

Delegation from the State of Kuwait
Position Paper for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

The issues before The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are Artificial Intelligence and the Rule of Law, and Strengthening Partnerships on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development. The Kuwait delegation eagerly anticipates the opportunity to discuss these pressing matters with other Member States.

I. Artificial Intelligence and the Rule of Law

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a prevalent and tenacious part of the functioning of society. AI is increasingly used in law enforcement and the administration of justice for a range of matters regarding resolutions of disputes and judicial decision-making. AI can provide a legal service at a significantly reduced unit cost to a much larger portion of the population. More than half of the world's population currently has unmet justice needs, while 1.5 billion of these people cannot obtain justice for civil, administrative, or criminal justice problems. Developing technology aims to mitigate the pressing matters concerning human rights and improve the objectivity and efficiency of judicial systems. Studies suggest that existing technology, including AI, can automate between 16% and 21% of the work conducted by judges. These capabilities of AI adhere to the UN prerogatives. Kuwait commits to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, aimed at providing justice for all. As of 2020, AI will potentially impact 58% of the targets of the SDG. AI proves to be an effective mechanism for improving efficiency, and with proper regulations and initiatives to strengthen its impact, it will continue to prove advantageous.

The State of Kuwait supports current initiatives and resolutions promoted by the United Nations (UN) and other organizations. The Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) encourages Member States to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and respect the rule of law in the digital world and physical world. To educate judges on the implementation of AI in judicial systems, UNESCO developed an introductory course as a part of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on AI application and its impact on rule of law. Currently, the Middle East does not actively use AI in their varying judicial systems; however, it is predicted that AI will cause an impact of US \$320 billion dollars in the region by 2030. This impact is expected to be a 30% annual growth in the contribution of AI in the Middle East. Countries in the region such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar demonstrate a strong commitment towards the development and implementation of AI technologies within their own economies which could potentially include other facilities such as government and the judicial system. Businesses in these parts of the region invest heavily in new technology to seek alternative sources of revenue and growth.

Kuwait recognizes the potential advantages and risks of the implementation of AI into judicial systems. Thus, Kuwait recommends that Member States implement solutions to help monitor ethical forms of AI in the judicial system to follow the rule of law such as setting a standard that encourages Member States to test their AI systems in the judicial system annually to ensure no amount of discrimination exists in the system. This will assist Member States in utilizing socio-technical systems. This annual testing should include proactive equity assessments as part of the system design, analyze the use of representative data and protection against proxies for demographic features, ensure accessibility for people with disabilities in the design and development of these AI systems, and test for clear organizational oversight. Each Member State must independently evaluate and use plain language in reporting the algorithmic impact assessment which would include disparity testing results and mitigation information. This information should be made public whenever possible to confirm these protections. Recognizing the existing cooperation between the International Criminal Court and UNESCO to preserve cultural heritage sites, Kuwait promotes the application of AI in protecting these sites due to its ability to predict crimes. Systems have the capacity to process data and information in a way that resembles intelligent behavior. This would be able to predict armed conflict and war, earthquakes and other natural disasters, pollution, poaching, uncontrolled urbanization, and unchecked tourist development which pose major problems to World Heritage sites. Kuwait acknowledges the exigency of establishing programs and regulations. Kuwait calls the UN to fully recognize the full potential of AI and the rule of law and encourages cooperation among Member States to ensure these aims.

II. Strengthening Partnerships on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development

Strengthening Partnerships on Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) is an essential avenue for achieving sustainable and inclusive development globally. Cooperation among Member States to further scientific and technological innovations encourages economic growth, promotes the dissemination of information, and enables the realization of the SDGs. Enlarging technological access remains a critical aspect of eradicating poverty and promoting social mobility. Currently, an estimated 37% of the global population lacks access to technology. Furthermore, education in science and technology propels innovation as well as reduces inequalities faced by marginalized populations. However, 244 million children and youth are out of school. Therefore, STI initiatives must address all aspects of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – and their interrelationships. It is equally important that knowledge systems be constructed broadly to include the cultural, social, and institutional dimensions in which they operate around the world.

Kuwait commits to Sustainable Development Goals developed by UNESCO over the last five years. SDG 17 (partnership for the goals) recognizes the importance of international cooperation and partnerships. General Assembly (GA) Resolution 76/213 on “Science, technology, and innovation for sustainable development” aims to encourage and foster investment in research and innovation and to promote digital inclusion and literacy among marginalized populations. The UN Inter-agency Task Team (IATT) established a sub-working group for taking forward the work on STI Roadmaps as policy and planning tools leading to action on STI in support of SDGs. The UN-IATT is working towards strengthening Member States’ capacities in using STI for the SDGs through joint UN courses delivered in different regions of the world. The State of Kuwait supports the UN’s global goals in boosting international knowledge and technology flows for the SDGs to support the development and use of the online technology platform under the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. This promotes international linkages among innovation ecosystems, including researchers, industries, start-ups, and civil society, to promote diverse forms of innovation, including pro-poor, inclusive, frugal, grassroots, and social innovation. Additionally, this initiative supports the design of implementation and the expansion of the Global Pilot Program on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the SDGs Roadmaps with broader country participation and strengthened modalities of knowledge exchanges and peer learning on relevant policy design. Currently, the Middle East Sustainable Development Goals are developed around human-centered development and enhance quality of life. These goals include diversifying the economy, addressing poverty, and providing equal education opportunities. The production, diffusion, and implementation of knowledge are recognized within the national development strategy which formulates the objective of achieving “Smart Kuwait” by 2035.

The State of Kuwait stands with the UN in its goals to help address these issues. To support women’s economic empowerment and mitigate the digital gender divide, Kuwait encourages Member States to develop a program to educate women in digital literacy skills while in primary schools. Education in digital literacy provides a tangible opportunity for women to tackle long-standing challenges of gender inequalities, including access to employment, income, education, and health services. As women become more digitally literate, they will be able to participate in digital campaigns in a safer way to protest crimes against women, domestic abuse, and child marriage through increased access to social media. Kuwait also encourages Member States to create a program that teaches people with cognitive disabilities how to code to help with the educational divide as well. Such programs created would be structured in a way that would provide simple, well-structured, and modular activities for those with cognitive disabilities, use carefully designed visual aids, support peer teaching and learning, and have support teams with complementary abilities to help those with cognitive disabilities learn how to code. Computer science skills are a way to empower individuals with these specific handicaps by providing them with potential career paths and supporting development in computational thinking and other areas. Understanding the challenges encountered by those with cognitive disabilities, and how they have been overcome, will continue to lead to more inclusive approaches to teaching computer science. Kuwait calls upon Member States to implement these programs to elevate economic security for these marginalized populations and promote diverse forms of innovation.