



# Women's Leadership in AI: From Inclusion to Impact

2nd Edition · Morocco's AI Forum

Tuesday, 14 April 2026 · Story Le Carrousel, Rabat

Jointly organized by **MoroccoAI** and **GIZ WoMENA**, this forum advances women's leadership in artificial intelligence across Morocco and the Global South.

OFFICIAL FORUM REPORT



## About the Forum

### Building on Momentum

The 2nd edition deepens the conversation from the first edition — "AI Policies: Between Innovation and Regulation" — by shifting focus to **who shapes AI systems and to what end.**

### Strategic Platform

Grounded in the conviction that women's leadership is a catalyst for impact, the forum moves beyond symbolic representation toward measurable outcomes — recognizing women as designers, policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and users of AI.

The forum directly supports Morocco's **New Development Model**, **Maroc Attamkine**, and the **Digital Morocco 2030** strategy, including the AI Made in Morocco initiative launched in January 2026.





# Forum at a Glance



**2nd  
Edition**

Building on the success of the inaugural forum

**3  
Thematic Panels**

Grounding, Governing, and Leading AI

**150  
Attendees**

By invitation only — senior leaders, policymakers, researchers

**14  
April 2026**

Story Le Carrousel, Rabat, Morocco

# Forum Objectives

Conceived as a sustained knowledge-sharing and action-oriented platform designed to create lasting impact across countries and generations.



## Promote Leadership

Advance women's leadership in AI innovation and decision-making, creating pathways to influence strategic technological choices.



## Address Barriers

Tackle cultural, institutional, and structural obstacles specific to Morocco and the Global South.



## Strengthen Governance

Encourage women's participation in AI governance, standards, and policy-making bodies.



## Challenge Bias

Address social norms and gender bias in AI systems to ensure culturally aware, socially responsible technology.



## Facilitate Exchange

Enable South–South and South–North knowledge sharing and collaboration across regions.



## Build Foundation

Lay groundwork for competitions, hackathons, and mentorship programs extending the forum's impact.



# Three Thematic Pillars

The forum is structured around three interconnected pillars addressing the full spectrum of women's leadership in AI.

1

## Panel 1 — Grounding AI

Social Norms, Gender Bias & Human Impact. Culture, society, and ethical implications.

2

## Panel 2 — Governing AI

Standards, Governance & Trust. Systems, standards, and institutional influence.

3

## Panel 3 — Leading AI

Decision-Making Power & Organizational Transformation. Power and leadership inside organizations.



# Program Agenda

A full day of high-impact panels, networking, and strategic dialogue — Tuesday, 14 April 2026.

| Time        | Session          | Details                                                                 |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 09:00–09:30 | Welcome Coffee   | Networking, registration, and welcome refreshments                      |
| 09:30–10:00 | Opening Ceremony | MoroccoAI & GIZ WoMENA welcoming speeches                               |
| 10:00–10:20 | Keynote Speaker  | Ms. Anita Bhatia — "At the table and in the room"                       |
| 10:20–11:30 | Panel 1          | Women Grounding AI: Social Norms, Gender Bias & Human Impact            |
| 12:00–13:10 | Panel 2          | Women Governing AI: Standards, Governance & Trust                       |
| 13:10–13:30 | Demo Session     | Ahlam Tarik · Aya Cherqi · Hiba Benkaddour                              |
| 15:00–16:10 | Panel 3          | Women Leading AI: Decision-Making Power & Organizational Transformation |
| 16:10–16:30 | Fireside Chat    | HRH Princess Katarina & Dr. Ghita Mezzour                               |
| 16:30–17:00 | Closing Ceremony | key takeaways and future announcements                                  |

## Organizers & Partners



**GIZ WoMENA**

A regional initiative implemented by GIZ and funded by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. WoMENA promotes gender-responsive and inclusive politics and economies across the Middle East and North Africa, working in six countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories.



**MoroccoAI**

A leading non-profit organization dedicated to advancing AI research, education, and implementation across Morocco. Through partnerships with academia, industry, and government, MoroccoAI serves as a crucial bridge between global AI advancements and local implementation.



# Setting the Stage: Why Women's AI Leadership Matters Now

## OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony brought together leading voices from Morocco and around the world to address a central challenge: ensuring the future of AI is shaped by inclusive leadership grounded in societal values.

### Prof. Mohammed Khalil

President, MoroccoAI



### Ms. Anette Funk

Head of GIZ WoMENA  
(video message)



### Mr. Gian Weck

German Embassy in Morocco



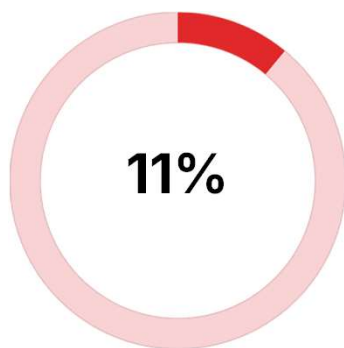
### Dr. Alessandra Sala

Women in AI & UNESCO  
Women for Ethical AI  
(video message)



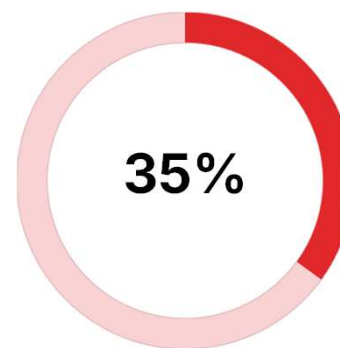
# *The Gender Leadership Gap: Key Statistics*

Prof. Khalil opened with data from McKinsey, OECD, UN Women, and UNESCO to frame the urgency of the forum's theme.



## **Fortune 500 CEOs**

Only 11% of Fortune 500 companies are run by women today



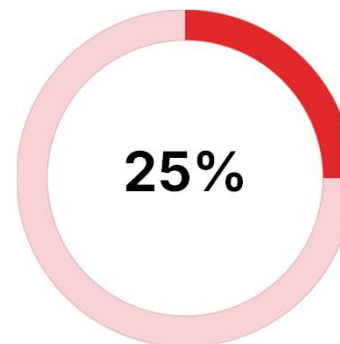
## **Girls Expecting Leadership**

Only 35% of 15-year-old girls in OECD countries expect to become leaders, vs. 65% of boys



## **Women Heads of State**

Only 1 in 7 countries is currently led by a woman (UN Women 2026)



## **Health Sector Leadership**

Women make up 70% of the global health workforce but hold only 25% of leadership roles

# Morocco: A Beacon of Progress

## Leading the World in Female Engineers

According to UNESCO 2021, **42% of engineers in Morocco are women** — ahead of France (30%), Canada (19.7%), and the US (24%). Morocco ranks among the world's highest for female engineers.

## Academic Excellence

In the most recent baccalaureate results, **71.3% of girls passed** versus 61.81% of boys. In 7 of Morocco's 12 regions, girls achieved the highest scores. Yet the question remains: why does this academic excellence not translate into leadership parity?



1,200 years ago, Fatima al-Fihri — a Moroccan woman — founded the world's oldest university, Al-Qarawiyyin, recognized by UNESCO and the Guinness World Record.





# AI Amplifies Human Bias

Prof. Khalil warned: *"AI has no values, no moral conscience, no free will. When data reflects inequality, AI amplifies that inequality."*

## Amazon Hiring Tool (2018)

Amazon's AI recruitment tool, trained on 10 years of predominantly male hiring data, penalized résumés containing the word "women" — and was ultimately scrapped.

## Translation Bias

AI translating from gender-neutral Turkish to English defaulted to "he is a doctor, she is a nurse" — encoding occupational stereotypes directly into language models.

## The Core Risk

If existing gender biases are embedded in training data, AI systems will not merely reflect inequality — they will harden and scale it across every sector they touch.





