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Morocco's AI Forum (2nd edition)

Women's leadership in AI: From Inclusion to Impact

Date: Tuesday, 14 April 2026

Location: Story Le Carrousel, Rabat – Morocco

A transformative platform advancing women's leadership in artificial intelligence—across organizational decision-making, standards and governance, and social and ethical impact—targeting Morocco and the Global South, jointly organized by MoroccoAI and GIZ WoMENA.

Community Partner



Insights from the first edition of Morocco's AI Forum

The first edition of the forum “*AI Policies: Between Innovation and Regulation*”, taking place at Four Seasons Hotel-Rabat, on the 28th October, was conceived as a strategic platform to align global debates on artificial intelligence with Morocco's ambitions as an emerging regional and continental hub for responsible innovation-driven AI. Hosted in Rabat and co-organized by **MoroccoAI** and **Meta**, the event gathered ministers, regulators, industry executives, researchers, international organizations, and civil society actors to examine how AI can be governed in ways that accelerate industrial competitiveness and social progress while safeguarding rights, ethics, and sovereignty. Across three panels and high-level opening remarks, participants explored:

- How AI is reshaping industrial processes, smart cities, and competitiveness in Morocco and beyond.
- How ethics, regulation, and governance can keep pace with technological change without stifling innovation, building on frameworks such as UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI.
- How AI can support social inclusion, decent work, gender equality, and human development, especially through “AI for Social Good” initiatives and hybrid human-machine systems.



**Minister of
Industry and
Trade**



**Head of Public
Policy MENA
META**



**President
MoroccoAI**



Watch the full recording from <https://youtu.be/J1SUy8AmRTE?si=oMABnRXMLvFibxdg>

Panel 1: AI for Innovation and Industry Transformation

The first panel, “*AI for Innovation and Industry Transformation*”, explored how artificial intelligence can strengthen Morocco’s competitiveness, accelerate industrial transformation, and position the country as a regional hub for responsible AI deployment. Moderated by **Mr. Karim Amor**, the discussion brought together leaders from government, industry, smart cities, consulting, and enterprise technology:

- **Dr. Ghita Mezzour**, Founder & CEO, DecisiveAI; Former Minister of Digital Transition and Administration Reform
- **Mr. Peter Chun**, President, World Smart Cities Forum; Former Senior Advisor to the President of Korea on Industry 4.0
- **Ms. Majda Moumni**, CEO, OCP Solutions
- **Mr. François Foglia**, Director, C2F2 Sàrl; Innosuisse mentor
- **Mr. Badr Boussabat**, International AI speaker; Bestselling AI Author and Senior Advisor
- **Mr. Hicham Iraqi Houssaini**, Managing Director, SAP Francophone Africa

The panel emphasized that AI is no longer optional for Morocco’s industrial base. It is becoming a prerequisite for maintaining competitiveness, improving resilience and sustainability, and safeguarding digital and data sovereignty. At the same time, speakers repeatedly stressed that AI transformation is not just a technological upgrade: it requires new governance approaches, stronger bridges between universities and industry, and a deliberate focus on ethics, talent, and human responsibility.



Watch the full recording from <https://youtu.be/zoDyNHnahzY?si=IRlenxuJ2BkArOSe>



Panel 2: Ethics, Governance, and Regulation in AI Development

The second panel on “*AI Governance and Regulation*” examined how countries can design regulatory frameworks that balance innovation, risk management, and societal trust in artificial intelligence. The discussion focused on the global nature of AI, the need for internationally aligned approaches, and the challenge of translating ethical principles into effective and practical governance mechanisms. Moderated by **Mr. Nasser Kettani**, the panel brought together experts from international organizations, legal practice, regional policy initiatives, national government, and the private sector:

- **Dr. Ming Kuok Lim**, Advisor for Communication and Information for UNESCO Regional Office for the Maghreb in Rabat
- **Ms. Crystal Dubois**, Attorney-at-Law, Bonnard Lawson International Law Firm
- **Mr. Anys Boukli**, CEO at Digital Partners SA
- **Mr. Abdelali Madani**, Head of the Regulation and Standardization Department, Digital Development Agency (ADD)
- **Mr. Mehdi Taher**, Head of public policy MENA, META

The panel highlighted that effective AI governance is not about restricting innovation, but about enabling responsible and sustainable adoption. Speakers emphasized the importance of clear problem-driven regulation, alignment with international standards and ethical frameworks, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure that AI contributes to economic development, protects human rights, and supports inclusive growth without disadvantaging emerging ecosystems.



Watch the full recording from <https://youtu.be/dsl5ga6Grp8?si=Sw8XDRKwyvrpYpkC>

Panel 3: AI for Social Good and Inclusive Job Creation

The third panel on “*Pro-Social and Human-Centered AI*” explored how artificial intelligence can act as a catalyst for social transformation, inclusion, and human development rather than merely technological acceleration. Discussions focused on AI as a form of societal infrastructure, raising fundamental questions about access, equity, human agency, and the responsibility to ensure that AI strengthens social cohesion and shared prosperity. Moderated by **Ms. Marielle Sander**, the panel brought together voices from academia, policy, innovation, and civil society:

- **Ms. Cornelia C. Walther**, Thought Leader Bridging Humanity and Technology
- **Ms. Aawatif Hayar**, Expert in Frugal Social Smart cities and communities, Former Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration, and Family
- **Ms. Loubna Bouarfa**, Machine Learning Scientist, Entrepreneur, and Serial Founder of AI Startups; University of Cambridge
- **Mr. Amine Bensaid**, President of AlAkhawayn University in Ifrane
- **Ms. Vida Hamd**, Head of Public Policy MENA, META

The panel emphasized that the future of AI depends on deliberate human choices. Speakers highlighted the need for AI systems that are inclusive, energy-efficient, culturally grounded, and outcome-driven, while reinforcing education, truth, and human connection. Rather than pursuing scale or performance alone, the discussion underscored that meaningful AI adoption requires ethical intent, open collaboration, and governance models that place human dignity, agency, and societal benefit at the center of technological progress.



