UNDP

Gender Social Media Monitoring Tool (2022-2023) – The Gender Social Media Monitoring Tool is a "pilot initiative that leverages artificial intelligence technologies to track conversations on social media networks across categories relevant to gender-responsive policymaking: education, politics, reproductive rights, work, and violence. Supporting over 100 languages, the tool detects harmful content and hate speech against women and girls, an indicator of

online gender violence and backlash against women's rights and gender equality. It can also provide policymakers, civil society, and practitioners with new data and insights to take action to address these backlashes."²⁵ References to "backlash against gender equality" are often used within the UN system to refer to opposition to SRHR, and more specifically, abortion as a right.

OHCHR

Interlinkages between Women's Rights and Digital Technologies, Civic Space, Data and Privacy, and Freedom of Expression (2022)

– Prepared by OHCHR, the observer paper indicates that member states must "[p]rotect and promote the rights of women and girls in a comprehensive manner, including their rights to equality, to privacy, to dignity, to information and bodily integrity and the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health, without discrimination, in the use and development of digital technologies."²⁶ The paper also mentions that "legislation prohibiting ill-defined concepts, such as 'obscenity' or 'immorality', may be used to limit critical discussions about sexuality, gender and sexual and reproductive rights."

UN General Assembly

Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in digital contexts (2018) – The Human Rights Council "recognizes that the right of women and girls to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health includes having access to the information, education and means to exercise this right, both online and offline."²⁷ It also "recognizes that digital technologies can offer access to information that enables women and girls to make informed and autonomous decisions in matters regarding their own bodies, lives and health, including their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights."²⁸

Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development (2024) – Adopted in March 2024, the first UN resolution on AI²⁹ calls on governments to get involved in all levels of design, development, and implementation of AI technology to eliminate the risk of "improper or malicious design development" of AI systems that could hinder the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda features a commitment to widespread access to "sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights", a euphemism used to promote abortion services. Designing AI systems that promote the 2030 Agenda would

systematically favor content that promotes the pro-abortion narrative to the detriment of pro-life speech.³⁰

UN-Sponsored Conferences

10th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (2025) – Held in May of 2025, the forum features panelists discussing AI initiatives that promote SRH and fight misinformation and taboos.³¹

Technology, and Innovation (STI) Forum (2025) – Held at the UN Headquarters in New York, the forum featured talks on the intersection of technology, human rights, and development. Several panelists, including representatives from UNESCO and the President of the UN General Assembly, asked the UN to enhance its role in AI governance, including addressing "misinformation" and "disinformation" online.³² "Misinformation" is loosely defined within the UN system and often used as a way to discredit or censor opposing viewpoints.

UN Youth Forum (2025) –The 2025 UN Youth Forum platformed young voices advocating for some of the most controversial UN policies and programs, promoting young people as key agents for the achievement of the abortion and gender ideology agendas. Panelists asked for the development of technologies that promote abortion access, AI systems that normalize non-conventional gender roles and sexual identities, and apps that offer widespread access to sexuality education.³³

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/partnering-for-gender-responsive-ai-003.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.unglobalpulse.org/un-global-pulse-scale-accelerator-introducing-the-first-cohort/>
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