## 🇵🇸 WoMENA & German Embassy: A Call to Action

**Ms. Anette Funk** (GIZ WoMENA) emphasized that the forum's outcomes fully reflect WoMENA's core mission: *"promoting women's economic participation through inclusive, locally grounded and scalable solutions aligned with national priorities."*

**Mr. Gian Weck** (German Embassy) noted that women represent only 24% of digital economy jobs and 12% of AI researchers globally. Germany's development cooperation applies the three Rs framework: upholding women's fundamental Rights, ensuring access to Resources, and guaranteeing Representation in political and economic decision-making.



# Ms. Anita Bhatia: "At the Table and in the Room"

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*Former UN Assistant Secretary-General &  
Deputy Executive Director, UN Women*

"AI may not have values, but whether we like it or not, it's going to have a soul. The soul of AI is still being decided. Let us have the courage to build an AI that serves all of humanity — powered by the rights, resources, and representation of every woman."

Ms. Bhatia opened by contextualizing the forum within a moment of profound geopolitical disruption, warning that many values underpinning the post-war multilateral order — including women's rights — are being actively challenged worldwide.





# The Urgency of AI's Pace



Drawing an analogy to COVID-19, Ms. Bhatia warned that *"the speed of AI development is creeping up on us just as the virus crept up on us."* By 2021, AI could not do elementary math; by 2022, it could pass the bar exam; by 2025, most software developers were delegating coding entirely to AI. ChatGPT 5.3 was the first system to manage its own deployment, train itself, and evaluate its own performance.

⚠ Only 11% of Fortune 500 companies are run by women. Without women at the table, AI will simply bake in existing biases and harden them into technology.

# *Systemic Bias in Practice*

## Crash Test Dummies

Until 2011, airbag crash test dummies were built using male bodies. Women faced a **20% higher chance of dying** in car accidents — not because they drove worse, but because safety science started with the implicit bias that most drivers are men.

## Access to Credit

Women entrepreneurs achieve a **15% greater return on capital** than male counterparts, yet face at least a **50% greater chance** of receiving smaller, fewer, and more restrictive loans. AI credit systems replicate this discrimination.

## Healthcare Research Gap

Research on female-specific conditions like menopause is extraordinarily small compared to men's health issues. AI medical systems trained on this skewed data will systematically underserve women patients.





# *A Framework for Action: Rights, Resources, Representation*



## **Rights**

Right to be counted and included

## **Resources**

Access to education, funding, and tools

## **Representation**

Women in governance, boards, policy

Ms. Bhatia called on Morocco AI and all partners to produce an annual benchmarking report tracking how many AI company CEOs, CTOs, and board members are women — translating representation into accountability. *"The architecture of AI governance is still being written.*

*We are its architects. Let us write it well."*

# Women Grounding AI: Social Norms, Gender Bias & Human Impact

PANEL 1

*Moderated by Prof. Jesko Hentschel, UM6P*

|                                                                              |                                                                                        |                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01                                                                           | 02                                                                                     | 03                                                                    |
| <b>Ms. Myriem Ouchen Noussairi</b>                                           | <b>Prof. Cornelia C. Walther</b>                                                       | <b>Prof. Aawatif Hayar</b>                                            |
| Head of Office, UN Women Morocco — on gender bias entry points in AI systems | Senior Fellow, Harvard Learning & Innovation Lab — on agency decay and the Fourth Path | Former Minister of Solidarity — on leveraging AI for social inclusion |
| 04                                                                           | 05                                                                                     |                                                                       |
| <b>Ms. Marielle Sander</b>                                                   | <b>Prof. Abdessamad Fatmi</b>                                                          |                                                                       |
| UNFPA Representative — on double literacy and concrete AI applications       | Founder, Erudite Counseling — on paradigm shifts and the oligarchy of AI               |                                                                       |

## *Panel 1: How Gender Bias Enters AI Systems*

Ms. Noussairi identified three key entry points through which gender bias scales in AI systems:

### **Data Absence**

When women are absent from economic, political, and scientific datasets, they are statistically invisible to AI — affecting resource allocation, loan access, and labor market analysis.

### **Stereotypes Codified**

Every societal stereotype is codified in AI algorithms: leadership is associated with men; care and nursing with women; women's images are often beautified and sexualized.

### **Governance Gaps**

When women are absent from governance and design processes, certain risks — including technology-facilitated violence — are never identified, tested, or prioritized.





# AI as Amplifier: The Double-Edged Sword

## AI Can Silence Women

Ms. Noussairi highlighted Morocco's upcoming electoral period: AI can amplify a woman's political campaign — but the same tools can be used to defame, impersonate, and algorithmically silence women in public life. *"AI can silence a voice like it could scale it up."*

## Technology-Facilitated Violence

The panel cited the case of German actress Collien Fernandez, whose husband allegedly created AI-generated sexual content using her likeness — sparking public demonstrations across Germany. This illustrates the extreme vulnerability AI can create, particularly for women in public life.





# Prof. Walther: The ABCD of AI Risks

Prof. Walther warned that society is navigating a "*dangerous transition*" — moving from experimenting with AI to integrating it, and approaching full reliance and addiction.



## A — Agency Decay

Cognitive offloading to AI erodes human thinking capacity. The brain is a muscle: use it or lose it.



## B — Bond Erosion

Always-available, always-flattering chatbots may replace human relationships, especially as robot embodiment advances.



## C — Climate Cost

AI is not free. Six of nine planetary boundaries have already been crossed. AI's environmental footprint is expanding rapidly.



## D — Divided Society

Billions still lack food, electricity, and water — yet they pay the consequences of AI while being least likely to benefit from it.



# *The Fourth Path: A Pro-Social AI for the Global South*

Prof. Walther and Prof. Hayar co-authored a framework positioning the Global South as champion of a fourth path — distinct from the US (business-first), EU (regulation-first), and China (state-dominance) models.

*"Pro-people, pro-planet, and pro-potential — with regenerative intent embedded in the algorithmic architecture of the future. Not just AI literacy, but hybrid intelligence: human literacy combined with algorithmic literacy."*

The framework's **4T model** — Tailor, Train, Test, Target — aims to bring out the best in and for people and planet, requiring a **quadruple bottom line**: people, profit, planet, and purpose.





# Prof. Hayar: AI for Social Inclusion

Prof. Hayar emphasized that AI must serve inclusion not as charity but as strategic necessity: *"We need all human intelligence — men and women. This is not for inclusion. This is for the future of humanity."*

## → Combating School Dropout

Morocco achieves 99.9% primary school enrollment, but faces ~30% dropout at secondary level. AI agents can accompany girls from home and remote schools, bridging the gap during social transitions.

## → Educating Families

AI can educate parents and accompany families in developing economic projects, reducing the economic pressures that keep girls out of school.

## → Soft Skills at Scale

Addressing social norms requires soft skills education for both boys and girls. AI can facilitate this at scale, creating the conditions for genuine gender equity.



# Ms. Sander: Concrete AI Applications for Women's Health

## Deep Echo — Saving Mothers' Lives

A Moroccan startup using AI to identify postpartum hemorrhage risk. Globally, 14 million women face complications annually; 43–70 million die each year, with **80% in the Global South**. AI ultrasound analysis — requiring no specialist training — is being tested in Morocco with UNFPA, with results expected by year-end.

## "Own Your Cycle" App

Ms. Sander launched a free app to help women understand their hormonal cycle across their lifetime — addressing a gap in women's health literacy that persists into the 21st century. *"If I can do it at 61, anyone can do it."* A call to women everywhere: engage with technology, do not be intimidated by it.





## *Prof. Fatmi: The Paradigm Must Change*

Prof. Fatmi warned that classical problem-solving frameworks are insufficient for the scale of AI's disruption. He cited Elon Musk's "Grokopedia" — which corrected 6 million Wikipedia entries in weeks — as evidence of a new oligarchy capable of rewriting human knowledge at will.

