AFRICA AI POLICY

MONTHLY REVIEW

Africa Artificial Intelligence Policy Lab
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Tech for Justice

THIS MONTH IN AFRICAN AI POLICY

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Africa AI Policy Monthly Review, your guide to AI policy developments across Africa. This edition brings you the latest on regional policy shifts, regulatory updates, and expert insights shaping the future of artificial intelligence on the continent.

FEATURED STORY: Nigerian Bar Association Unveils AI Guidelines for Legal Professionals

On August 28, 2024, the Nigerian Bar Association unveiled guidelines to modernise legal practice in Nigeria. During its Annual General Meeting for the Section on Legal Practice, the NBA introduced four key documents aimed at guiding legal professionals in the use of technology: guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence, IT solutions for law firms, privacy standards for lawyers, and cybersecurity protocols.

Developed by the NBA's Digital Committee, these guidelines offer a flexible framework for integrating technology while addressing eth-ical considerations and emerging risks. The NBA-SLP encourages legal practitioners to familiarise themselves with these documents, which can be accessed online. Access the guidelines *HERE*

Guidelines For The Use of Artificial Intelligence in The Nigerian Legal Profession

Launched during the Nigerian Bar Association Annual General Meeting, the guideline is set to guide the safe and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence within Nigeria's legal profession. Aimed at lawyers, law firms, legal departments, and organisations, the guidelines provide a comprehensive understanding of AI's responsible application in the Nigerian context.

Emphasising human oversight, the guidelines address key legal and ethical considerations, highlight best practices for data privacy and security, and outline a roadmap for successful AI integration into legal practices. While offering a broad overview of AI concepts, the document refrains from detailing specific AI algorithms or technical infrastructure.

Regional Highlights

West Africa

NIGERIA

Nigeria's Minister of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani

US, Nigeria seek AI governance framework in Africa

At the recent Global Inclusivity and AI-Africa conference held in Lagos, international stakeholders, including the United States and Nigeria, outlined plans for interoperable and aligned AI governance frameworks. This cooperation aims to foster innovation in Africa's AI sector, with a focus on governance that transcends borders. Dr. Seth Center, acting Special Envoy for Critical and Emerging Technology at the US Department of State, highlighted the importance of using AI to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goals, stressing the need for collaboration as African countries develop their national AI strategies.

East africa

KENYA

Kenya's ICT Authority Launches Strategic Plan for 2024-2027

The ICT Authority has unveiled its Strategic Plan (2024-2027), focusing on advancing government priority policies, including the Digital Superhighway and creative economy initiatives. The plan highlights projects such as expanding secure broadband infrastructure, digital literacy programs, and e-government services. Recognizing the rapid evolution of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and Blockchain, the Authority emphasises the need for continuous learning and adaptation among ICT practitioners.

The Strategic Plan serves as a results-based management tool that guides the Authority's investment strategies and operational practices, ensuring agility in a dynamic digital environment. It highlights four key aspirations: prioritising customer needs, developing flexible and efficient ICT systems, ensuring secure and resilient digital assets, and fostering confident digital capabilities. The Authority calls upon all stakeholders to join in driving sustainable digital transformation and achieving the ambitious goals outlined in the plan.

Kenya announces regulatory measures to curb AI-driven disinformation

The Kenyan government is taking steps to regulate the misuse of AI-driven tools that threaten democracy. Speaking at the launch of the Fifth National Action Plan on the Open Government Partnership, President William Ruto announced new measures aimed at preventing the abuse of technologies like Artificial Intelligence, which contribute to disinformation.

"We are also implementing a regulatory regime that forestalls the abuse of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, which leads to disinformation that threatens our democracy," he said.

"We are working with partners to make the government more open and citizens more informed in our effort to strengthen public participation, improve governance, and boost service delivery."

He emphasised that these regulations are crucial to safeguarding democracy. The initiative seeks to promote transparency, public participation, and accountability, while also aligning Kenya with global digital governance standards.

UGANDA

Uganda Launches AI4Health Incubation Grant

Uganda has launched the AI-4Health Incubation Grant, led by STI Pathogen Labs in collaboration with the Science, Technology, and Innovation Secretariat (STI), Marconi Lab, and AI Lab Makerere. The initiative aims to support the commercialization of AI-driven health technologies, serving as an early-stage incubator for transforming innovations into scalable businesses that can impact the health sector.

