Concept Note for Policy Focus Session:

" Safeguarding Democracy in the Age of AI – The Role of Women in Politics"

Details

Date: Thursday, March 21th
Duration: 60 minutes
Type: Policy Focus Session
Location: NJV Athens Plaza Hotel
Time: 10:40 – 11:40
Co-host: Microsoft
Participants: Open to all attendees of the WPL Summit

Summary

In an era marked by the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), safeguarding democracy takes center stage, with women in politics facing unique challenges. This policy focus session, led by Microsoft, delves into the intersection of AI, democracy, and the role of women in politics. The session aims to explore the challenges and opportunities posed by the use of AI, address the challenges of AI technologies in the context of elections and the impact these may have on women in and running for office. As we confront the super election year of 2024, the imperative to fortify democracies, uphold fundamental rights and protect female candidates is paramount.

Background

In 2024, high-profile elections worldwide are set to impact over 2 billion voters, shaping the global political landscape. However, the pursuit of democracy remains incomplete without the full representation of half the world's population — women. Despite strides, women's under-representation persists in political parties and elected leadership.

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects or misuses of technology, not least as today's AI revolution continues to advance. This session

recognizes the pressing challenges posed by deepfakes, disinformation, and cyber threats, particularly targeting women in politics.

This session aims to spotlight the unique challenges women in politics face, particularly in an era where technology touches every aspect of our lives as political leaders and citizens. During election years, the intensity of online violence amplifies, with deepfakes, disinformation, online harassment, and cyber threats becoming integral to campaign dynamics. The disproportionate impact on women politicians calls for urgent and actionable measures to create a safer environment that encourages more women and girls to enter and stay in the political arena and continue to reap the benefits of the AI revolution.

Amid these challenges, the global community is actively responding to the intersection of AI, elections, and online safety. Notably, at the Munich Security Conference on February 17, a group of leading technology companies, including Microsoft, launched the [AI Elections Accord: A Tech Accord to Combat Deceptive Use of AI in 2024 Elections](#), This Tech Accord aims to protect elections and electoral processes from deceptive AI content, emphasizing detection, responsive protection, evaluation, and public awareness and education.

Microsoft shares WPL's belief that the safeguarding of electoral integrity and public trust is a shared responsibility critical to the success of democracies, both in Europe and globally. The urgency to address digital threats against women in politics is particularly evident in the super election year of 2024.

Format
The format is an interactive discussion guided by Tilemachos Moraitis, Government and Corporate Affairs Manager at Microsoft.

Possible Guiding Questions

1. What are the challenges and opportunities of AI in protecting and advancing democracy?
2. How can we best address threats to democracy in the digital age from each of your perspectives?

3. How can women politicians navigate the challenges posed by AI to actively contribute to democratic processes?
4. How do governments best ensure that AI is governed by the rule of law?
5. How can the WPL community manage the risks arising from deceptive AI election content created through their publicly accessible, large-scale platforms or open foundational models, or distributed on their large-scale social or publishing platforms?

Expected Outcomes

1. Identify policy and legislative measures to protect women politicians from deceptive AI.
2. Foster collaboration among governments, technology companies, NGOs, and political leaders to collectively ensure responsible use of AI technologies and create a safer digital world.
3. Highlight the pivotal role of women in politics and decision-making roles in shaping a safer digital world.
4. Development of actionable commitments from key political leaders and other leaders to advocate safeguarding democracy in the era of AI.

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