*"We are in a pincer movement — crushed from above by oligarchs feeding synthetic data to our children, and from below by our own cognitive atrophy as we surrender thinking to chatbots."*

He called on the Global South to act collectively and urgently, referencing Dario Amodei's paper *"Surviving Technological Adolescence"* as a framework for navigating this moment.





## Panel 1: Key Recommendations

### Design By Women, Not Just For Women

The AI ecosystem reflects current power structures. Women must be designers and decision-makers — not merely beneficiaries of systems built by others.

### Invest in Double Literacy

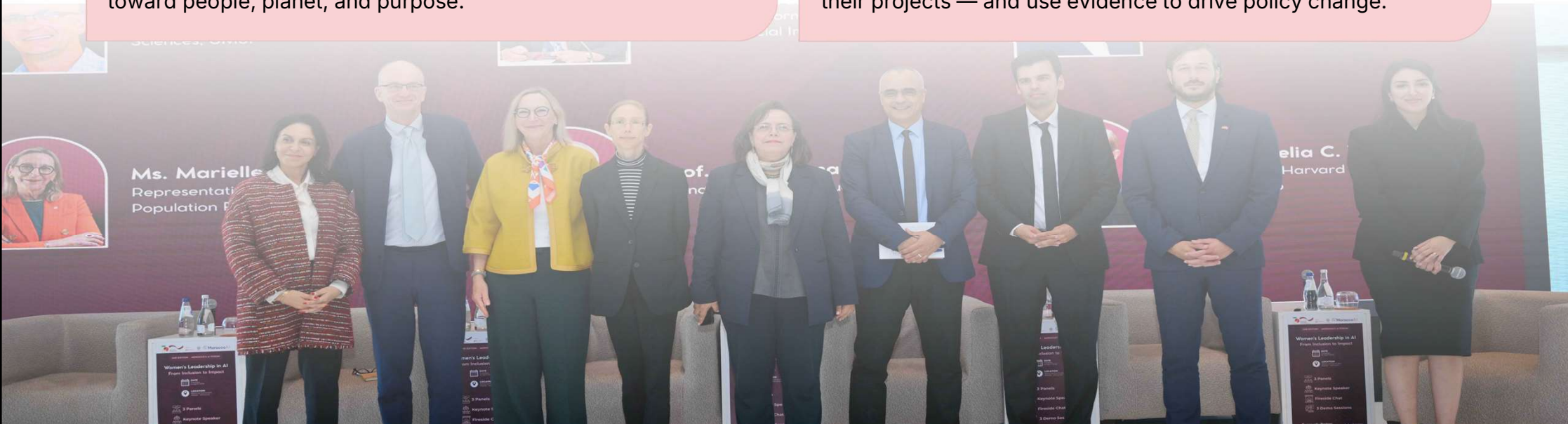
Combine human literacy (emotional intelligence, self-awareness, critical thinking) with algorithmic literacy (understanding how AI impacts cognition and behavior).

### Champion the Fourth Path

The Global South — including Morocco — should position itself as the champion of pro-social AI: tailor, train, test, and target AI toward people, planet, and purpose.

### Use AI to Expose Bias

Deploy data analytics to surface hidden inequalities — including the fact that less than 2% of women globally access funding for their projects — and use evidence to drive policy change.



# Women Governing AI: Standards, Governance & Trust

## PANEL 2

*Moderated by Ms. Salma Karim, Head of Human Capital & Innovation, ADD*

"We are at a crossroads where AI is shifting from a tech experiment to the foundational infrastructure of modern society. For this infrastructure to hold, it requires trust. And trust is not an accident — it is built through governance."

The panel brought together experts from WIPO, WTO, the Integrity Group, and Kompass Education to examine how women leaders shape AI governance systems that are globally aligned, locally relevant, and capable of building trust at scale.



## *Panel 2 Speakers*

### **Dr. Maha Gmira**

CTO, Solution AI — AI strategy, African governance frameworks, and technical execution

### **Dr. Ulrike Till**

Director, IP & Frontier Technologies, WIPO — intellectual property and trust in AI innovation

### **Ms. Bridget Shoo**

Counsellor (Frontier Technologies), WTO — AI, trade, and digital cooperation for equity

### **Mr. Sasha Cadariu**

Director of AI Strategy & Ethics, The Integrity Group — AI safety, governance, adversarial testing

### **Ms. Clara Hawking**

Executive Director, Kompass Education — AI governance in education and child-centered systems



# *Dr. Gmira: Africa's AI Reality Check*

Dr. Gmira called for realism about Africa's AI readiness, warning against premature investment without foundational infrastructure.

**38%**

## **Internet Penetration**

Africa's rate vs. 68% global average

**<1%**

## **Data Center Capacity**

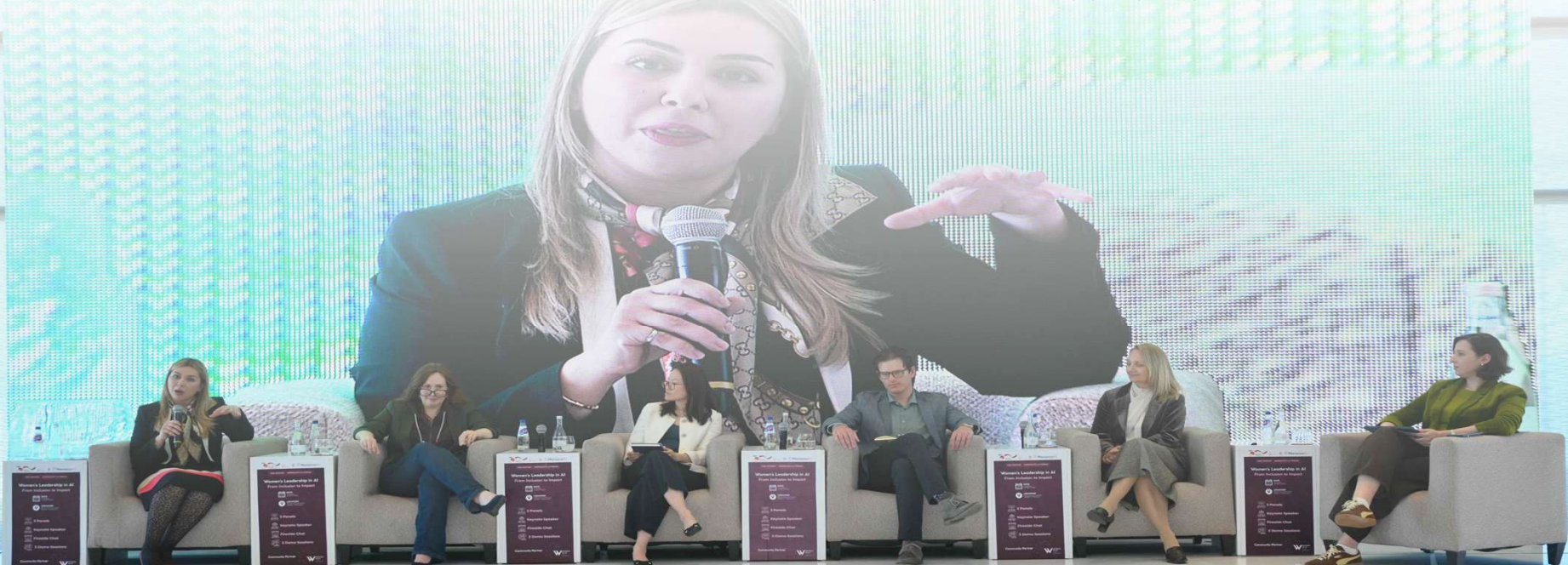
Africa's share of global data center and GPU capacity

**<1%**

## **AI Research**

Africa's share of global AI research output

Dr. Gmira cited Brazil's Pix payment system — reaching 160 million users rapidly — as a model for how the Global South can turn late-mover status into strategic advantage by leapfrogging legacy infrastructure.