Watch the full recording from https://youtu.be/Ge0GEY0Zl9s?si=0w6sBn_gStGZmR5g

The second edition of the Morocco's AI Forum

Building on the first edition of the forum, which examined **AI policies at the intersection of innovation and regulation**, this second edition deepens the conversation by focusing on **Women's Leadership in AI: From Inclusion to Impact**. While the initial edition addressed how governance frameworks can enable responsible AI, this new chapter shifts attention to *who shapes AI systems and to what end*, recognizing leadership as a decisive factor in translating policy into real-world outcomes.

This second edition serves as a strategic platform dedicated to strengthening women's leadership in artificial intelligence in **Morocco and the broader Global South**. Its launch at this pivotal moment reflects the growing recognition that AI's societal impact depends on the diversity, values, and perspectives embedded in its design and governance. As AI increasingly influences decision-making, access to opportunities, and the distribution of resources, the central question is no longer simply women's inclusion in AI, but whether AI delivers **meaningful, equitable, and ethical impact** for women and society as a whole.

Grounded in the conviction that women's leadership is a catalyst for impact, the forum moves beyond symbolic representation toward outcomes. Adopting a **Women in AI** perspective, it recognizes women as designers, policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and users of AI, whose transversal leadership across governance, innovation, ethics, and sectoral applications can drive more inclusive economic growth, address structural inequalities, and ensure that AI systems serve human development rather than narrow interests.

The Challenge We Face

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a prospective technology; it is actively reshaping economies, public policies, and social structures. However, a potential strong bias resulting in women underrepresentation across the key domains that shape AI's trajectory and impact—from the potential impact on **social and ethical dimensions** to reshaping **governance and standards-setting** and redefining a **new organizational leadership** and **decision-making process**.

1

Addressing the Social and Cultural Barriers through AI

Beyond institutions, structural, cultural, and socio-economic factors continue to constrain women's full participation in AI ecosystems. These barriers perpetuate gender disparities and prevent women from contributing their unique insights to technology that affects everyone.

2

Governance Deficit: Women's role?

Women's participation remains limited in AI governance structures, regulatory processes, and standards-setting bodies. Their underrepresentation in these critical forums means that policies, regulations, and ethical frameworks often lack the inclusive perspectives necessary for equitable AI development.

3

Pioneers in AI Leadership

Women role models in executive, technical, and board-level positions where AI strategies, investments, and products are paving the way. This trend opens perspectives in critical decision-making processes that shape the future of AI innovation and deployment across industries and sectors.

Morocco's Strategic Context

Morocco's New Development Model (NDM), launched in 2021, is considered one of the main reference frameworks guiding the country's long-term development vision toward inclusive, sustainable, and resilient growth by 2035. It provides a powerful framework for women's inclusive leadership, emphasizing human capital development, equal opportunity, and women's active participation and leadership as drivers of economic and social transformation.

Women Shaping Social Responsibility and Inclusion

Empowering women to leadership positions is both a societal imperative and a powerful lever for achieving productivity, competitiveness, and shared prosperity. The NDM recognizes that women's leadership in technology and innovation is essential for Morocco's economic transformation and sustainable development goals.

Women Influencing Governance

Strong emphasis on social cohesion, trust in institutions, territorial equity, and ethical governance are foundations for sustainable development. This includes empowering women to actively influence policy, regulations, and ethical frameworks that shape Morocco's technological future and ensure inclusive decision-making processes.

Education as an Enabler for Women's Leadership

Education is viewed not only as individual advancement but as a strategic national investment, with growing recognition of women's crucial role in leading innovation, driving strategy, and implementing solutions across high-value sectors. The NDM positions education as the foundation for empowering women to take leadership roles in emerging technologies like AI.

Morocco's Strategic Context

Adopted in 2020, **Maroc Attamkine** is the **National Integrated Program for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls**, setting a clear national ambition to strengthen women's participation in the labor market and economic life by 2030. The program targets an increase in the **female employment rate to 30% by 2030**, compared to 19% in 2020, through coordinated public action. The program focuses on removing structural barriers to women's economic participation by combining legal reforms, institutional coordination, fiscal incentives, and targeted initiatives such as **Akadimiya Attamkine** and **Douar Attamkine**. It emphasizes access to skills, employability, entrepreneurship, and leadership as key levers for sustainable empowerment.



Morocco's Strategic Context

Morocco's **Digital Morocco 2030** strategy positions digital transformation as a lever for inclusive and sustainable development, with a strong focus on women and youth through digital inclusion, advanced digital and AI skills, and leadership in innovation ecosystems. By prioritizing access, skills, and leadership, the strategy recognizes women's empowerment in digital and AI as essential to equitable growth and long-term digital sovereignty. The **AI Made in Morocco** initiative, launched in January 2026, marks a strategic step toward building sovereign, homegrown AI capabilities aligned with Morocco's values and societal needs, while fostering local innovation, research, and entrepreneurship. Ensuring women's full participation is essential to promoting ethical, human-centered AI and to strengthening inclusive national and regional leadership in AI for development.

