A Call for Expanding the AI Frontier for All

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Thank you, Mr. President, Secretary-General, and distinguished members of the Security Council. It is a privilege to join you today. As someone who grew up in South Korea and has devoted my career to advancing artificial intelligence, it is deeply meaningful to contribute to this dialogue under the presidency of the Republic of Korea and at such a moment of global importance.

I have spent more than two decades as a computer scientist seeking to understand how machines might interpret the world in ways more like people do. My work asks whether intelligence can be built in forms that are not just powerful, but genuinely reflective of humanity.

We stand today at an extraordinary inflection point. AI dazzles us with achievements that only years ago seemed impossible. In particular, I am deeply motivated by how AI is accelerating scientific discovery — from advancing medicine to exploring the natural world — to expand the horizons of human knowledge.

But this promise is accompanied by scientific limits and societal choices. Today I want to talk about one of those choices: choosing intelligence that is not only powerful, but accessible, robust, and efficient. Because when only a few have the resources to build and benefit from AI, we leave the rest of the world waiting at the door. So, my message to you is simple: Let us expand what intelligence can be — and let everyone everywhere have a role in building it.

The Need for New Scientific Frontiers

Scientific history shows us that breakthroughs rarely come from staying in the same lane. At critical moments, new methods and new ways of thinking open entire fields. In AI, however, much of the energy and investment has converged on one model of progress: scaling.

In recent years, developers have sought to build AI systems using ever larger datasets and computing power. This approach has delivered impressive results — while also leading to a reality where the most advanced models are built by a mere handful of companies in just a few countries.

This concentration in the hands of a few narrows both our science and who gets to shape it. When most of the world lacks the resources to experiment at the frontier, we lose a diversity of

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perspectives from researchers, institutions, and societies that could lead to important discoveries and pivots.

The task before us, then, is to expand the frontier: to cultivate space for alternative approaches, to encourage curiosity-driven science, and to support bold exploration. Science has historically leapt forward when we have taken risks and opened the door for more voices to contribute to discovery. We can, and must, pursue alternative approaches to AI development that are more adaptive, more resilient, and broadly accessible to the global community.

Striving for Global Access and Representation in AI

What might those alternative paths mean in practice? Expanding the frontier is not only about new scientific methods for achieving intelligence. It is also about how we choose to think about access: Who can build advanced AI systems? To whom are they accessible? Whose voices do they include? And whose values do they reflect? If AI is to benefit humanity, access must be the north star.

That means pushing the frontier along two dimensions.

The first dimension is building AI that is *smaller*. If we really want to "democratize" AI, we must rethink our dependence on massive-scale data and computing resources from the outset, and design methods that do more with less — for example, systems that learn with far less data, adapt through interaction, and recognize what they do not know.

Children gain common sense not by reading endless words but by observing the world around them. How can we design AI systems that learn in the same spirit? Models that achieve strong performance while lowering the barriers to entry would open the frontier to researchers, institutions, and governments worldwide.

The second dimension is ensuring AI systems represent and serve *all communities.* We should re-center what truly matters to humanity: linguistic diversity, cultural breadth, and pluralistic values. Today's leading AI models underperform for many non-English languages and reflect narrow cultural assumptions. These flaws lead to the systematic exclusion of entire communities from AI's benefits and they cannot be cured simply by patching gaps after the fact. What's required is to rethink the foundations — the training data, learning objectives, and evaluation methods — so that systems are built from the start to be robust across languages, contexts, and perspectives.

Accomplishing this will rest on answers to still-unsolved research questions across disciplines: What does meaningful linguistic fluency in AI look like? How do we measure value alignment across societies? Who must be at the table when decisions get made? These are only some of the questions we must address through interdisciplinary, cross-cultural collaboration. Every country and community has unique expertise to contribute — expertise that is indispensable when building AI systems that truly serve the world.

A Call for Bold, Collective Investment

I want to leave you today with three considerations for how all of us can begin to make inroads on these issues.

First, invest in high-risk, high-reward science. Because market-driven forces tend to favor short-term, profit-driven research and development, governments and international bodies must fund bold experiments that look uncertain today but promise to open new frontiers tomorrow.

Second, build shared, public AI infrastructure. We need open, multilingual, and multimodal datasets; rigorous benchmarks that test for cultural pluralism and real-world applications; and shared compute resources for academic institutions and nations otherwise left out. These are not nice-to-haves — they are essential foundations to expand the talent and ideas that drive discovery.

Third, prioritize capacity-building. Fellowships and exchanges that connect researchers across borders, advanced training programs that equip the next generation with cutting-edge skills, and collaborative institutes that sustain long-term partnerships are all crucial. Innovation can emerge from many paths — and the next breakthrough may come from where we least expect it.

There is still so much we can and must do to achieve more global access and representation in AI. Progress on these fronts will not be easy. It demands our willingness to take paths less traveled and to set aside narrow competition in favor of collaborating for the common good.

Thank you again, Mr. President, Secretary-General, and distinguished members of the Security Council for the privilege of speaking to you today.