Tanzania

Tanzania Bureau of Standards Develops AI Safety Standards

The Tanzania Bureau of Standards is developing AI safety and security standards, addressing concerns surrounding the technology's rapid growth. Announced during Engineers' Day on 20 September 2024, TBS engineers emphasised their commitment to consumer safety. The Bureau will focus on drafting guidelines that promote the ethical use of AI technologies within its borders.

Southern Africa

ZAMBIA

Zambia to Launch National AI Strategy on Independence Day

Felix Mutati, Zambia's minister of science and technology

Zambia's Minister of Technology and Science announced that the National AI Strategy will be officially launched on October 24, 2024, coinciding with the country's Independence Day.

Developed in collaboration with the Finnish government and the Tony Blair Institute, the strategy aims to drive economic growth and enhance efficiency across all sectors. The initiative is expected to position Zambia as a leader in AI innovation, fostering technological advancements and economic transformation.

Zambia Calls for AI Policies in Financial Sector

The Zambian Government has urged the financial sector to develop Artificial Intelligence policies to enhance the adoption of new technologies in serving clients. Technology and Science Minister Hon. Felix Chipota Mutati emphasised that AI is here to stay, and banks must integrate it into their operations. He also noted that over 65% of Zambia's population is now engaged in financial services.

NAMIBIA

### Namibia Nears Completion of Data Protection and Cybercrime Bills

Namibia's Minister of ICT announced that the country's Data Protection and Cybercrime Bills are nearing completion, aimed at safeguarding citizens' personal data amid rapid technological growth. At the 8th National ICT Summit, she emphasised the need for a resilient framework to keep pace with digital advancements, promoting technologies for e-government, digital health, and education.

Namibia's Minister of ICT, Hon. Emma Theofelus

NORTH AFRICA

EGYPT
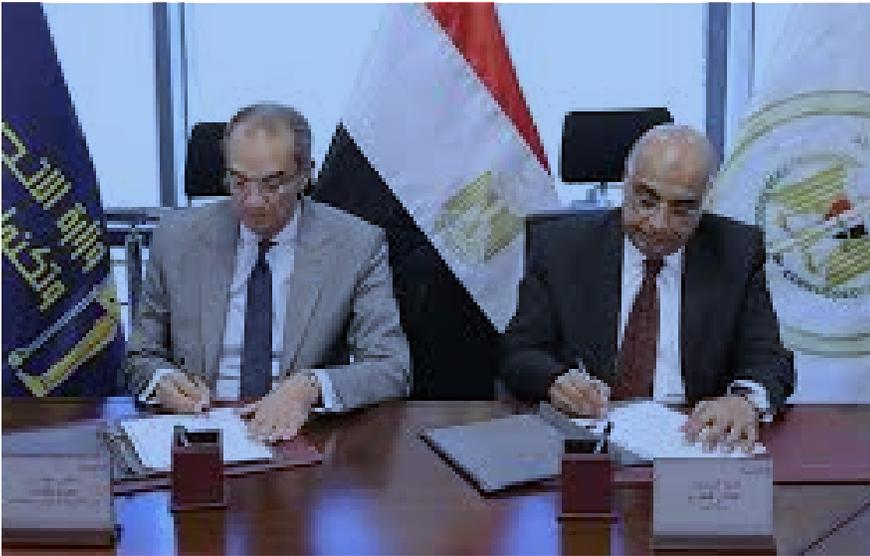
Egypt to Introduce AI-Powered Transcript System in Courtrooms

Egypt has announced a new initiative to integrate an AI-powered speech-to-text system in its courtrooms. A cooperation protocol was signed on August 29, 2024, between the Ministries of Justice and Communication and Information Technology.

Developed by the MCIT, the AI system will automatically document court session records, enhancing the efficiency of transcript writing. The technology is set to be deployed in all criminal and economic courts, with special applications planned for 66 courtrooms handling pretrial detention cases. The protocol seeks to streamline the documentation of court minutes through an AI-driven solution that converts speech into text.

This involves the integration of a speech-to-text engine, developed by the Applied Innovation Center (AIC), with the Ministry of Justice's application, enabling automatic transcription. This initiative not only promotes the utilisation of AI technology within the judicial system but also aims to optimise daily operations, fostering increased efficiency and effectiveness across Egypt's courtrooms.

