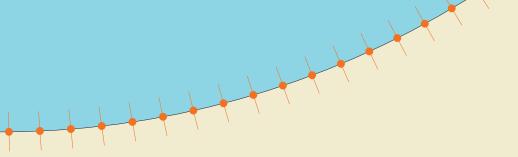


# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SOCIAL GOOD

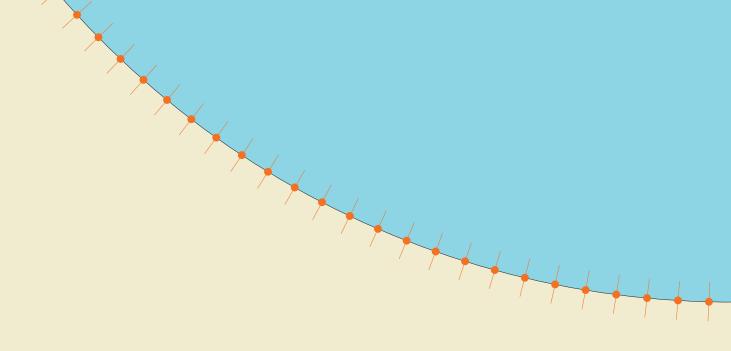
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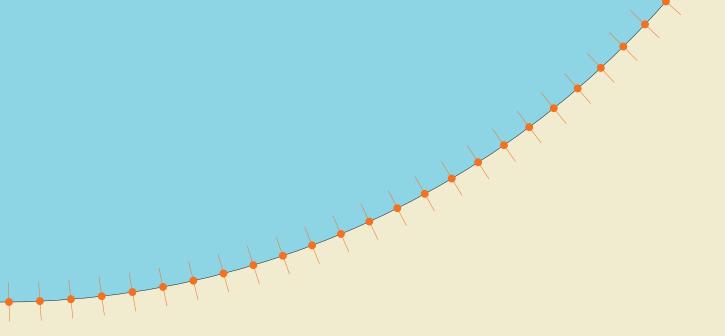
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## <u>Foreword</u>

## **By APRU**

The dual character of artificial intelligence technology, its promise for social good, and its threat to human society, is now a familiar theme. The authors of this report note that "the challenge is how to balance the reduction of human rights abuses while not suffocating the beneficial uses". Offering a solution, they go on to say that "the realization of social good by Al is effective only when the government adequately sets rules for appropriate use of data".

These observations go to the core of the challenge before all societies. Whose interests do governments mainly represent? Are they accountable in real ways to their citizens or are they more aligned to the interests of high-tech monopolies? As with all technologies, we face the questions of ownership and of their use for concentrating political power and wealth rather than ensuring the benefits are shared with those most in need of them.

The current COVID-19 crisis has shown that governments need to move decisively towards the public interest. We confront crises within a new economic order of information technology that "claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices"<sup>2</sup>. The multidisciplinary studies in this report provide the knowledge and perspectives of researchers from Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand, India, and Australia that combine the local understanding with the international outlook that is essential if policymakers are to respond with appropriate regulation (and taxation) to ensure technology companies with a global reach are enabled to contribute to the common good. The insights in these chapters underpin the report's recommendations on developing an enabling environment and a governance framework.

This is the third in a series of projects<sup>3</sup> exploring the impact of AI on societies in the Asia-Pacific region which offers research-based recommendations to policymakers. It is intended that the reports support the work towards achieving the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its goals.

Subsequent work might usefully look at the ways that social movements can assist formal regulatory processes in shaping Al policies in societies marked by inequalities of wealth, income and political participation, and a biosphere at risk of collapse.

This project is a partnership between APRU, UN ESCAP and Google. International circumstances permitting, we will work together to hold a policy forum later in 2020 or early 2021 to share these findings with policymakers and public officials from around the region.

I thank our partners for their support and Professor Jiro Kokuryo, Vice President of Keio University, Tokyo, along with members of the Project Advisory Group for their leadership of this initiative.