The Forum directly supports these national ambitions by serving as a platform that:



**Advances women's leadership
in AI governance, innovation,
and decision-making**



**Translates Digital Morocco
2030's inclusion objectives into
concrete action and
partnerships**



**Contributes to shaping an "AI
Made in Morocco" ecosystem
that is inclusive, ethical, and
globally competitive**

Forum Objectives

The Forum is conceived not as a one-off event, but as a sustained knowledge-sharing and action-oriented platform designed to create lasting impact across countries and generations.



Challenge Bias

Address social norms and gender bias in AI systems to ensure culturally aware, socially responsible technology that maximizes positive human impact.



Address Barriers

Tackle cultural, institutional, and structural obstacles specific to Morocco and the Global South that prevent women from fully participating in AI ecosystems.



Strengthen Governance

Encourage women's participation in AI governance, standards, and policy-making bodies to ensure inclusive and equitable frameworks for AI development.



Promote Leadership

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



Facilitate Exchange

Enable South–South and South–North knowledge sharing and collaboration, creating bridges for learning and partnership across regions.



Build Foundation

Lay groundwork for **scalable initiatives including competitions, hackathons, and mentorship programs** that will extend the forum's impact beyond the event itself.

Expected Outcomes



1

Women-Driven Policy & Governance

Concrete policy and leadership recommendations, driven by women's insights, to influence AI standards, governance, and ensure socially responsible AI development tailored to cultural and regional contexts.



2

Empowered Network of Women AI Leaders

An expanding Governance and Advisory Board of women AI leaders and allies, empowered to drive AI innovation within organizations, influence global standards, and shape inclusive AI across their countries.



3

Foundations for Women's AI Impact

Strong foundations for the launch of action-oriented initiatives including competitions & hackathons, mentorship, and capacity-building programs, all designed to further women's agency in leading AI innovation, influencing governance, and shaping inclusive AI.

Three Thematic Pillars

The forum is structured around **three interconnected thematic pillars** that address the full spectrum of women's leadership in AI—from **societal trends and challenges to institutional governance and organizational power**. Each panel brings together diverse perspectives to explore challenges, share solutions, and chart pathways forward.



Panel 1 — Women grounding AI: Social Norms, Gender Bias, and Human Impact

Focus: Culture, society, and ethical implications

Purpose: Examine how women's leadership shapes AI systems that are socially responsible, culturally aware, and designed to reduce bias and maximize positive societal impact. Address the intersection of technology, culture, and human values.



Panel 2 — Women governing AI: Standards, Governance, and Trust

Focus: Systems, standards, and institutional influence

Purpose: Explore how women leaders contribute to AI governance, policy, and standards-setting, ensuring ethical, inclusive, and trustworthy AI development. Examine the mechanisms for increasing women's participation in regulatory and governance bodies.



Panel 3 — Women leading AI: Decision-Making Power and Organizational Transformation at Scale

Focus: Power and leadership inside organizations

Purpose: Highlight how women in executive, technical, and strategic roles influence AI innovation, drive performance, and shape organizational decisions. Explore the pathways and practices that enable women to rise to leadership positions in AI-driven environments.

Women grounding AI: Social Norms, Gender Bias, and Human Impact

Purpose

Examine how AI systems can contribute to reduce bias by becoming socially responsible, culturally aware, and designed to. This panel emphasizes the role of women in ensuring AI benefits society, respects human values, and addresses gender and social inequities.

By centering human impact and ethical considerations, this discussion explores how women's leadership can guide AI development toward outcomes that are not only technically sophisticated but also socially beneficial and culturally appropriate for diverse communities.

Key Questions

How can women's leadership help identify and mitigate gender bias in AI datasets and algorithms?

In what ways do cultural and social norms influence AI design and deployment in Morocco and the Global South?

How can AI be leveraged to address societal challenges such as education, health, and inclusion?

What ethical frameworks and community engagement practices can women leaders champion to ensure responsible AI adoption?

Women governing AI: Standards, Governance, and Trust

Purpose

Explore how women leaders contribute to the design, implementation, and oversight of AI governance frameworks, regulatory standards, and institutional policies. The panel emphasizes the importance of inclusive leadership in building trustworthy and ethical AI systems that align with societal values.

This conversation examines the critical role women play in ensuring AI development is guided by robust governance structures, transparent standards, and accountability mechanisms that serve the public interest.

Key Questions

Why is women's participation in AI governance and standards-setting critical for inclusive innovation?

How do women leaders influence AI policy at organizational, national, and international levels?

What mechanisms can increase women's visibility and decision-making power in AI governance bodies?

How can public and private institutions collaborate to ensure gender-balanced leadership in AI standards and regulation?

Women leading AI: Decision-Making Power and Organizational Transformation at Scale

Purpose

Highlight how women in executive, technical, and strategic roles influence AI innovation, drive organizational performance, and shape critical business and technology decisions. This panel explores the pathways, strategies, and organizational practices that enable women to rise to leadership positions in AI-driven environments.

Through compelling case studies and evidence-based insights, panelists will demonstrate the tangible business value of women's leadership in AI, showcasing how diverse leadership teams drive better outcomes, foster innovation, and create more inclusive organizational cultures.

Key Questions

How do women leaders shape AI strategy, product development, and investment decisions within organizations?

What evidence links women-led AI teams to improved innovation, collaboration, and performance outcomes?

Which organizational structures and cultural practices best support women in leadership roles?

How can companies mentor and promote women into executive and board-level AI positions?