MAURITIUS

Mauritius calls for Public Input on the National AI Policy

The Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council is inviting public input on the National AI Policy for Mauritius. The council is seeking feedback on key focus areas for the policy, the potential economic and social impacts of AI on the country, and the ethical considerations in developing AI technologies. This public consultation aims to ensure that the policy addresses relevant concerns and supports responsible AI development in Mauritius.

Legislative Tracker: AI Bills, Laws, & Regulations

COUNTRY	LEGISLATION	STATUS	DESCRIPTION
Nigeria	Guidelines for the Use of AI in Legal Profession	Released	Framework for ethical AI use in legal practice, addressing ethical considerations.
Kenya	Regulatory Measures to Curb AI-driven Disinformation	Announced	New measures aimed at preventing misuse of AI contributing to disinformation.
Namibia	Data Protection and Cybercrime Bills	Nearing completion	Aimed at safeguarding citizens' personal data amid rapid technological growth.
Zambia	National AI Strategy	Launching on Oct 24, 2024	Strategy to drive economic growth and enhance efficiency across all sectors.
Tanzania	AI Safety and Security Standards	In development	Drafting guidelines for ethical use of AI technologies within its borders.
Egypt	Court AI-Powered Transcript System	Announced	Integrating AI speech-to-text system in courtrooms for efficient transcript writing.

Global Ai Policy Developments

United Nations Adopts Ground-Breaking Pact for the Future to Transform Global Governance

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

World leaders at the United Nations have adopted the "Pact for the Future," a wide-reaching agreement aimed at transforming global governance to meet modern challenges. This historic Pact includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations, addressing a range of issues such as peace and security, climate change, and digital cooperation. It emphasises commitments to UN Security Council reform, nuclear disarmament, and the prevention of weaponizing emerging technologies. Additionally, the Pact supports sustainable development, financial reforms for developing nations, and the inclusion of youth in global decision-making.

For more information HERE

UN Releases Proposed Framework for Global AI Governance, Emphasising the Critical Role of Standards

On September 19, 2024, the UN Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence (HLAB-AI) unveiled its final report, "Governing AI for Humanity." The report provides a comprehensive framework for global AI governance, stressing international collaboration to address existing gaps. Key proposals include establishing an International Scientific Panel on AI, advancing global AI capacity building, and creating a standardised AI data framework. The report underscores the critical need for inclusive governance, revealing that only seven out of 193 UN member states are currently involved in AI governance, with most of the Global South excluded.

New Guide on Generative AI Use in Court

On September 23, 2024, the Supreme Court of Singapore introduced Registrar's Circular No. 9 of 2024, a guide for court users on the use of generative AI tools. Applicable to various courts, including the State Courts and Family Justice Courts, this guide clarifies that generative AI is permitted but requires users to verify the accuracy and relevance of AI-generated content in legal documents. However, fabricating or manipulating evidence using AI is strictly prohibited. The Guide applies to all matters with effect from 1 October 2024.

IBA Releases Guide on AI as a Professional Tool
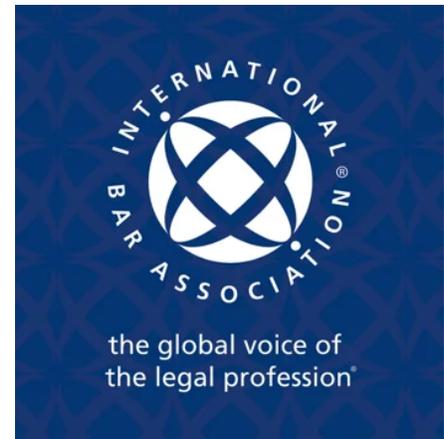
The IBA Artificial Intelligence Working Group published an updated global guide on the use of AI as a professional tool in diverse sectors, particularly legal services. The guide examines AI regulations and recommendations from various jurisdictions and international bodies. While acknowledging AI's transformative potential beyond 'Legal Tech,' the guide stresses the importance of legislative reforms and ethical frameworks in the legal profession, highlighting that AI cannot replace the unique roles of lawyers and judges. This second edition offers valuable insights into public policy for AI's beneficial use.