## *Ms. Shoo (WTO): Closing the Digital Divide*



WTO research projects AI could increase global GDP by **13%** and global trade by **37% by 2040**. However, the gains are deeply unequal.

### **The Policy Gap**

Only **8% of low-income economies** have introduced AI policy, versus **68% of high-income economies**. Low-income economies appear open but lack meaningful regulation — creating vulnerability rather than opportunity.

### **The Opportunity**

If the digital infrastructure and policy gap is narrowed, low-income economies' GDP gains from AI **double**. Coherence across trade, competition, labor, and IP policy — not just individual regulations — is essential to realizing this potential.



# Dr. Jill (WLPB): Trust Through Intellectual Property

*"Trust is not a given. Trust needs to be built. What you build into policy is predictability and accountability — and those are the things people will then start trusting in."*

## Ownership Creates Accountability

IP frameworks clarify who owns AI-generated content and who is responsible for it — providing the predictability that underpins trust. The ongoing OpenAI vs. New York Times dispute illustrates what happens without clear IP rules.

## Patents Require Disclosure

The IP bargain — monopoly protection in exchange for public disclosure — has always embedded transparency into innovation. This principle is critical for addressing AI's "black box" problem.

## Rights Enable Financing

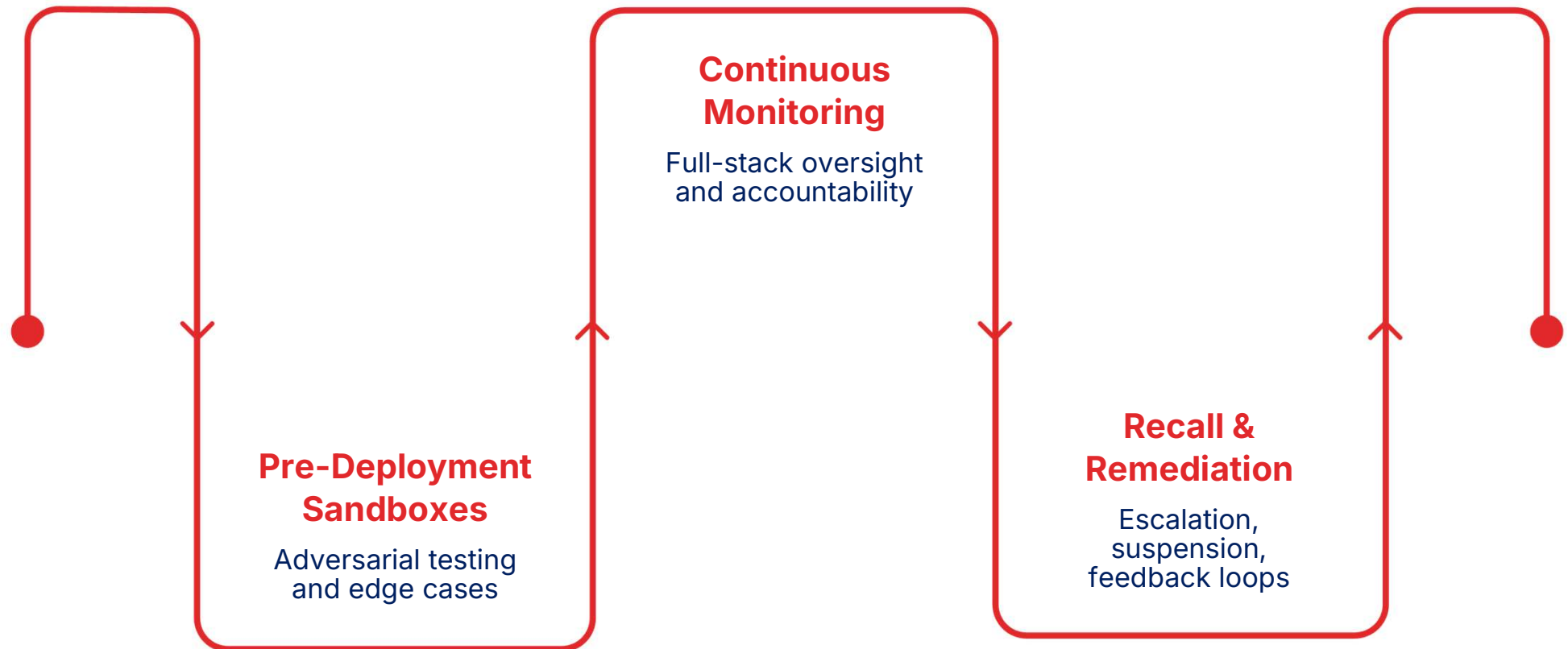
Having IP rights allows small companies and women-led businesses to raise finance, license technology, and franchise — democratizing access to AI's economic benefits.





## *Mr. Cadariu: Rigorous Governance Architecture*

Mr. Cadariu outlined a framework for operationalizing AI governance beyond principles, centered on three core mechanisms:



He emphasized that "continuous monitoring infrastructure" is intentional — it requires a full technology stack, defined roles, and tools to assess whether a deployed system is behaving as intended and being used as designed.

## Mr. Cadariu: Gender Diversity in Red Teams

Mr. Cadariu argued that traditional red teams — composed of STEM specialists focused on technical attack surfaces — miss a critical dimension: *"AI is not just software to be broken. It is an entity that can be persuaded."*

"When you don't have cognitive diversity within a red team, you're overlooking a lot of what's available when it comes to attacks. Cultivating gender diversity could be a direct way to cultivate cognitive diversity — and most red teams are composed entirely of men with STEM backgrounds."

He demonstrated that multi-turn adversarial sequences exploiting behavioral tendencies — rational actor assumptions, game-theoretic incentives — can elicit dangerous outcomes without the AI recognizing it is facilitating harm.





# *Ms. Hawking: Institutional Accountability in Education*

Ms. Hawking challenged the narrative that AI adoption in education is merely a "tools moment" — arguing it represents a fundamental **infrastructure shift** requiring executive leadership accountability.

## **The German Professor Case**

A professor used a private ChatGPT subscription for two years to review student papers and grant proposals — without authorization, oversight, or informed consent. When he changed privacy settings, all data was deleted. The real issue: student data had been used to train AI models without consent.

## **Children as Beta Testers**

EdTech companies are deploying generative AI for grading, feedback, and emotional monitoring with minimal regulation. Ms. Hawking proposed a potential **31st Human Rights Article** addressing cognitive autonomy and the right to grow up developing genuine agency.





# *The Regulatory Fragmentation Dilemma*

Former Minister Dr. Ghita Mezzour (from the audience) raised a critical challenge: strong regulation may protect society but can be weaponized by big tech against startups.

## Digital Dispossession

Mr. Cadariu cited Prof. Shoshana Zuboff's concept: big tech companies deliberately violate laws, absorb fines as a cost of business, and use regulatory compliance costs to eliminate smaller competitors. GDPR implementation actually **increased major tech companies' market caps** by eliminating smaller rivals who couldn't afford compliance.

## The Regional Solution

Dr. Gmira proposed regional AI governance frameworks — African, North African, or MENA-level — as an alternative to either no regulation or compliance with frameworks designed for different ecosystems. *"There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but the solution might be regional."*



## *Digital Sovereignty & Interoperability*

Ms. Shoo offered the metaphor of AI systems as **Lego blocks** — countries building their own capacity while enabling others to use and build upon shared foundations. Examples include Switzerland's open-source multilingual LLM (Appetitus, trained on 10,000 languages with gender-neutral design) and Singapore's Southeast Asian language models.

"Interoperability — not harmonization — is the realistic path forward. Countries will have different regulations. The goal is to ensure companies and entrepreneurs can move smoothly between those systems."





## *Panel 2: Key Recommendations*

### **Trust Is Non-Negotiable**

Governance creates the safety required for society. Build predictability and accountability into every AI policy framework.

