The "Coded Gaze" of Generative AI at the Intersection of Gender Equality and Racial Justice:

Charting a way forward through challenges and opportunities for marginalized, racialized women globally

Date: **Monday March 13, 2023**

Time: **1:30 – 3:30PM**

Hosted at: **Salesforce Tower, Bryant Park**

In the context of

- the Commission on the Status of Women's 67th Session (CSW67) on *Innovation and Technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls* and
- the dedication of the month of March by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the theme of the International Day for the Elimination of Racism: *"**The urgency of combatting racism and racial discrimination 75 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,"***

the above-captioned event is co-sponsored by UN Women, UNESCO, OHCHR, The Government of the United Kingdom, The Government of South Africa, The Interparliamentary Forum on Emerging Technologies, and Revolutionnaire.

BACKGROUND

While both opportunities and challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as relates to gender and racial inequalities and injustices are gaining greater attention, recent months have catapulted AI, and in particular generative AI, to the forefront of this discourse and the public's imagination as CHAT GPT generates poems and essays that at first glance seem as if they are generated by humans. However the concerns surrounding permitting AI to be widely used without warning or understanding by the public as to how these systems are built appear to be gaining greater urgency as they become ever pervasive in both the Global North and South.

Generative AI is on the cusp of creating autonomous, self-sustaining digital-only enterprises - with potential to stimulate economic growth and create increased productivity - that can interact with humans without the active need for human intervention, and is anticipated to soon become an integral part of how the world works. Positive potential does exist, with the Global South and its growing populations potentially being able to build the datasets that will define our futures and potentially limit the confines of the past. As we move increasingly online there is an opportunity for the global playing field to be levelled.

Yet the potential dangers of this technology are significant. They come from the fact that it does not only bring the prejudices of human programmers to bear: it generates answers based on billions of pre-existing texts used to train its simulated grasp of language and thought, with bias often deeply embedded in the data that is often discriminatory or unrepresentative for people of color, women, or other marginalized groups. Further, there is little consideration around the lack of a means of references or verification of the outputs – dangerous, as these tools can be used to compound the inequalities that currently exist.

There is ample evidence of the discriminatory harm that existing AI tools can cause to already marginalized groups, globally. The depth of racial and gender bias in AI has long been demonstrated - for example, by the pioneering work of Joy Buolamwini and others highlighting the inability of AI to accurately identify non-white faces; and the extent to which avatars of women, particularly those in minority or marginalized groups are often presented as stereotypes steeped in colonialism and bias.

Importantly, particularly for the Global South, data justice issues differ in significant ways from those of the Global North, as imported algorithmic fairness frameworks do not reflect understanding of social structures, power dynamics and legacies of colonialism; and where data that is rooted in discrimination, structural and systemic inequalities has significant implication for economic development.

Further, the tech industry's lack of representation of women and marginalized, racialized people who would understand and could address the potential harms of these technologies only exacerbates this problem, and there is a strong need to govern the diffusion of these models, and their impact on society and the economy more carefully.

OBJECTIVES:

The Coded Gaze of Generative AI at the Intersection of Gender Equality and Racial Justice will explore and highlight

- **Current state of play of generative AI**
  - its potential to level the playing field
  - the newest challenges and dangers of generative AI as relates to marginalized, racialized women;
- **Action needed by Governments, civil society, foundations, Tech companies and the UN** (via global mechanisms under development) to ensure that it is governed, used and accessed in an equitable and ethical manner as relates to gender and racial bias issues in particular, including

  - promising (existing and proposed/under development) national laws and policies, private sector regulations and global AI governance by Member States, Private Sector entities and the UN;
  - NGO-driven strategies and proposals to eliminate gender and racial bias in AI, including
    - **AI and the challenges and potential as relates to the special role of the creative arts**, especially via social justice-driven creative art organizations, in addressing the harmful norms and stereotypes that underpin racial and gender inequality.

PARTICIPANTS:

Featured Opening Speakers:

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Founder and Leader, Umlambo Foundation; Vice Chancellor, University of Johannesburg; Commissioner, Broadband Commission; Chair of the Board, Women Deliver; Former Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women; Former Vice President of South Africa

and

Epsy Campbell Barr, Chairperson, The Permanent Forum of People of African Descent; Former Vice President of Costa Rica and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Panelists (in alphabetical order):

Justice Faith Betty, co-founder, Revolutionnaire
Jacalyn Chapman, Salesforce VP Equality, Employee Advocacy & Belonging
Heather Hodges, Director of External Relations at The Historic New Orleans Collection,
Begona Lasabagaster, UNESCO Director, Gender Equality Division
Angela Saini, Author, *Superior: The Return of Race Science*
Kiito Shilongo, Senior Tech Policy Fellow, Mozilla, Namibia (TBC)
Emma Wright, Director, Interparliamentary Forum on Emerging Technology, UK