Program

09:00 - 09:30

Welcome Coffee

Networking and registration

09:30 - 10:00

Opening Ceremony

- **Prof. Mohammed Khalil:** President, MoroccoAI
- **Ms. Anette Funk:** Head of Project WoMENA, GIZ
- **Mr. Gian Wieck:** Deputy Head of Development Cooperation at the German Embassy in Rabat
- **Dr. Alessandra Sala:** Global President of Women in AI; Co-Chair of UNESCO Women for Ethical AI

10:00 - 10:20

Keynote Speaker: Ms. Anita Bhatia

At the table and in the room: shaping AI to be more inclusive and impactful

10:20 - 11:30

Panel 1: Women Grounding AI: Social Norms, Gender Bias, and Human Impact

- **Prof. Jesko Hentschel:** Affiliate Professor, Faculty of Governance, Economic and Social Sciences, UM6P
- **Prof. Aawatif Hayar:** Expert in Frugal Social Smart Cities and Communities; Former Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration, and Family
- **Ms. Myriem Noussairi:** Head of Office - UN Women Morocco Country Office
- **Ms. Marielle Sander:** Representative, United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA
- **Prof. Abdessamad Fatmi:** Founder and CEO, Erudite Counseling
- **Prof. Cornelia C. Walther:** Senior Fellow, Harvard Learning and Innovation Lab

11:30 - 12:00

Coffee Break

Informal networking and discussions

12:00 - 13:10

Panel 2: Women governing AI: Standards, Governance, and Trust

- **Ms. Salma Karim:** Head of Human Capital & Innovation Department, ADD
- **Dr. Maha Gmira:** CTO at Solution AI
- **Dr. Ulrike Till:** Director of the IP and Frontier Technologies Division at WIPO
- **Ms. Bridget Shoo:** Counsellor (Frontier Technologies), WTO
- **Mr. Sasha Cadariu:** Director of AI Strategy and Ethics, The Integrity Group
- **Ms. Clara Hawking:** Executive Director, Kompas Education

13:10 - 13:30

Demo Session

- **Ahlam Tarik:** AI Engineering Student
- **Aya Cherqi:** Big Data & AI Engineering Student
- **Hiba Benkaddour:** AI Engineering Student

13:30 - 15:00

Lunch & Networking

Building connections for future collaboration

15:00 - 16:10

Panel 3: Women Leading AI: Decision-Making Power and Organizational Transformation at Scale

- **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 Tech Morocco
- **Ms. Nezha Larhrissi:** President & Co-Founder, eSTEM Morocco
- **Ms. Khadija Khartit:** Founder, Sohaara
- **Ms. Patricia Souza da Cunha Oliveira:** President, Women4Cyber Luxembourg

16:10 - 16:30

Fireside Chat

- **Her Royal Highness Princess Katarina**
- **Dr. Ghita Mezzour:** Founder and CEO, DecisiveAI; Former Minister of Digital Transition and Administration Reform

16:30 - 17:00

Closing Ceremony

Constitution of the Board, key takeaways, and future announcements

Opening Ceremony

09:30 – 10:00



Prof. Mohammed Khalil
President, MoroccoAI



Ms. Anette Funk
Head of Project WoMENA, GIZ



Mr. Gian Wieck
Deputy Head of Development
Cooperation at the German
Embassy in Rabat



Dr. Alessandra Sala
Global President of Women in AI;
Co-Chair of UNESCO Women for
Ethical AI

Keynote Speaker: *"At the table and in the room: shaping AI to be more inclusive and impactful"*

10:00 – 10:20



Ms. Anita Bhatia

Former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director at UN Women; Visiting Fellow at King's College; and Board Member for various entities

Ms. Bhatia is the founder of Impact Commons, a strategic advisory, advocacy convening and capacity building organization. Until April 2023, she served as the United Nations' Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for UN Women, the flagship entity in the United Nations system charged with advancing gender equality and women's empowerment globally. In that role, she led external stakeholder relations with both public and private sector partners, fundraising, communications, strategy planning, as well as finance and HR. In this role, she led the organization's fundraising efforts successfully securing a significant increase and diversification of the organization's funding base. She also led the development of new strategic alliances with international financial institutions, impact investors, corporates, and others. She has been a leading advocate for a stronger focus on gender-lens investing and was instrumental in the publication of globally recognized standards for gender bonds through the publication "Bonds to Bridge the Gender Gap: A Practitioner's Guide to Using Sustainable Debt for Gender Equality" in partnership with IFC and the International Capital Markets Association.

Ms. Bhatia has served as a member of the Board of Governors of the United Nations System Staff College and currently serves on the Board of the United Nations Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF) and as a Commissioner in the Lancet Commission on Gender-based Violence and Maltreatment of Young People.

Prior to UN Women, Ms. Bhatia had a distinguished career spanning 30+ years in the World Bank Group, including the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) serving in different leadership and management positions. She served as the Director for Development Partner Relations at the World Bank, Director of Partnerships and Advisory Services Operations at the IFC and Head of IFC's Latin America Advisory Operations among other roles. In addition to Latin America, she has worked in Africa, Europe, Central Asia and South and East Asia.

Ms. Bhatia holds a BA in History from Calcutta University, an MA in Political Science from Yale University and a Juris Doctor in Law from Georgetown University.