### **Diversity Is a Requirement**

Systems without diverse perspectives have built-in failures. Gender and cognitive diversity in governance, red teams, and design processes is a safety imperative — not an add-on.

### **Pursue Interoperability**

Develop technical solutions — metadata, identifiers, shared standards — that allow policy frameworks to work across jurisdictions without requiring full harmonization.

### **Customize to Context**

Comply with international standards but adapt to local ecosystems. Small language models (SLMs) tailored to local languages and cultures may outperform large general models in specific contexts.

**Ms. Salma Karim**

Head of Human Capital & Innovation  
Department, ADD

**Dr. Maha Gmira**

CTO at Solution AI

**Dr. Ulrike Till**

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# *Women Leading A2: Decision-Making Power & Organizational Transformation*



## PANEL 3

*Moderated by Prof. Ikram Chairi, UM6P & Co-Founder, DaQL*

*"The most important shift is not from exclusion to inclusion — it is from inclusion to influence and power. We need to empower women not just to be present, but to be decision-makers and transformers."*

## Panel 3 Speakers



### **Dr. Sofia Ghacham**

Women in AI Morocco Ambassador & Founder — on building ecosystems for women's AI leadership



### **Ms. Ranya Alaoui**

Country Director, Women in Tech Morocco — on AI diplomacy and human capital sovereignty



### **Ms. Nezha Larhrissi**

President & Co-Founder, eSTEM Morocco — on education pipelines and leadership pathways



### **Ms. Khadija Khartit**

Founder, Sohaara — on last-mile empowerment and the Sua AI initiative



### **Ms. Patricia Souza da Cunha Oliveira**

President, Women4Cyber Luxembourg — on inclusive leadership in cybersecurity

## *Dr. Ghacham: From Presence to Power*

Dr. Ghacham founded Women in AI Morocco after recognizing that Moroccan women AI experts were *"not visible, not connected"* — despite their expertise. The initiative operates at two levels:

### Ecosystem Level

Creating hackathons, buildathons, trainings, and programs. In one year: **300 active members**, **12 board members**, and **3,000 beneficiaries**. Women in AI Morocco has become the go-to network for connecting women experts in AI, cybersecurity, and blockchain.

### Individual Level

Helping women gain visibility, upskill technically, and access mentorship. Women in AI Morocco participated in a global AI safety roundtable at the UAE alongside chief AI officers from major companies — bringing Global South women's voices to international policy discussions.





## Ms. Alaoui: AI Diplomacy & Human Capital Sovereignty

Ms. Alaoui argued that technology is the great equalizer of the 21st century — and that Morocco's 47% female engineering rate is not merely a social achievement but a **strategic sovereign asset**.

*"Human capital is the currency for sovereignty. Parity is not just a social goal — it is a lever for tech diplomacy. If we multiply success stories, Morocco can have parity as a proxy for global excellence and competitiveness."*

She cited Cap Gemini Engineering Morocco (ranked #1 in social responsibility for parity) and a CEO who built 800-person teams with genuine gender balance as proof that **systemic, top-management-driven parity works** — when tracked as a KPI alongside revenue.



# Ms. Khartit: Sohaara & the Sua Initiative

Ms. Khartit — the first female CEO of an investment bank in Saudi Arabia's history — built Sohaara around three pillars to address global disorientation (*tilfa*):

1

## Upskilling

Last-mile skills development beyond traditional education — activating knowledge in concrete projects

2

## Tooling

Utilizing smart AI tools to activate acquired skills in careers and startups

3

## Connecting

Linking users to investors, clients, co-founders, mentors, and employers — the full last-mile-to-success ecosystem

She announced **Sua** — a values-driven AI companion embodying three Moroccan values: the caring heart of a mother, wisdom, and purposeful guidance. A direct counter to sexualized AI companions, Sua is designed to be caring, purposeful, and culturally grounded.





# *Ms. Farhissi: Building the Pipeline – eSTEM Morocco*

eSTEM Morocco has coached, trained, mentored, and empowered more than 13,000 girls since 2013 — yet this represents a fraction of the 9 million girls attending Moroccan public schools daily.

## **The Titrit Platform**

A digital platform designed around the whole girl — bringing opportunities, mentors, and role models to girls wherever they are, rather than requiring girls to come to opportunities.

## **Digital Houses Network**

19 local associations equipped with donated laptops and Wi-Fi, deploying eSTEM programs across Morocco — including in Sidi Ifni and other remote regions.

## **The Paradox**

Morocco has 50%+ female enrollment in science and tech university majors yet ranks among the last 10 countries globally in female labor force participation. Bridging this gap is eSTEM's core mission.





## Ms. Oliveira: Diversity as a Safety Imperative

Ms. Oliveira drew on MIT and Stanford research showing that diverse teams overlook **30–40% fewer biases** in their studies. In cybersecurity specifically, diverse teams identify attack vectors that homogeneous groups miss entirely.

*"AI has the potential to change drastically our biases — or to potentialize them. If we want to change AI, we need to start by challenging ourselves first. Take an implicit bias test. Diversify your AI tools. Challenge each one of them."*

Women4Cyber Luxembourg runs annual mentorship programs with 30 mentors and cybersecurity scholarships at the University of Luxembourg — addressing the "leaking pipeline" from entry-level to C-suite (where women hold only **7% of cybersecurity leadership roles** globally).



## Panel 3: Key Recommendations

### Make Parity Systemic

Parity must be tracked as a KPI alongside revenue, with top management designing and monitoring processes — not just making statements on International Women's Day.

### Shift from Presence to Power

The goal is not how many women are present, but how many are decision-makers, investors, board members, and policy influencers.

### Embrace the Application Layer

Women don't need to build GPUs. The application layer of AI requires creativity, communication, and local knowledge — areas where Moroccan women already excel.

### Build Togetherness

Every new initiative should begin with the question: "Who are the partners I should reach out to?" Ecosystem collaboration multiplies impact exponentially.



**Prof. Ikram Chairi**

Assistant Professor at the College of Computing, UM6P & Co-Founder, DaQLI



**Dr. Sofia Ghacham**

Women in AI Morocco Ambassador



**Ms. Ranya Alaoui**

Country Director of Women in Morocco



**Ms. Ne**  
President  
Morocco



**Patricia Souza**

Co-Founder, Women4Cyber L

# Young Women Building AI: Morocco AI Hackathon 2025 Laureates

## DEMO SESSION

Three AI engineering students — laureates of the Morocco AI Hackathon 2025 — demonstrated projects that embody the forum's core message: **inclusion is not just a goal; it is a driver of innovation.**

### Ahlam Tarik

**EVA** — Evaluation Virtual Assistant: AI-powered speech coaching that analyzes delivery, body language, and sign language, ensuring every voice — regardless of ability — can be heard and evaluated fairly.



**Ahlam Tarik**  
AI Engineering Student

### Aya Cherqi

**HandsVoice** — Real-time sign language to speech translation, with a two-way avatar system enabling fluid communication between hearing and non-hearing people. Partnering with La Asma Foundation for data collection.



**Aya Cherqi**  
Big Data & AI Engineering Student

### Hiba Benkaddour

**AiDex** — AI emergency response assistant that analyzes photos/videos to generate structured incident reports, recommend responders, and provide first aid guidance. Integrates with Morocco's 15, 19, and 150 emergency numbers.



**Hiba Benkaddour**  
AI Engineering Student





## *EVA: No Voice Left Behind*

Ahlam Tarik's inspiration came from a teammate who lost her voice the night before a hackathon pitch. *"1.5 billion people worldwide live with hearing loss, communicating through sign language and lip reading — ways our technology still largely ignores."*

EVA analyzes speech clarity, filler words, vocal pace, body language (detecting closed vs. open postures), and understands sign language in real time. It provides complete feedback for job interviews, team meetings, and HR evaluations — giving every person, regardless of ability, a fair chance to be heard.