Mi Orman

**Christopher Tremewan**Secretary General

Association of Pacific Rim Universities



<sup>1.</sup> Introduction p.4

<sup>2.</sup> Zuboff, S. (2019). The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. See 'Definition' in opening pages

<sup>3.</sup> Al for Everyone (2018) led by Keio University; The Transformation of Work in the Asia-Pacific (2019) led by The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. https://apru.org/resources/

## **By UN ESCAP**

In 2015, governments agreed on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to "ensure peace and prosperity, and forge partnerships with people and planet at the core". In this global agenda, science, technology, and innovation were identified both as a goal in itself and as a means of supporting the achievement of other sustainable development goals.

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers a myriad of technological solutions to today's problems, including responding to COVID-19, enabling better delivery of public services<sup>1</sup>, and supporting smart innovations for the environment. However, the wave of optimism surrounding the transformative potential of AI has been tempered by concerns regarding possible negative impacts, such as unequal capabilities to design and use this technology, privacy concerns, and bias in AI.

The world must ensure that AI-based technologies are used for the good of our societies and their sustainable development. Public policies play a critical role in promoting AI for social good. Governments can regulate AI developments and applications so that they contribute to meeting our aspirations of a sustainable future. Governments, in particular, are



encouraged to invest in promoting AI solutions and skills that bring greater social good and help us "build back better" as we recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While much has already been written about AI and a world of possibilities and limitations, this report is based on realities and experiences from Asia and the Pacific, and provides various perspectives on what AI for social good may look like in this region. More importantly, the report offers suggestions from the research community on how policymakers can encourage, use, and regulate AI for social good.

I look forward to more research collaborations with ARTNET on STI Policy Network<sup>2</sup> – a regional research and training network supporting policy research to leverage science, technology, and innovation as powerful engines for sustainable development in Asia Pacific.

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### Mia Mikic

Director

Trade, Investment and Innovation Division Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

<sup>1.</sup> Artificial Intelligence in the Delivery of Public Services (UN ESCAP, 2019).

https://www.unescap.org/publications/artificial-intelligence-delivery-public-services

<sup>2.</sup> https://artnet.unescap.org/sti



## **By Keio University**

It has been a great pleasure for Keio University to take the academic lead in such an important initiative as the UN/ESCAP-APRU-Google project "AI for Social Good". We are extremely pleased that the joint efforts of government, academia, and industry have generated a set of academically robust policy recommendations.

In our efforts to overcome COVID-19 with the help of information technology (IT), we are reminded of the importance of having a firm philosophy on the use of data. For example, we have seen first-hand the effectiveness of IT-based "contact tracing" in controlling the spread of the disease. At the same time, we are uncertain about the technology and its implications on privacy. There are noticeably different views on this topic concerning data and privacy, with cultural differences playing a major role. Some cultures are happy to actively share data, while others place greater emphasis and value on protecting privacy. At the same time, although all cultures recognize the value of sharing data, they are seemingly split on whether the data should belong to society or the individual. The design of technologies and institutions vary depending on such fundamental philosophies behind the governance of information. We do not, however, want the world to be split along this divide, as this leads to the fragmentation of data and everyone loses out. In order to benefit from the great technologies that we possess, the world must come together.

Since Keio University was founded by Yukichi Fukuzawa in the middle of the 19th century, we have been a pioneer in introducing Western

thought to Asia. During his life, Fukuzawa advocated the introduction of Western culture to Japan and placed great emphasis on relationships between people for the creation of a modern civil society. Today, this would encompass the idea of harmonious coexistence between people and technology. From such a heritage, we are cognizant of our renewed mission to bridge differences and create a new civilization that makes full use of data while honoring the dignity of each and every person. Of course, this is easier said than done. In reality, we face competition among nations and businesses who all have interests in controlling, monopolizing, and/or profiting from data. We should also be alert to the possibility that technologies can actually widen rather than close the inequality gap between the haves and have-nots.

With this in mind, academia should pledge to stay loyal only to evidence and logic. Through such self-discipline, we can provide open forums to orchestrate collaboration among various stakeholders to work together for the good of humanity. This is a worthwhile endeavor, as we are certain that artificial intelligence has the power to solve many issues, including epidemics, and will help us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations.

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**Akira Haseyama**President
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