Panel 1: Women Grounding AI

10:20 – 11:30



Prof. Jesko Hentschel

Affiliate Professor, Faculty of Governance, Economic and Social Sciences, UM6P



Prof. Aawatif Hayar

Expert in Frugal Social Smart Cities and Communities; Former Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration, and Family



Ms. Myriem Ouchen Noussairi

Head of Office - UN Women Morocco Country Office



Ms. Marielle Sander

Representative, United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA



Prof. Abdessamad Fatmi

Founder and CEO, Erudite Counseling



Prof. Cornelia C. Walther

Senior Fellow, Harvard Learning and Innovation Lab

Panel 2: Women Governing AI

12:00 – 13:10



Ms. Salma Karim

Head of Human Capital & Innovation
Department, ADD



Dr. Maha Gmira

CTO at Solution AI



Dr. Ulrike Till

Director of the IP and Frontier
Technologies Division at WIPO



Ms. Bridget Shoo

Counsellor (Frontier Technologies),
WTO



Mr. Sasha Cadariu

Director of AI Strategy and Ethics, The
Integrity Group



Ms. Clara Hawking

Executive Director, Kompass Education

Demo Session

13:10 – 13:30



Ahlam Tarik

AI Engineering Student

Ahlam Tarik is a 4th-year AI Engineering student at UEMF. Her research interests center on trustworthy AI and clinical machine learning, with ongoing supervised research on Alzheimer's disease progression modeling. She won the 1st Prize for Scientific Excellence at the AgorAI Spring School 2026 (EMINES/UM6P, École Polytechnique, OCP, EMSI) for my work on trustworthy cardiac arrhythmia classification, and the national "Coup de cœur Jazari" award at RamadanIA 2026 (Ministry of Digital Transition, 4,000+ participants). She was selected among the top 3.8% for the Morocco AI Summer School 2025.



Aya Cherqi

Big Data & AI Engineering Student

Aya Cherqi is a final-year Big Data & AI engineering student at the International University of Rabat (UIR), focusing on generative AI and intelligent systems. Her work explores the intersection of computer vision, speech technologies, and natural language processing to develop AI solutions with meaningful real-world and social impact.



Hiba Benkaddour

AI Engineering Student

Hiba Benkaddour is a final-year Big Data and AI engineering student at Université Internationale de Rabat (UIR), with a strong focus on applied artificial intelligence. She is particularly interested in building AI solutions that have a direct real-world impact.

Panel 3: Women Leading AI

15:00 – 16:10



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 Tech Morocco



Ms. Nezha Larhrissi

President & Co-Founder, eSTEM Morocco



Ms. Khadija Khartit

Founder, Sohaara



Ms. Patricia Souza da Cunha Oliveira

President, Women4Cyber Luxembourg

Fireside Chat: *"What edible frameworks in community engagement practices and women leaders champion to ensure responsible AI?"*

16:10 – 16:30



Her Royal Highness Princess Katarina

Princess Katarina is a member of the Karadordevic royal family and an international businesswoman specializing in etiquette and decorum courses. Her Royal Highness has built a global career promoting standards of excellence in personal and professional conduct, working with institutions and individuals across sectors. In addition to her business activities, she is actively engaged in philanthropic initiatives, supporting charitable causes in health, education, and social development. Through her work, Princess Katarina contributes to advancing leadership, cultural diplomacy, and social impact on the international stage.



Dr. Ghita Mezzour

Founder and CEO, DecisiveAI;
Former Minister of Digital
Transition and Administration
Reform

Dr. Ghita Mezzour is the Founder and CEO of DecisiveAI, a company dedicated to driving AI transformation by supporting organizations throughout the entire journey — from identifying needs to developing AI solutions and delivering measurable impact. She previously served as Morocco's Minister of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform (2021-2024). Under her leadership, the number of Moroccan youth pursuing university studies in digital fields, such as AI, big data, and cybersecurity, doubled. Major multinationals established tech innovation and R&D centers in Morocco. In September 2024, she launched the Digital Morocco 2030 Strategy, aiming to position Morocco as a regional digital hub by 2030. Prior to her ministerial role, Dr. Mezzour was an academic and entrepreneur, recognized for leading high-impact projects in artificial intelligence and data analytics funded by international organizations such as the World Bank, USAID, the NATO and the United Nations. She holds a PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University in the United States, as well as Master's and bachelor's degrees in communication systems from EPFL in Switzerland.

Speakers



Prof. Jesko Hentschel

Affiliate Professor, Faculty of
Governance, Economic and Social
Sciences, UM6P

Jesko Hentschel is a development economist and senior advisor on poverty reduction, jobs, and human development. He is an Affiliate Professor at the Faculty of Governance, Social and Economic Sciences (FGSES) at University Mohamed VI Polytechnic in Rabat. He joined the faculty after a 32-year career at the World Bank, where he served most recently as Regional Country Director for the Maghreb (2019–2024) and for Latin America’s Southern Cone (2014–2019). His field positions spanned Argentina, Madagascar, Morocco, and Turkey. He is also a Visting Professor of Practice at the Department of International Development, London School of Economics and Political Science, and a Research Fellow with IZA, the Institute of Labor Economics.

Originally from Hamburg, Germany, Jesko’s work has centered on poverty reduction, employment, and human development. As Deputy Director of the flagship World Development Report 2013 on Jobs, he helped introduce a new framework that applied a public economics lens to employment, moving the discourse beyond traditional labor market analysis.

Jesko consulted for the Inter-American Development Bank, DFID (now UK’s FCDO), and various UN organizations. He has also lectured at the University of Potsdam and published on social science research methods, skills development, and equity. His current research interests focus on the politics around social policy reforms in the Global South. He holds graduate degrees in social policy as well as agricultural and international economics from the London School of Economics, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Konstanz.