*"Last September, a voice was lost in a room full of ideas. Today, we're building an AI that ensures no voice is ever lost again."*



# *HandsVoice & AiDex: Inclusion as Innovation*

## HandsVoice

Aya Cherqi highlighted that deaf people in Morocco lack rights to education, health, and media access in sign language. HandsVoice enables sign-to-speech translation with emotional awareness, with a future avatar for two-way communication. The team is pursuing partnerships with the Moroccan Union of Associations of the Deaf for data collection and community validation.



## AiDex

Hiba Benkaddour noted that over 250 million emergency calls are made annually, yet callers often cannot communicate effectively under stress. AiDex supports SDGs 3 (Good Health), 11 (Sustainable Cities), and 16 (Strong Institutions). It ensures data sovereignty by hosting sensitive data locally and complying with Moroccan CNDP standards.



# HRH Princess Katarina & Dr. Ghita Mezzour: Values, Courage & Connection

## FIRESIDE CHAT

The forum's closing fireside chat brought together HRH Princess Katarina and Dr. Ghita Mezzour (former Minister of Digital Transition; CEO, DecisiveAI) in a conversation about the human values that must guide leadership, innovation, and empowerment in the age of AI.

*"Onwards and upwards. Be strong. Remember, you can do it. Don't let anyone put you down — they are the ones who are not going to be your supporters. Be with people who support you and help you."*



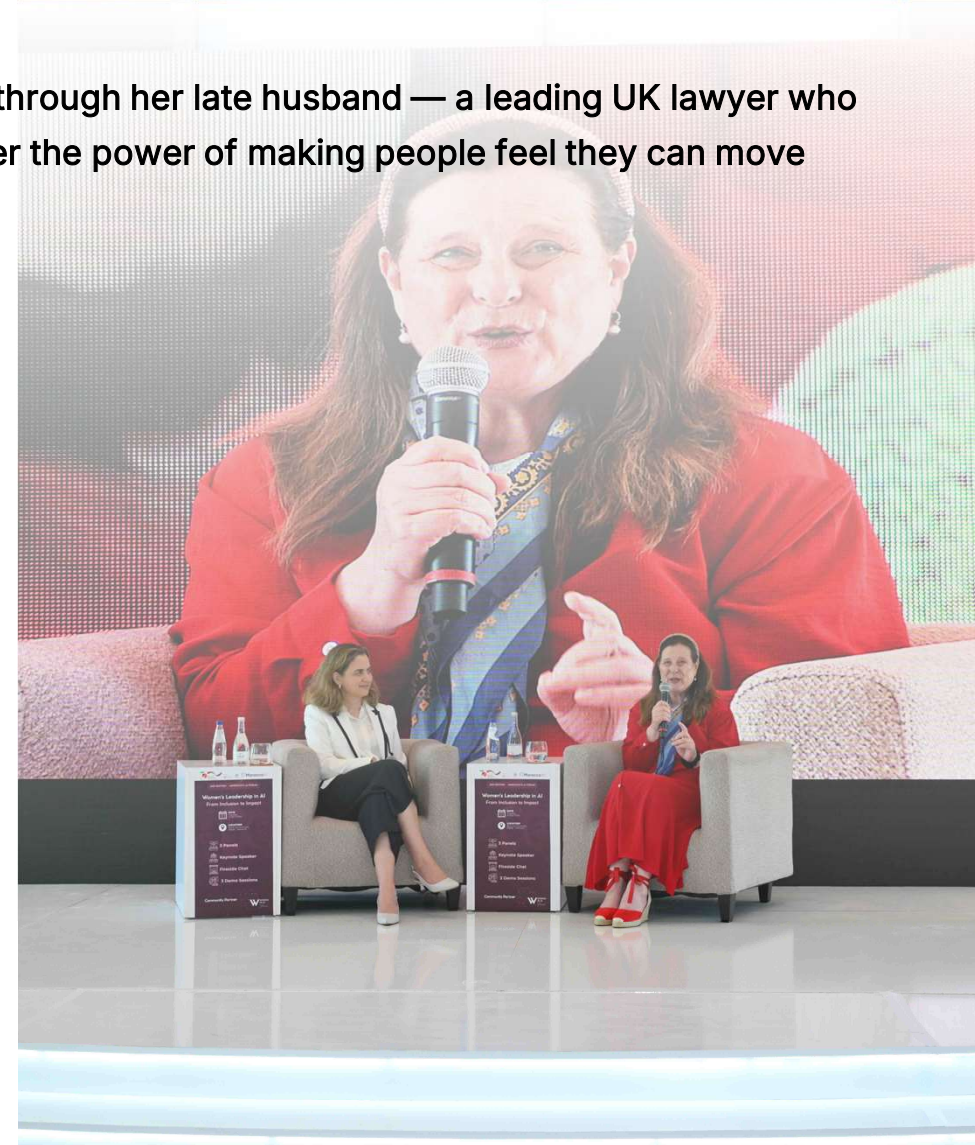


# *Princess Katarina: The Power of Human Connection*

Princess Katarina shared that her path to empowering women began through her late husband — a leading UK lawyer who worked on war crimes in Sierra Leone — whose example taught her the power of making people feel they can move forward.

"There was a young girl being bullied because she made her own clothes. I asked her: 'How do we know that in 10 years, after university, you are not the next couture company in England?' All the other children suddenly sat up — and saw her completely differently."

"A woman in the NHS said 'What's wrong with you?' to patients. I suggested: 'How can I help you today?' Just those few words made her stronger — and her patients felt better too. Small changes in language carry enormous power."



# *Etiquette, Education & Empowerment*

## Education as Values

Princess Katarina defined education not as university degrees but as being taught well from an early age — values of respect, kindness, and treating others as you wish to be treated. She cited a school in Riyadh where every classroom door carried messages like "Be kind" and "Respect" for 5-year-olds.

## Men as Allies

Dr. Mezzour highlighted Princess Katarina's emphasis on men as empowerers — fathers, husbands, and colleagues who create conditions for women to thrive. *"It comes from the heart. Having a good man as the father, as the head of the family, will always bring good stability."* Prof. Khalil's organization of the forum was cited as an example of male allyship in action.





## Closing Ceremony: "When AI Becomes She"



Prof. Khalil closed the forum not with statistics but with art — inviting poet Rasha Belcoda to perform an original piece written for the occasion.

*"They say AI, I say she. Intelligence lies in the hands of the creative force in this living tapestry. Yes, it's a collective destiny with a female touch preserving harmony. Wisdom has a goddess — Athena creatively conducting all instruments. So world, welcome the woman. Welcome the girl. Spark the female roar. Let every goddess rise tall."*

The poem encapsulated the forum's spirit: AI's soul is still being written, and women must be among its authors.



