

References to digital policy made by the UN Secretary General,
President of the General Assembly and the European Union
at the 73rd UN General Assembly

UN Secretary General

Date of speech: 25 September 2018. [Access the speech.](#)

Digital mechanisms: ‘At the United Nations, we are harnessing technologies in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are creating innovation labs, including in my office. And in July I established a High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, a dialogue platform for all key actors.’

Infrastructure: ‘Artificial Intelligence is connecting people across languages, and supporting doctors in making better diagnoses. Driverless vehicles will revolutionize transportation.’

Security: ‘At the same time, technology is being misused by terrorists and for sexual exploitation and abuse.’

‘Organized criminal networks lurk on the dark web, profiting from encryption and near-anonymous cryptocurrency payments to traffic in people and illegal goods. Some reports estimate that cybercrime is now putting \$1.5 trillion in the pockets of cybercriminals annually. Malicious acts in cyberspace – such as disinformation campaigns -- are polarizing communities and diminishing trust among States. And more and more people are getting their information from news or social media feeds that echo their views, reinforce tribalism and assure people that they are right and the other side is wrong.’

‘The impacts of new technologies on warfare are a direct threat to our common responsibility to guarantee peace and security. The weaponization of artificial intelligence is a growing concern. The prospect of weapons that can select and attack a target on their own raises multiple alarms — and could trigger new arms races. Diminished oversight of weapons has implications for our efforts to contain threats, prevent escalation and adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law. Let’s call it as it is. The prospect of machines with the discretion and power to take human life is morally repugnant. Heaven forbid, any new war could very well include with a massive cyberattack not only targeting military capacities, but also critical civilian infrastructure. I am encouraged by the ten possible guiding principles elaborated in Geneva last month by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. More work on these issues, aimed at building trust between and within nations, will be needed if we are to ensure responsible use of new technologies. I urge you to use the United Nations as a platform to draw global attention to these crucial matters and nurture a digital future that is safe and beneficial for all.’

Economic: ‘Technological advances may disrupt labour markets as traditional jobs change or disappear, even as the number of young job-seekers continues to grow. Re-training will be needed at previously unimaginable scales. Education must adapt, from the earliest grades. The very nature of work will change. Governments may have to consider stronger social safety net programmes, including, possibly, universal basic income.’

Development: ‘Rapidly developing fields such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and biotechnology have the potential to turbocharge progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.’

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‘Let me now turn to new technologies and what we can do to uphold their promise and keep their perils at bay. And there is great promise. Scientific progress has helped to cure deadly diseases, feed growing populations, drive economic growth and connect businesses, communities, families and friends across the world.’

‘With technology outracing institutions, cooperation between countries and among stakeholders will be crucial, including Member States, the private sector, research centres, civil society and academia.’

‘But today I want to concentrate on two epochal challenges which, since last year, have taken on surpassing urgency: climate change and the new risks associated with advances in technology.’

‘The good news is: technology is on our side. Clean energy is more affordable and competitive than ever. If we pursue the right path, climate action could add \$26 trillion to the global economy by 2030.’

Sociocultural: ‘The digital revolution is also being used to discriminate against women and reinforce our male-dominated culture. Indeed, there is a deep gender gap in access to digital technologies, widening the digital divide. We must dismantle obstacles and create opportunities for women, ensure equality and change on-line and toxic corporate cultures. The technology sector must open up and become more diverse – not least for its own benefit.’

UNGA President (opening speech).

Date of speech: 25 September. [Access the speech.](#)

Digital mechanisms: ‘We have entered a technological and digital era that is fostering economic, social and cultural exchanges that were unimaginable only a few decades ago. This Organization needs to be better prepared to deal with these challenges.’

European Union

Date of speech: 27 September 2018. [Access the speech.](#)

Security: ‘The anonymity of cyberspace is used by external actors to cloak malicious political interference. It is not just Europe’s problem; many others here today are similarly affected. The United Nations should help expose this phenomenon, attribute responsibility and increase democratic resilience.’