Speakers



Prof. Aawatif Hayar

Expert in Frugal Social Smart Cities and Communities; Former Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration, and Family

Aawatif Hayar is the Former Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration, and Family of Morocco. She was President of Hassan II University Casablanca 2019-2021. Since 2016, she has served as the Scientific Advisor of Smart City Expo Casablanca and General Co-Chair of IEEE international Smart Cities Conference. In 2011, she served as a professor at the UH2C. She is also a member of the Casablanca “Avant-garde” City think tank. She was also selected by the African Innovation Foundation as one of the top ten innovative African women in 2015. She was the first Moroccan to receive the degree of “Agrégation” in Electrical Engineering with honors from ENS Cachan in 1992. She received a “Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies” in signal processing image and communications and a degree in Engineering in Telecommunications Systems and Networks from ENSEEIHT de Toulouse in 1997. She earned her PhD with honors from Institut National Polytechnique in Toulouse in 2001.

Speakers



Ms. Myriem Ouchen Noussairi

Head of Office - UN Women Morocco
Country Office

Myriem Ouchen Noussairi is the Head of Office of the Morocco Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

With over 20 years of experience in the United Nations system, she brings extensive expertise in development program management and analysis. Ms. Noussairi joined UN Women in March 2020 as a Programme Specialist. Prior to that, she served as a Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst at the United Nations Development System's Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) in Morocco from 2013 to 2020. From 2012 to 2014, she was responsible for the Biodiversity and Sustainable Development portfolio within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), working closely with the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Before joining the United Nations system, Ms. Noussairi worked in the private sector as a consultant, supporting companies in improving their compliance and environmental performance with a focus on environmental certification (ISO 14001).

She holds a Master's degree in Environmental Science and Policy with a specialization in Risk Management from Clark University (Worcester, Massachusetts).

Speakers



Ms. Marielle Sander

Representative, United Nations
Population Fund - UNFPA

Marielle Sander, a Swedish national, is the Country Representative for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Morocco. Marielle is a development practitioner with more than two decades of experience in international development. An advocate for human rights, especially the rights of women and girls, her career includes fighting human trafficking and labor exploitation in Eastern Europe as Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration and in South-East Asia with The Asia Foundation. As Deputy Representative for UNICEF, she led the work on children's rights and rights of children living with disabilities in Russia, and since joining UNFPA in 2015, she works with Governments to strengthen and leverage demographic data to ensure reproductive health and rights of women, girls, and adolescents. In Morocco, UNFPA works on youth empowerment, women and girls' wellbeing, reproductive health, and population dynamics. Currently, UNFPA is also partnering on AI-based research in Morocco for women's health. A creative influence, Marielle's work on strategic and innovative communications focus has been recognized by UNFPA (People Culture Award 2022) and through international award-winning documentaries linking cultural expression, socioeconomic development, and indigenous identity. Marielle has served with UNFPA in Haiti, Eritrea, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, and, since 2023, in Morocco.

Speakers



Prof. Abdessamad Fatmi

Founder and CEO, Erudite Counseling

Dr. Abdessamad Fatmi holds a PhD from the University of Liverpool, UK. He is a seasoned education and AI expert with an accumulated experience of 30 years in higher education executive offices, project management, and research in Morocco, Spain, the UAE, and the UK. Dr. Fatmi served as Professor and Dean in two prestigious Higher Education institutions in Morocco (The International University of Rabat and Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane). He also served as senior advisor to two education ministers and was in charge of strategy, research, and international cooperation. Dr. Fatmi was also closely involved in the design process of the 2015- 2030 strategic vision of the Moroccan Ministry of Education. Dr. Fatmi also held positions in other international institutions, such as the University of Tarragona, the University of Liverpool, and other prestigious institutions. He also advised many international institutions, such as the UM6P and the Arab Water Academy. He most recently led the implementation of the Higher Education Partnership-Morocco, funded by the USAID and implemented by Arizona State University. He recently authored a book titled "The Dawn of Artificial General Intelligence: Genesis and Implications for the Arab World".

Speakers



Prof. Cornelia C. Walther

Senior Fellow, Harvard Learning and
Innovation Lab

Dr. Cornelia C. Walther is a humanitarian leader with 20+ years at the UN, driving social change. Now, as a senior fellow at the Wharton School and Sunway University, she pioneers research on ProSocial AI and hybrid Intelligence via the global POZE alliance to build "Agency amid AI for All." She is the author of six books and a contributor on Forbes and Psychology Today. Her new book, Artificial Intelligence for Inspired Action (AI4IA), comes out in December.

Speakers



Ms. Salma Karim

Head of Human Capital & Innovation
Department, ADD

Salma KARIM is a public-sector innovation leader with 18 years of experience at the intersection of artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and human capital development.

At the Digital Development Agency (ADD), the Moroccan government entity responsible for implementing the national digital strategy, she leads initiatives focused on AI skills development, digital education, innovation ecosystems, and future-ready workforce transformation.

She has played a key role in advancing Morocco's AI ecosystem, notably contributing since 2019 to the national AI and Big Data applied research program Al Khawarizmi, which mobilized more than 200 researchers across 15 academic institutions and generated 45 applied AI projects addressing local sectoral challenges.

A strong advocate of AI literacy as a societal capability, she leads national capacity-building initiatives including Academia Raqmya (2022), Morocco's inclusive digital learning platform and member of the International Telecommunication Union Digital Transformation Centres network. The platform integrates dedicated AI and data learning tracks and has supported over 55,000 online learners, while more than 20,000 citizens have been trained in person in digital and AI-related skills through courses, masterclasses, and public awareness programs.