# *Cross-Cutting Theme 1: AI Amplifies What Humans Build In*

Across all three panels, a single truth emerged repeatedly: **AI has no values of its own — it amplifies the values, biases, and power structures of those who build it.**

## **Garbage In, Garbage Out**

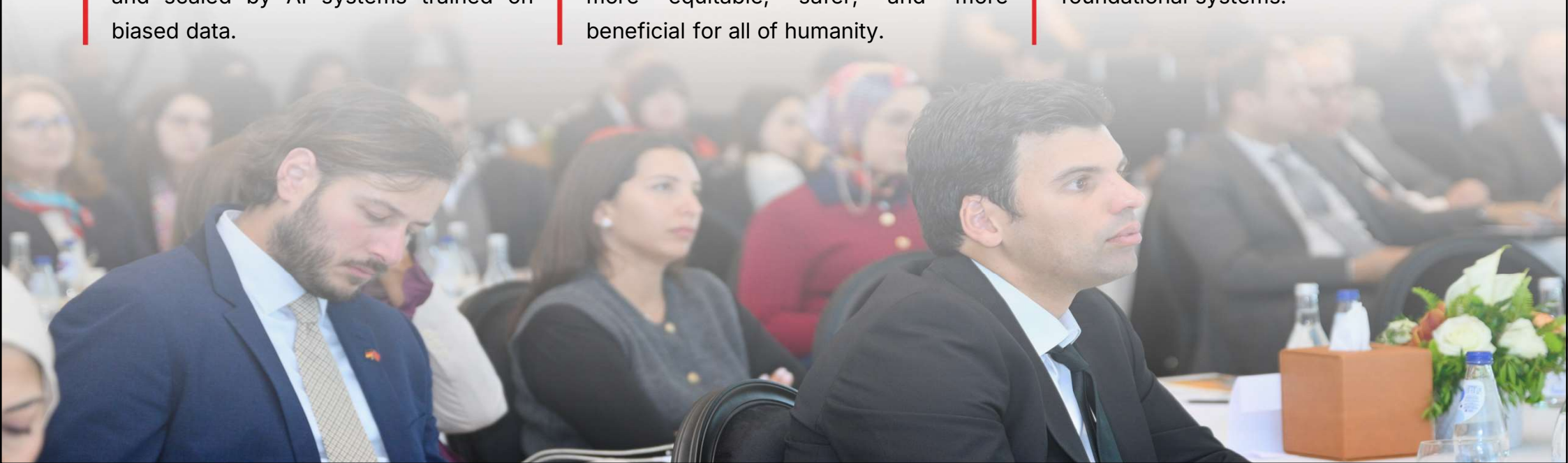
From Amazon's hiring tool to translation bias to medical research gaps, every panel surfaced examples of how existing gender inequalities are encoded and scaled by AI systems trained on biased data.

## **Values In, Values Out**

The corollary is equally powerful: if women's perspectives, care ethics, and lived experiences are embedded in AI design, the resulting systems will be more equitable, safer, and more beneficial for all of humanity.

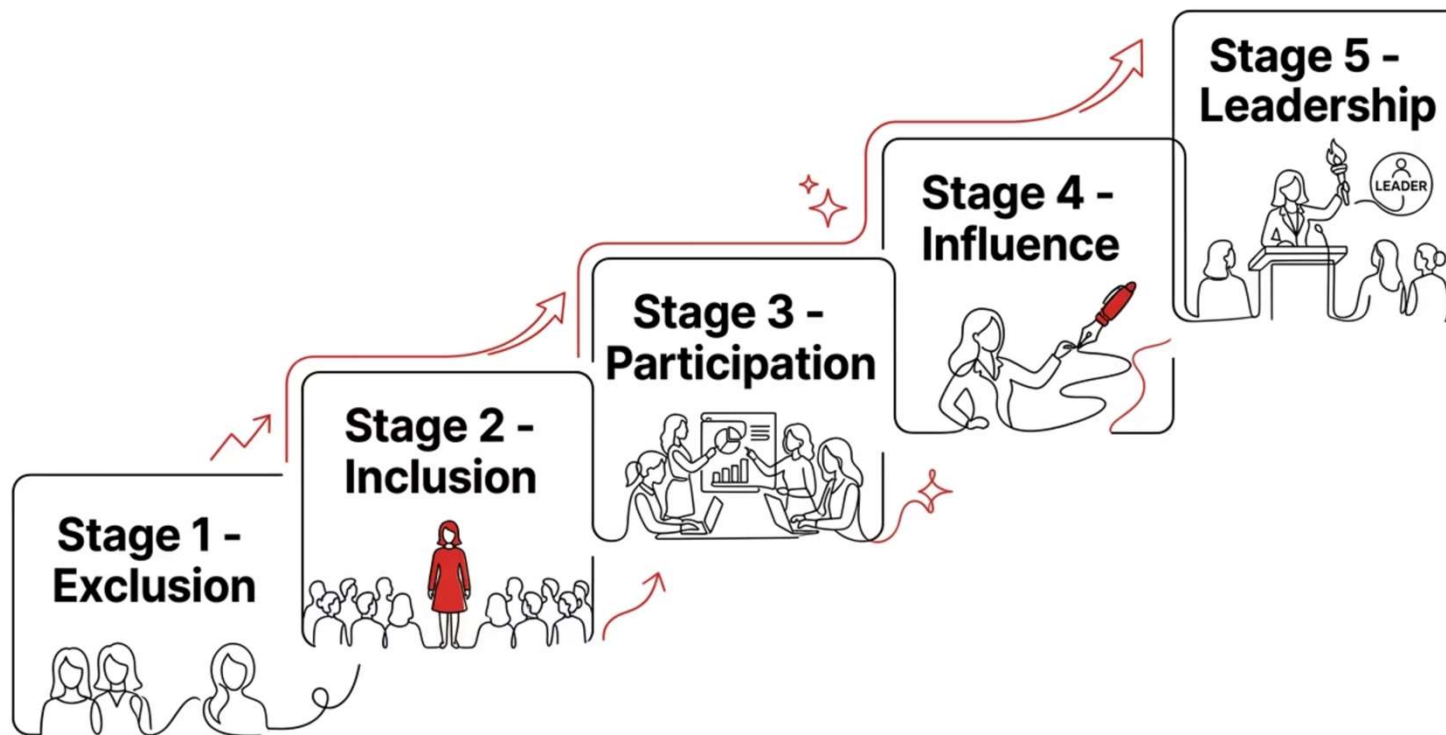
## **The Urgency Is Now**

The architecture of AI governance is still being written. Every month of delay in including women's voices is a month of bias being baked permanently into foundational systems.



## *Cross-Cutting Theme 2: From Inclusion to Influence*

Every panel converged on the same evolution: the goal is no longer simply to include women in AI — it is to ensure women hold genuine decision-making power.



Dr. Ghacham's formulation — *"It's not important how many women we have, but how many women we have as decision-makers and influencers"* — captured the consensus of the entire forum.



## *Cross-Cutting Theme 3: The Global South's Strategic Moment*

A powerful consensus emerged across all panels: the Global South — and Morocco specifically — faces a unique strategic window to shape AI on its own terms.

### **Late-Mover Advantage**

Countries building AI infrastructure now can leapfrog legacy systems and design for inclusion from the start — as Brazil did with Pix payments.

### **Morocco's Strengths**

42% female engineers, strong baccalaureate performance by girls, gender-based budgeting leadership, and the AI Made in Morocco initiative position Morocco as a regional model.

### **The Fourth Path**

The Global South can champion pro-social AI — neither US business-first, EU regulation-first, nor Chinese state-dominance — but people, planet, and purpose-first.



## Cross-Cutting Theme 4: Hybrid Intelligence & Double Literacy



### Human + Algorithmic Literacy

Prof. Walther and Ms. Sander's concept of **double literacy** — combining deep human self-knowledge with algorithmic understanding — emerged as the essential competency for the AI era. Understanding how our own biases, emotions, and cognitive shortcuts work is prerequisite to working with AI responsibly.

### Care as a Design Principle

The Hinton-Fei-Fei Li conversation about AI needing "maternal values" — care, empathy, responsibility — resonated across all panels. Women's disproportionate experience of the care burden positions them uniquely to embed these values into AI systems. As Prof. Walther wrote: *"Women are uniquely positioned to make hybrid intelligence work for social good."*

# Strategic Recommendations for Stakeholders



## Governments

Mandate gender-balanced representation in all national AI governance bodies. Extend gender-based budgeting to AI investment. Develop regional AI governance frameworks adapted to local realities.



## Academia

Integrate double literacy (human + algorithmic) into curricula at all levels. Support research on women's AI leadership outcomes. Create mentorship pipelines connecting junior women researchers to global networks.



## Industry

Track gender parity as a KPI alongside revenue. Diversify red teams and AI governance boards. Invest in women-led AI startups and ensure procurement processes favor inclusive teams.



