

Session Outcome Document

AI Empowerment for Older People from a Gender Mainstreaming Perspective

KAIST Aging & Technology Policy Lab

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<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/188>

Key Issues discussed

- Two megatrends are converging, the longevity revolution and digital and AI transformation, as AI becomes everyday infrastructure for the health, care, work and connection of older persons.
- Ageing is gendered: older women are the majority of older persons yet face compounded disadvantages. Gender mainstreaming is essential, and gender must be read intersectionally (disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, rural residence), not reduced to women.
- A second-level generative-AI divide is emerging: evidence from the Republic of Korea (2,621 internet users aged 50 or over) shows the adoption gap is widest among older persons, women and lower-income groups, with AI literacy the strongest factor.
- “One-size-fits-all” AI-literacy programmes can widen the divide, as advantaged older persons convert literacy into adoption faster than disadvantaged older women.
- Accountability is weak: participants urged an ESG-equivalent disclosure mechanism holding developers accountable for AI’s impacts across the life cycle.
- Data justice is at stake: sovereign-AI and data-sharing restrictions, and the under-representation of older women and low-resource languages, risk rendering older women invisible to AI systems.
- Human agency and the “right to be unconnected”: forced digitalization can exclude older persons (e.g., from cash and in-person banking), and over-reliance on AI raises concerns about cognitive engagement. Older persons must help design the systems built around them.

Key Outcomes of the session

- **Findings.** Republic of Korea evidence (2025 Digital Divide Survey) confirmed the generative-AI divide is shaped by age, gender and socioeconomic status — and that universal AI-literacy interventions can paradoxically widen gaps for the most disadvantaged older women.
- **Shared understanding.** Broad agreement that gender mainstreaming must be intersectional and that older persons’ agency, including the right to remain unconnected, belongs at the centre of AI governance.
- **New evidence and a forthcoming report.** Doctoral and lab research on the Gen AI divide was presented, alongside a forthcoming report on AI and ageing (14 country cases) to be shared at the AI for Good Global Summit; the Technology and Innovation Report was cited as a model for accountability.

- **Multi-stakeholder commitment.** Academia, UN agencies, government and civil society affirmed a shared direction: keep older women and intersecting groups at the centre of AI design, governance and measurement, and move from fragmented pilots to inclusive standards.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- **Tailor interventions; reject one-size-fits-all.** Direct AI-literacy and adoption resources to disadvantaged older persons, rural older women in particular, with use cases designed for them, recognizing that closing the gap takes more time.
- **Institute AI accountability and transparency.** Establish ESG-style public-disclosure mechanisms covering AI's impacts across the life cycle, engaging the private sector in inclusive AI.
- **Close the gender–age data gap.** Invest in gender- and age-disaggregated data, low-resource-language datasets and responsibly governed synthetic data, so older women are visible to and served by AI.
- **Embed older persons in design and governance, and protect choice.** Co-design AI with older persons and safeguard the right to remain unconnected through accessible non-digital alternatives for essential services.
- **Anchor action in global mandates and regional cooperation.** Align with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), the Global Digital Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals (notably SDG 5 and SDG 10), using regional cooperation to scale inclusive standards, capacity and accountability towards 2035.