She also contributed to the launch in 2020 of North Africa's first immersive technology training center in partnership with USAID and a US technology partner, training more than 2,000 young talents in AR/VR/XR technologies and fostering locally relevant innovation use cases.

Salma KARIM holds a Master's degree in Consulting and Senior Management from the National School of Business & Management (ENCG) Tangier and Executive certifications from the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (Future Government Leaders Program delivered with the UAE Prime Minister's Office and the Arab Administrative Development Organization), as well as a Social Innovation Management executive certificate from Ecole Centrale de Casablanca.

Speakers



Dr. Maha Gmira

CTO at Solution AI

Dr. Maha GMIRA is CTO at Solution AI. Previously, she was Expert specializing in Artificial Intelligence Strategies and Gender at the United Nations for Development. She also served as the head of the Artificial Intelligence engineering school at EUROMED University of Fez. Her educational background includes a bachelor's degree in engineering, a Master's in Mathematics, and a PhD in Artificial Intelligence from Polytechnique Montréal, Canada. In November 2021, the African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC), an entity of the African Union, honored Prof. Maha Gmira with a Flagship Project. In 2022, she obtained a Horizon Europe project, which deals with artificial intelligence in Agriculture, with a budget of more than 1.4 million Euros.

Speakers



Dr. Ulrike Till

Director of the IP and Frontier Technologies Division at WIPO

Dr. Ulrike Till is the director of the IP and Frontier Technologies Division at WIPO. She is an experienced IP and patent lawyer with significant commercial background and exposure to complex international patent litigation, data exclusivity issues, commercial negotiations, competition law, settlements and agreements. In her current role, Ulrike focus on the wide reaching IP policy implications arising from digitalization, industry 4.0 and frontier technologies. Ulrike is qualified both as an English solicitor and German Rechtsanwalt and has practiced in both jurisdictions. She has a technical background with a PhD in Chemistry, management training (MBA Oxford) and many years experience in private practice as well as in-house.

Speakers



Ms. Bridget Shoo

Counsellor (Frontier Technologies),
WTO

Bridget Shoo is a Counsellor in the Economics Research and Statistics Division at the World Trade Organization (WTO). She is part of the newly established Digital Trade and Frontier Technologies Unit, where she works on research and initiatives related to frontier technologies in the WTO, with a special emphasis on artificial intelligence (AI). She was previously at the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry where she led initiatives to grow Singapore's bilateral economic relations with Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, as well as developed policies to strengthen Singapore's supply chain resilience and increase industry adoption of AI.

Speakers



Mr. Sasha Cadariu

Director of AI Strategy and Ethics, The Integrity Group

Sasha serves as Director of AI Strategy and Ethics at The Integrity Group, where his work spans AI ethics and governance architecture, safety strategy for high-impact deployments, and AI literacy programs for direct impact. Previously at Lumenova AI, he ran adversarial testing and vulnerability discovery experiments across commercial frontier systems, developed and implemented internal governance and safety frameworks, and led AI policy analysis and thought leadership initiatives. His approach bridges immediate governance concerns, practical AI experimentation, and longer-term existential risk considerations, remaining grounded in epistemological frameworks that prioritize rigorous thinking about AI ethics over prescriptive principles. He began his career as a researcher at the Center for AI Safety, where his work centered on multi-agent dynamics, systemic and existential risk, and AI ethics. He presently holds an MSc in Bioethics from King's College London and a BA in Philosophy and Cognitive Psychology from Bates College.

Speakers



Ms. Clara Hawking

Executive Director, Kompass Education

Clara Hawking is Co-founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a global consultancy specializing in AI governance, ethics, and policy in education. With a background in computer science and a specialization in AI ethics, she advises governments, international organizations, and education systems on the responsible and lawful integration of AI. Clara is a frequent speaker at global forums, including UNESCO, OECD, and leading academic institutions, and contributes to research on future-ready education and child-centered AI governance. Her work focuses on aligning innovation with human rights, institutional accountability, and long-term societal impact.

Speakers



Prof. Ikram Chairi

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

Ikram CHAIRI is an Assistant Professor at the College of Computing, Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P). Her research focuses on data analysis and machine learning, with a particular interest in developing novel training algorithms that address the challenges of limited or low-quality data. She earned an engineering degree in Statistics and Data Warehousing in 2010 and a PhD in Machine Learning and Data Analysis in 2014 from the University Abdelmalek Essaâdi. In 2015, she was among the two researchers from North Africa selected for the Erasmus-Mundus Postdoctoral Fellowship at the GIAA Lab (Applied Artificial Intelligence Group) at Carlos III University of Madrid, where she contributed to the development of an intelligent conversational agent for the Spanish railway company RENFE. Dr. Chairi currently collaborates with the Operations Research Center (ORC) at MIT to deploy AI models for medical applications at Hartford Hospital. She has led several applied research projects with industrial partners and played an active role in organizing major scientific events promoting AI in Africa, such as Applied Machine Learning Days (AMLDD) Africa and North African Summer School in ML and AI (NASSMA) with Google Deepmind.

Speakers



Dr. Sofia Ghacham

Women in AI Morocco Ambassador

Dr. Sofia Ghacham is an ICT engineer with over 16 years of experience in digital transformation and railway systems.

Through her experience in complex project environments, she brings a practical perspective on how technology decisions are shaped within organizations, particularly in large-scale systems.

She is the Founder and Ambassador of Women in AI Morocco, where she works to advance inclusive AI ecosystems and support the emergence of women in leadership roles across technology and innovation fostering diverse leadership that drives better decision-making and sustainable organizational transformation.

