PMAC PRINCE MAHIDOL AWARD CONFERENCE 2024

PL 2

ETHICAL TECHNOLOGY: FOR WHOM, BY WHOM AND FOR WHAT PURPOSES

| BACKGROUND

The application of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare offers immense potential to improve population health outcomes by contributing to a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable health system. They have the power to enhance the quality of, and access to, health solutions, and protect society from public health threats, thus helping countries to advance efforts towards universal health coverage and ensure the realization of the right to health for everyone.

These technologies, however, can pose significant risk in exacerbating and entrenching existing inequalities and patterns of discrimination, leaving those who do not have access even further behind. Equitable access to technology and AI in healthcare is undermined by the gender digital divide - the measurable gap between women and men in their access to, use of and ability to influence, contribute to and benefit from information and communications technologies. Proper use of digital technologies in protecting human rights and discrimination involves the principle that health is a basic human right and everyone should benefit from digital advancements without worrying about their privacy and security being violated. Regulatory mechanisms should be in place that preclude any breach of privacy and confidentiality of data by public and private sector, holding them accountable for the same.

| OBJECTIVES

The objective of this plenary session is to highlight the range of ethical and human rights concerns and threats to society relating to the use of digital health and AI for healthcare, and explore the key principles, strategies and approaches in mitigating and addressing these threats.

Addressing these threats are critical to effectively harness the power of digital technologies and AI to advance universal health coverage and realize the right to health for everyone.

Key Issues: Scope and substance of discussion

Within the context of key ethical and societal threats highlighted above, the plenary discussion will aim to explore strategies and opportunities to address/mitigate these threats, and to promote an enabling environment for ethical, equitable and rights-based application of technologies and AI in healthcare. The plenary session will focus discussion on the following key issues:

- **Highlight the key threats and barriers and human rights concerns posed by digital health and AI in healthcare** on perpetuating inequalities in healthcare delivery, particularly among marginalized populations. The Plenary session will attempt to define key ethical and rights-based principles, and identify global trends of key threats and barriers, with a focus on algorithmic bias and discrimination, protection of health data, and the digital divide between various segments of society and countries. Panellists will discuss emerging ethical challenges posed by AI in healthcare - including patient safety, data privacy and security, exacerbating social and health inequalities and building trust on AI in health including issues relating to misuse of private information by technology companies.
- **Explore strategies and measures to mitigate, address and safeguard against key threats and barriers** posed by digital health and AI in healthcare and identify opportunities for promoting an enabling environment for technologies to be gender-responsive, equitable and inclusive. This includes strengthening digital literacy to optimise the benefits of technology and narrowing the digital divide.
- **Understand the responsibilities and obligations of public and private sector actors** to ensure that the deployment of technology is guided by the principles of equity, ethics and inclusivity, including through the promotion of intersectoral collaboration and inclusive participation, and strengthening legal, governance and regulatory frameworks, compliance and enforcement.
- **Explore planetary health gaps and concerns** with regards to digital and AI technology development and implementation to promote resilient health systems, human well-being and environmental sustainability.



Panelist / Panelist

Osama Manzar

Director and Founder

Digital Empowerment Foundation
India

Osama Manzar works at the cusp of Rights, Access and Meaningful Connectivity. He is a Senior Ashoka Fellow, British Chevening Scholar, International Visitors Leadership Program Fellow of US State Department and an Advisor to Women in Digital Economy Fund (WiDEF).

After half a decade of stint in tech journalism, he founded Digital Empowerment Foundation in 2002 working on “access to rights and rights to access” ending up digitally empowering more than 35 million people till date through establishing more than 2000 digital centres run by as many info-preneurs or Soochnapreneurs.

He was instrumental in several policies and impact activities like India’s National Digital Literacy Mission, co-creation of Common Service Centres, banning FreeBasics in India, liberalising ISP licensing through PM-WANI in India, and initiated fight against misinformation at a village level and institutionalised the same having created a cadre of more than 500 women fact checkers across rural India.

He has been on the boards and advisories of Women in Digital Economy Fund (WiDEF), APC, World Summit Awards, GNI, Barefoot College, and profiled by The Hindu as “the man who travelled more than 10,000 villages”.

He writes regular columns in Mint at Livemint.com and has co-authored more than 20 titles, including Internet Economy of India and NetChakra.

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