## Civil Society

Build ecosystems of togetherness — connecting organizations rather than competing. Champion the application layer of AI where creativity and local knowledge create competitive advantage for women.



## *Roadmap: Next Steps for the Forum's Impact*



### **Immediate**

Publish forum report and form advisory board



### **Short-term**

Launch Morocco index and pilot curricula



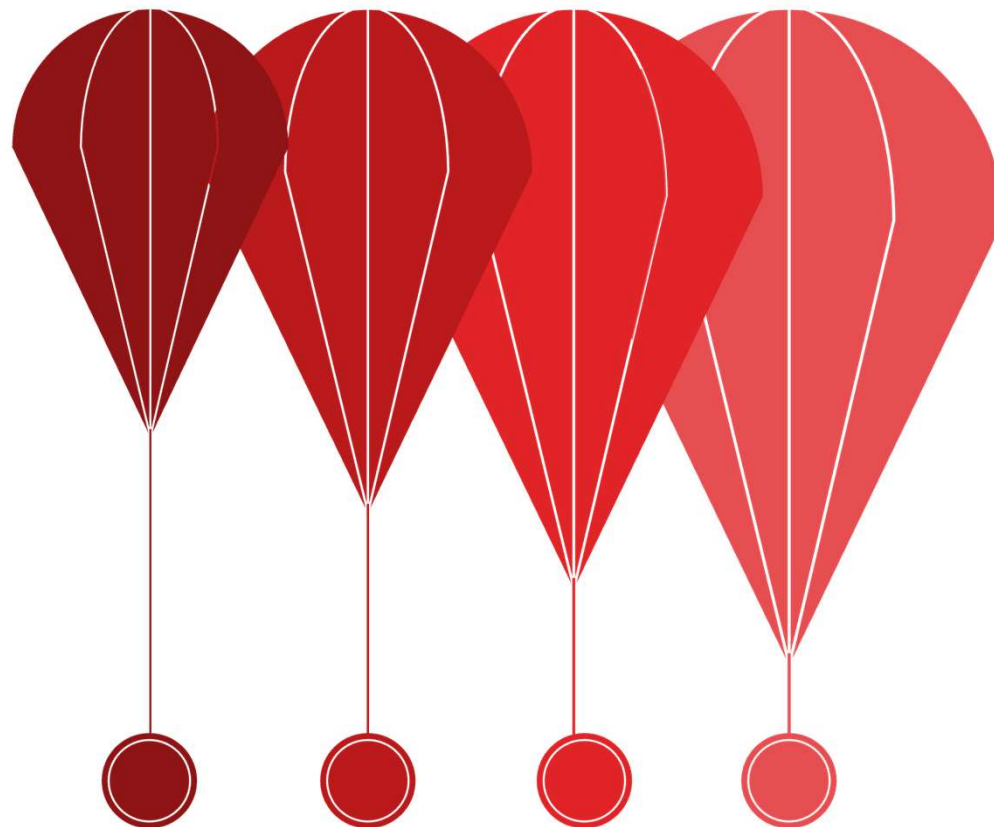
### **Medium-term**

Release Global South benchmarking report



### **Long-term**

Third forum with measurable exchanges



Ms. Bhatia's call to action — producing an annual benchmarking report tracking women CEOs, CTOs, and board members in AI — was endorsed across panels as the forum's most concrete near-term deliverable.

# *Recommendations for International Organizations*



## **Advance Interoperability Standards**

WIPO, WTO, and UN agencies should prioritize technical interoperability solutions — metadata, identifiers, shared frameworks — that allow women-led businesses to operate across regulatory jurisdictions without prohibitive compliance costs.

## **Protect Children's Cognitive Rights**

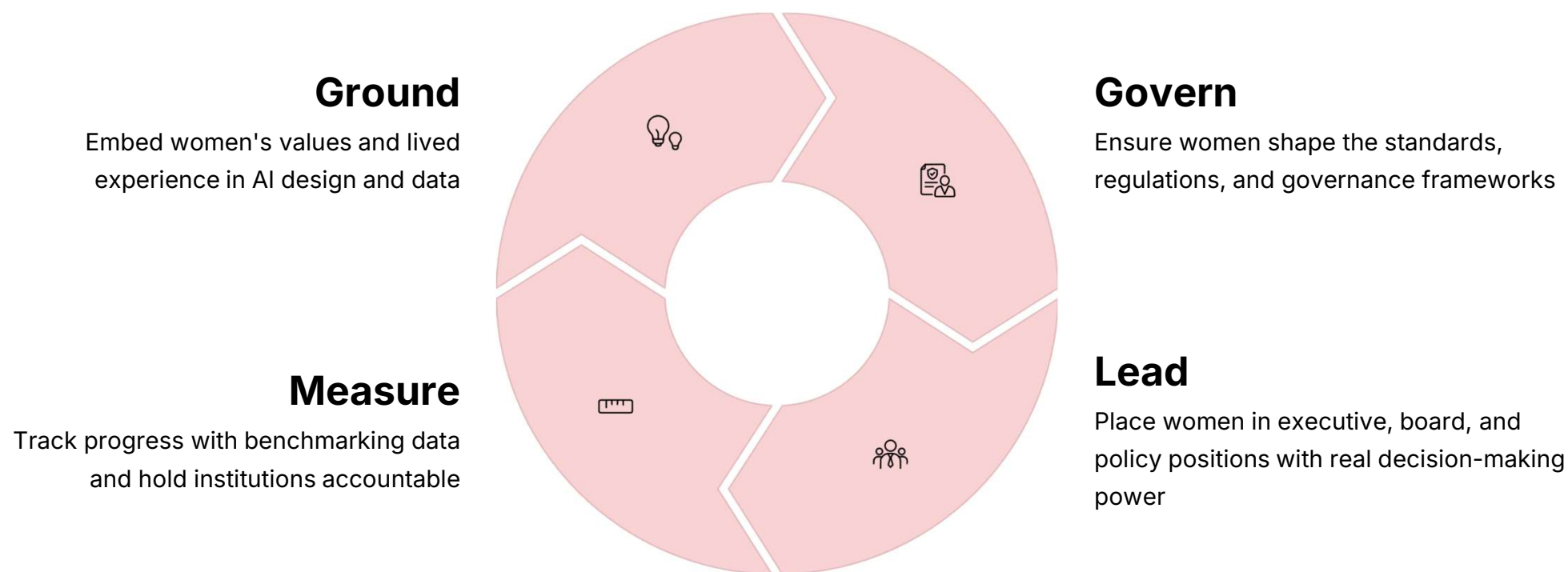
International human rights frameworks should be updated to address algorithmic influence on children's development — potentially through a new article addressing cognitive autonomy and the right to develop genuine agency.

## **Fund Digital Public Goods**

Support open-source, multilingual, gender-neutral AI models developed by and for the Global South — enabling digital sovereignty without requiring full ownership of the technology stack.

# *The Forum's Impact & Future Vision*

The 2nd edition of Morocco's AI Forum demonstrated that women's leadership in AI is not a peripheral concern — it is a **strategic imperative for the quality, safety, and equity of AI systems** that will shape every aspect of human life.





## Concluding Statement

*"The soul of AI is still being decided. All of us in this room who are here to discuss this today — we are its architects. Let us write it well."* — Ms. Anita Bhatia, Keynote Speaker

The Women AI Forum 2026 leaves a clear mandate: move from conversation to commitment, from statistics to systemic change, and from symbolic inclusion to genuine power. Morocco stands at a historic inflection point — with the talent, the policy frameworks, and the international partnerships to demonstrate to the world that **AI built with women, by women, and for all of humanity** is not only possible, but essential.

The 3rd edition of Morocco's AI Forum will build on these foundations — measuring progress, celebrating achievements, and deepening the action-oriented partnerships that will define Morocco's role as a global leader in inclusive, responsible AI.

MOROCCOAI GIZ WOMENA RABAT, APRIL 2026