CAIDP Update 2.41 (Nov. 25, 2021) – *UNESCO Adopts Landmark Global Agreement on AI*

The 41st UNESCO General Conference this week adopted the [Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#). This UNESCO agreement creates the ever first global agreement on the ethics of AI. Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General, [said](#) "The world needs rules for artificial intelligence to benefit humanity. The Recommendation sets the first global normative framework while giving States the responsibility to apply it at their level. UNESCO will support its 193 Member States in its implementation and ask them to report regularly on their progress and practices."

According to UNESCO, the Recommendation aims to realize the advantages AI brings to society and reduce the risks it entails. The Recommendation promotes human rights and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, addressing issues around transparency, accountability and privacy, with action-oriented policy chapters on data governance, education, culture, labour, healthcare and the economy.

UNESCO highlighted four key achievements of the Recommendation:
1. **Protecting data.** The Recommendation calls for action to guarantee individuals more protection by ensuring transparency, agency and control over their personal data.
2. **Banning social scoring and mass surveillance.** The UNESCO Recommendation explicitly bans the use of AI systems for social scoring and mass surveillance.
3. **Helping to monitor and evaluate.** The Recommendation also establishes Ethical Impact Assessments and a Readiness Assessment Methodology to help promote compliance.
4. **Protecting the environment**. The Recommendation emphasizes resource-efficient AI methods to help ensure that AI becomes a more prominent tool in the fight against climate change.

Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, said "Decisions impacting millions of people should be fair, transparent and contestable. These new technologies must help us address the major challenges in our world today, such as increased inequalities and the environmental crisis, and not deepening them."

The Center for AI and Digital Policy contributed to the development of the Recommendation. In August 2020, CAIDP called attention to the drafting of the UNESCO AI Recommendation, emphasizing that "Key challenges ahead for UNESCO will include the need to address bias in AI-based systems." (*[CAIDP Update](#)* 1.4). Then in July 2021, CAIDP noted many changes since the original draft and expressed "strong support for adoption." (*[CAIDP Update](#)* 2.25) The final UNESCO Recommendation also reflects principles from the [Universal Guidelines for AI,](#) and includes the first ever ban on AI social scoring and mass surveillance.

Adoption of the UNESCO AI Recommendation followed several events during #parisAIweek, including the annual meeting of the [Global Partnership on AI](#), [The Paris Peace Forum](#) (which devoted a track to Artificial Intelligence) and the CAIDP conference [Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Values](#), hosted jointly with the Groupe d'études Géopolitiques, Ecole Normale Supérieure.