SolarWinds: IT Professionals Advocate for Stronger AI Regulation

A recent survey conducted by SolarWinds revealed that 88% of IT professionals support stronger government oversight of AI technologies. The survey of nearly 700 IT experts highlighted security and privacy as top concerns, with 72% seeking improved infrastructure security and 64% advocating for stricter privacy protections. Government intervention was also widely supported to combat AI-generated misinformation and promote transparency. Notably, only 38% of respondents expressed confidence in the quality of data used by AI systems, citing data quality as a significant challenge to successful AI implementation.

Data Protection Commission Launches Inquiry into Google AI Model

The Irish Data Protection Commission has initiated an inquiry into Google Ireland Limited to determine compliance with GDPR's Article 35 concerning Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs). The investigation will assess whether Google conducted a DPIA before processing EU/EEA personal data for developing its AI model, Pathways Language Model 2 (PaLM 2). This inquiry is part of broader EU regulatory efforts to ensure that personal data processing in AI development complies with privacy rights and legal standards.

UK Signs AI Safety Treaty to Protect Human Rights and Democracy

The UK has signed an AI safety treaty with the Council of Europe, designed to protect human rights, democracy, and the rule of law from AI-related risks. The treaty commits member states to monitor AI advancements, implement regulations, and address issues like misinformation, algorithmic bias, and data privacy concerns. It complements the UK's Online Safety Act and invites other nations, including the US and Australia, to join this global initiative to ensure responsible AI development.

EU, US and UK representatives have signed a landmark AI safety treaty

California Assembly Passes Controversial AI Safety Bill

The California State Assembly has passed the Safe and Secure Innovation for Frontier Artificial Intelligence Models Act (SB 1047), a contentious bill aimed at enhancing safety measures for AI companies operating in the state. Authored by Senator Scott Wiener, the legislation requires AI companies to implement model shutdown capabilities, safeguards against unsafe modifications, and conduct risk assessments before training advanced AI models. Despite opposition from leading AI firms like OpenAI and Anthropic, the bill now moves to the State Senate for a final vote before reaching Governor Gavin Newsom.

Policy Insight of the Month: Collaboration for Interoperable AI Governance

At the recent Global Inclusivity and AI-Africa conference held in Lagos, international stakeholders, including the United States and Nigeria, outlined plans for interoperable and aligned AI governance frameworks. This cooperation aims to foster innovation in Africa's AI sector, with a focus on governance that transcends borders. Dr. Seth Center, acting Special Envoy for Critical and Emerging Technology at the US Department of State, highlighted the importance of using AI to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goals, stressing the need for collaboration as African countries develop their national AI strategies.

Events & upcoming discussions

Zambia to Launch National AI Strategy
- Location: Lusaka, Zambia, Date: October 24, 2024
- Zambia's Minister of Technology and Science announced that the National AI Strategy will be officially launched on Independence Day.

Mauritius National AI Policy Public Consultation
- Date: Ongoing
- The Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council is inviting public input on the National AI Policy for Mauritius.

African Union AI Observatory Implementation Meeting
- Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Date: November 10, 2024
- Discussion on the creation of the African Artificial Intelligence Observatory to boost media digital transformation.

Research & Reports: Latest Publications on AI Policy

Rwanda and Singapore Launch AI Playbook for Small States

Singapore and Rwanda have introduced the world's first AI Playbook for Small States at the United Nations Summit of the Future on 22 September 2024. The playbook, developed by Singapore's Infocomm Media Development Authority in collaboration with Rwanda's Ministry of ICT, offers best practices from small states on adopting AI strategies, overcoming challenges, and ensuring AI governance. Aimed at fostering inclusive global discourse on AI's potential, the document will continuously evolve, reflecting the shared experiences and innovations of small states in navigating AI development.

Reader Poll: What's the Most Pressing Challenge for AI Policy in Your Region?

As we continue to explore AI policy developments, we want to hear from you!
- Lack of regulatory frameworks
- Ethical concerns
- Data privacy issues
- Lack of skilled professionals

Vote here and share your thoughts in our next issue.

Closing Remarks

As AI continues to evolve, the future of policy and governance across Africa is both exciting and challenging. This month has shown significant progress in various countries, with collaborative efforts and new initiatives aimed at harnessing AI for development while ensuring ethical considerations are at the forefront. We look forward to bringing you more insights and updates next month. Stay informed, stay engaged, and let's shape Africa's AI future together.

Thank you for reading the Africa AI Policy Monthly Review! For this and more updates, subscribe to our mailing list *Here*