Speakers



Ms. Ranya Alaoui

Country Director of Women in Tech
Morocco

Ranya Alaoui is a senior institutional affairs and reputation strategist with over 14 years of experience at the intersection of technology, innovation ecosystems, and public-private dialogue in Morocco and across the African continent.

At one of Africa's leading research and innovation universities, she leads strategic partnerships, international outreach, and thought leadership initiatives within the Entrepreneurship & Venturing division contributing to the university's positioning as a continental hub for deep-tech and startup development.

A pioneer of Morocco's tech ecosystem since 2014, Ranya has shaped institutional narratives for some of the country's most defining moments in the digital economy, from the early days of e-commerce governance to the emergence of the startup ecosystem. Her distinctly social sciences approach to technology grounded in ethics, inclusion, and long-term societal impact has made her a trusted voice at the intersection of innovation and human development.

As Country Director of Women in Tech Morocco, the official Moroccan chapter of the world's foremost organization advancing gender parity in STEM, she leads initiatives connecting women professionals, students, and entrepreneurs with tech opportunities and advocates for Morocco's positioning as a model for female leadership in technology across Africa and the MENA region.

Ranya is a member of Morocco's inaugural 40 Under 40 cohort, designated Top 10 Women in PR in Morocco by PRAfriwaWeek, and has been featured as a reference voice on Morocco's innovation trajectory.

Speakers



Ms. Nezha Larhrissi

President & Co-Founder, eSTEM
Morocco

Nezha Larhrissi is the President and Co-Founder of eSTEM Morocco, a nationally recognized non-profit that has directly reached over 13,400 girls and youth to close digital and gender gaps. She launched Titrit, a flagship EdTech platform blending STEM, self-leadership, and project-based learning, and serves on the World Bank Civil Society Advisory Group for Morocco. With 27 years of international experience across 40 countries, she has held senior leadership roles at Signify and Nokia Siemens Networks and served as Senior Advisor to Morocco's Minister of Environment during COP21 and COP22. A certified trainer in Generative and Agentic AI, she holds an engineering master's in telecommunications and is a TechWomen and HP Digital Equity Accelerator alumna. A passionate mentor and mother of two, she brings strategic depth to education transformation, paired with a love for rally racing and mountain hiking.

Speakers



Ms. Khadija Khartit
Founder, Sohaara

Khadija Khartit is the Founder of Sohaara, an AI-driven platform designed to bridge the “last mile ” between talent, opportunity, and economic participation. Through integrated upskilling, intelligent tools, and real-time opportunity matching, Sohaara enables professionals and entrepreneurs, particularly in emerging markets, to access careers, build ventures, and connect to global ecosystems.

At the core of Sohaara is “Soha, ” an AI-powered companion that guides users toward timely, high-impact opportunities across employment, entrepreneurship, and funding. The platform also integrates AI-powered upskilling tutors and a build environment that enables users to move from problem to prototype, positioning AI as a practical tool for economic inclusion.

Khadija brings over 27 years of international experience across the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco, spanning investment banking, strategy, and executive leadership. She became the first female CEO of an investment bank in Saudi Arabia, where she co-led a \$175M landmark transaction and advised on multiple cross-border deals. Her experience includes working with global organizations such as UBS, Shell, and American Airlines, as well as being part of major deal arranging including blocks of Lyft, Spotify, and Dropbox. She has served as Adjunct Faculty in Entrepreneurship and Fintech at Cornell University and Brandeis University, and contributes as a review board member at Investopedia and fintech expert with Moody’s Learning.

Today, Khadija focuses on how AI can expand access to opportunity, strengthen workforce readiness in high-demand sectors, and enable more inclusive economic systems across growth markets. Her work sits at the intersection of technology, human agency, and economic mobility.

Khadija is a Fulbright scholar and holds an MBA from The Oklahoma State University and a Master of Science in Finance from Boston College. She is fluent in Darija, Arabic, French, and English.

Speakers



Ms. Patricia Souza da Cunha Oliveira
President, Women4Cyber Luxembourg

Patricia Souza da Cunha Oliveira is President of the Women4Cyber Luxembourg Chapter, a non-profit European private foundation with the objective to promote, encourage and support the participation of women in the field of Cybersecurity.

With over 20 years of international experience across leadership development, technology ecosystems, and inclusion strategies, she works at the intersection of cybersecurity, education, and social impact. Patricia designs and leads initiatives that expand access to digital skills, strengthen representation in emerging technologies, and connect institutions, communities, and industry to build sustainable pathways into tech.

Her work focuses on creating spaces where talent can emerge and belonging can grow—transforming inspiration into real opportunities for women and young people.

At Women4Cyber Luxembourg, she champions collaboration across Luxembourg and beyond to promote inclusive leadership in cybersecurity and AI, contributing to global conversations on responsible, human-centered technology and the role of diverse leadership in shaping the future of digital societies.



The **Forum** invites leaders, policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and advocates to join this transformative movement. Together, we will **empower women to lead AI innovation within organizations, influence standards and governance, and shape socially responsible and inclusive AI**—ensuring that technology reflects human values, mitigates bias, and serves all of society.



Date

Tuesday, 14 April 2026



Location

Story Le Carrousel, Rabat – Morocco



Organized by

MoroccoAI and GIZ WoMENA

"Empowering women to lead AI innovation within organizations, influence standards and governance, and shape socially responsible AI is both a societal imperative and a strategic lever for driving innovation, competitiveness, and shared prosperity."

For more information, please contact the organizing committee.

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