New technology developments which focus on integrating human-centred methods and rules into our use of AI, so that it is transparent, evidence-based and secure, will serve to increase trust in technology, assisting the process of changing society and the world of work for governments and people everywhere in a way that favours human dignity at all levels of involvement, from workers to managers.¹

Key Issues discussed

Special attention was given to: evidence-based AI, ethical AI machine, ethical Governance, human-machine interaction, diversity, Ethics of Reciprocity, ethics across cultures, empathic social agency, traditions, human dignity, digital transformation, sustainability.

1. Dr. Andreas Reis, Head of Health, Ethics & Governance at the World Health Organisation started by explaining the importance of Ethics in health care and in particular the training for those involved in the design development of AI technologies for health. WHO, together with a group of experts in ethics and governance, has developed ethics guidelines and are finalising the development of an online training course targeted to designers and developers of AI algorithms to ensure transparency, trust and the minimisation of risks.²

2. Prof. Karamjit Gill, Editor–in-Chief, Al&Society Journal, Springer Nature answered, to the question if it is possible to embed ethics in the machine, building on the idea of machine ethics as an extension of human ethics, ultimately becoming fully aligned with the machine’s operations - just as the machine was seen as an extension of the human body, now machine ‘intelligence’ is seen as an extension of human intelligence. He also underlined that ethics is situated in different cultural contexts; there is no universal view of ethics, as it has impact on cultural practices of societies, and thus ethics has to be contextualised within cultures.³

3. Dr. Olufemi Adeluyi, Sen. Tech. Assistant (R&D) to the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Nigeria, continued underlining the importance of quality and inclusivity of data to AI and recommended an approach for balancing the requirements of regulation and the need to promote innovation of AI systems.⁴

4. Mr. Forhad Zahid Shaikh, Chief e-Governance Strategist of a2i, ICT Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and IT, Government of Bangladesh, addressed major ethical concerns and possible threats due to AI that he apprehends in the cultural and moral context of his country.

² WHO: Ethics and governance of artificial intelligence for health, full report: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240029200
One risk he highlighted was the issue of biased data, which could lead to unfair decisions and outcomes, in addition to the misuse of personal data and the chance that online criminals would use AI to hide their crimes. Regarding the threats under Bangladesh's cultural and moral context, he explained that AI could potentially lead to unemployment in several key sectors, such as the RMG, freelancing, and customer care service.

Mr. Forhad emphasized the importance of holding AI developers accountable for their creations and ensuring that AI is used ethically, to avoid ethical concerns and potential threat to society.

5. Dr. Evelyne Tauchnitz, Senior Researcher at Institute of Social Ethics, University Lucerne, focused on the need of ethical governance for digital technologies and on the values and norms – namely human rights – upon which we can build such ethical governance on a global level. Universal human rights norms are an important point of reference that can serve as a minimal ethical standard to guide policy makers in the formulation of global governance strategies. Human rights possess the advantage that they have already been accepted by the vast majority of states and institutional mechanisms are already in place both at the national and international level to monitor their respect and progress. A public debate is needed to discuss how human rights are to be interpreted, properly implemented, and, if necessary, enforced, in the digital age.

6. Mgr. Giulio Dellavite, Secretary General of the Diocese of Bergamo, Italy, closed the session on the question if Ethics have anything to say to our modern and fast-changing society. The expression "being well" sums up being well, doing good and doing it well. It is a ‘human’ concept and in effect is the same for all religions and spiritual philosophies. This is the evolution of Pope Benedict’s XVI thought, who introduced the concept of “integral human ecology” that calls for action towards a new humanism and a new renaissance. Ethics does not make us guardians of a past to defend, but guardians of a future in which to invest. So, ethics is a new criterion for the economy of the future; it is a good and beautiful business.

Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025

There are very strong interrelations between the SDGs and the WSIS Action Lines, therefore the session addressed all goals in general, and in particular goal 1, goal 2, goal 3, goal 4, goal 6, goal 7, goal 8, goal 9, goal 10, goal 11, goal 16, goal 17.

Ethics: Symbiotic Horizons

- Common ethical goals BUT different cultural practices;
- No universal view of ethics. Ethics and AI have to be contextualised within cultures;
- Just as there is symbiosis between explicit and tacit knowledge and practice, so there are symbiosis between common (global) and diverse (contextual) cultural views of ethics;
- Future Symbiosis: technology, society and nature.

Tangible outcomes

The session has built upon the results of research, development and innovation: the versatile and robust Eco-System Platform PROMIS®, that gathers and protects tacit knowledge, as the key to developing structured multilingual intellectual capital and integrates Ethics-by-design alongside AI-by-design in view of the far reaching consequences involved for good or ill. [https://rdcu.be/cYVPg]

Actionable plan - Thematic aspects to be included in the WSIS+20 Forum 2024 (High-Level Event)

- To start a project concerning Ethics-by-design and AI-by-design methodology, integrated in a human-centred and multilingual framework involving UN institutions and interested partners.
- To expand the cross-cultural & inter-cultural dialogue on Ethics and AI on a global scale.