

Session Outcome Document : Session 352**I.T.U. – leaving no one behind.... I need a Telephone to connect to yoU**Institute for Digital Culture – University of Leicester (UK) – sjf48@le.ac.uk

Tuesday 7 July 2026 | T103 – Tower Building

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/352>

The session identified a [linked questionnaire](#) which WSIS members and also the session participants were asked to take part in and to share more widely.

NOTE: this stays open for one month (until – 7 August) and you are kindly invited to add your responses.

Opening remarks referred to the fact that society is becoming ‘*digital by default*’ and that even an analogue phone is not available to the older generation who are increasingly finding themselves being “[locked out of essential and life-saving services](#)” (see also the session overview document).

- 1) The session started with Dr Fox discussing her linked research which explored generations and the names we apply to each – for example, *the Silent, the Baby Boomers, Generation X’ers*, etc., relative to their time (in history).
- 2) Dr Fox identified the correlation between technology advancements (related to generations) and human rights; and, questioned whether the fourth industrial revolution called for a fourth generation of human rights.
- 3) She then went on to discuss the rights and limitations applied to certain age groups – for example: the differing age for sexual consent (as young as 14 years in some countries); the age of criminal responsibility – largely stated, as guidance, by the UN as being 16-year and upwards. Whilst, across the world, this is often found lower – including in England and Wales – 10 years, and Scotland – 8 years.
- 4) Dr Fox then discussed the new digital limitations/protections (*rights?*) for the under 16-year-olds, in relation to social media (e.g. Australia and the UK)
- 5) Finally, she homed in on the older generation and how they should be defined and what, if any ways, they needed extra protections in this new and evolving digital-AI age.

These factors were then brought together in the

Key Issues discussed by the panel and then extended to the wider audience, which were:

- Whether the current UN Declaration on Human Rights was suited to the new and advancing digital (AI) age – that is, whether the current approach of the UN Council in the form of the resolution declaring that human rights apply equally offline and online, was sufficient; And/or,

Session 352 – outcome document**I.T.U. – leaving no one behind.... I need a Telephone to connect to yoU**

- If new UN (Digital - AI) Rights (above a Declaration – e.g. a Convention/Treaty) should be considered?
- And whether Digital-AI Rights should be age specific, in this case, for the *older generation*?
- And what we should interpret as the *older generation* – e.g. *as part of the developing UN Treaty for the Rights of the Older Persons*;
- And whether this UN Treaty for Older Persons, should include specific reference to digital rights.

Key Outcomes of the session

- **Key insights and findings:** The session concluded (panelists and participants) with **general agreement** that more action is **URGENTLY** needed across the following:
 - Specific **UN Human Rights for Humanity**, in order to be protected in **this new digital-cyber age which is seeing the explosion of AI embedded in other technologies**.
 - **That the current UN Framework remains insufficient for this purpose and action is critical NOW**
 - That **there is not a one-size fits all in terms of either age specific digital-AI rights** (older or younger generation) whilst it was agreed that on some occasions it is beneficial to include in specific other Treaties/Conventions – e.g. *UN Treaty for the Rights of the Older Persons*
- **A commitment was undertaken between all panelists to collaborate together** (India the South and Europe - the EU and the UK) in order to identify and promote some of the negative consequences and risks of AI development (e.g. social exclusion of some of society; deepening divides); whilst, at the same time, taking positive (pro-active) actions to address these alongside raising the profile of where action is needed.
- **And to seek funding and support** to achieve the (above) **commitment**.
- Dr Fox **announced** that her research is to be **published** in the *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 4th Issue, in 2026 (end of the year) – it is entitled: ***A Society for all ages? Older People – Technology & Rights!***

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions are to:

- Guide** the UN Community **to revisit and strengthen** the Human Rights Council interpretation (of the UNDR) within **Resolution L13 – The Promotion, Protection and Enjoyment of Human Rights on the Internet** (adopted by consensus on by the Human Rights Council on Thursday, July 6, 2012) specifically **to the new and advancing Digital-AI age**.
- Advocate** that the *UN Treaty for the Rights of the Older Persons* should contain protection and rights (including the right to opt-in or out of digital services and/or be provided with alternative mechanisms which includes *human-contact support*).
- Stipulate** that wider discussions must be given to **negative future consequences** of technologies, such as AI, and that concerted action must be taken in the form of pro-active Treaties and or policy intervention in order to limit and mitigate for risks in order to protect society and humanity (in the long-term).

Finally to reiterate the UN General Assembly ([A/RES/78/213](#)) “*that certain applications of new and emerging digital technologies are not compatible with international human rights law, and noting that uses of new and emerging digital technologies that impact the enjoyment of human rights may lack adequate regulation and governance mechanisms*” thereby,

Asserting the need for new specific Human Rights protections for the A.I. Age.