OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
79TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HIS EX. MR. PHILÉMON YANG
ON THE DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY AND GOVERNANCE OF FUTURE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. President,

This letter expresses our deep concern about the safety of current and potential developments and applications of Artificial Intelligence, and their potential consequences to humanity. As you rightly stated on the occasion of your election as President of the 79th United Nations General Assembly, *In this digital age, artificial intelligence has increased opportunities but also challenges. The slightest mistake can wipe us off the face of the Earth.*

We are a global foresight and strategy community of hundreds of scientists, academics, intellectuals, artists, business people, diplomats, and parliamentarians. In our activities, we are permanently in contact with decisionmakers from both the public and private sectors, and the civil society, and are supported by relevant personalities from different member states of the United Nations.

We strongly support the general agreement about the need to have a multi-stakeholder and multilateral system of governance of AI to guide its development, regulate its applications, and permanently monitor its consistency with the human rights and the wellbeing of people.

In this sense, important events have already occurred recently, such as the session of the UN Security Council, the hearings in the US Senate, the three summits on the security of AI (London, Seoul and Seattle), an *International Scientific Report on the Safety of Advanced AI* to be presented at the next summit in France in 2025, the statement by Pope Francis at the G-7, as well as dedicated sessions at UNESCO, OECD, ECLAC, regulations by the European Union, China, and the legislative developments underway in different member states. Similarly, there are well-known critical positions of AI and AGI developers themselves, and of scientists and technicians from the IT community. All these point in the same direction: safety, governance, and consistency with human rights.

We recognize the great progress with the unanimous approval of the GA Resolution *Seizing the Opportunities of Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence Systems for Sustainable Development* and the GA Resolution *Enhancing International Cooperation on Capacity-building of Artificial Intelligence* represents within the United Nations, as well as the work carried out by the ad-hoc groups of experts promoted by the General Secretariat, the *High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence report: Governing AI for Humanity,* and the consensus on this topic expressed in the preparatory documents for the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact. These are very important steps and initiatives that go in the right direction and which, in our opinion, require strong political and institutional support to continue advancing a safe AI development in accordance with human rights.

However, we believe that it is essential to go further, collecting the opinions and positions expressed in the aforementioned events, to deal with Artificial Intelligence in all its dimensions and possibilities, such as narrow and generative AI, general-purpose AI, more advanced Artificial General Intelligence, and the potential risks of the developments that could lead to a Super Artificial Intelligence beyond our control.

To achieve that, a specialized multi-stakeholder, multilateral UN agency on Artificial Intelligence must be equipped with staff, resources, and powers, linked to the General Secretariat, to continually study, guide, coordinate, and propose to the member states the necessary measures and actions.

Without doubt, the United Nations is the key institutional space to continue advancing in this sense. The next "Summit of the Future" and the "Pact for the Future" should represent the beginning of a new era of peace and security for humanity, an ethical and political commitment of the member states to a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable future. This will not be possible if existential risks and threats such as an out-of-control future forms of artificial general and super intelligences are not timely addressed.

We are appealing to you, Mr. President, because we are aware of your sensitivity and understanding of this issue, and we believe that with your influence and position, you can drive towards an agreement in this regard by the United Nations at the next meeting in September, adopting a *Resolution to create a committee of the willing to draft a UN Convention on AI with two sections – one on narrow AI and one on AGI –* which could lead to the creation of a specialized Agency for the governance and safe development of Artificial Intelligence in all its forms.

In order to support such a decision, we provide you with the most recent studies and research on AGI Governance Scenarios (https://www.millennium-project.org/transition-from-artificial-narrow-to-artificial-general-intelligence-governance/) that The Millennium Project has carried out with the participation of the highest representatives of industry, science, technology, academia, and politics, which support our concern and proposal, as well as a summary document on General Artificial Intelligence that reflects the main concerns of the signatories of this letter.

We sign this open letter as representatives of The Millennium Project, World Futures Studies Federation, Association of Professional Futurists, and World Academy of Art & Science, with the support of over 70 Nodes of The Millennium Project, individuals, and institutions listed in the annex below.

Sincerely,

Jerome C. Glenn, CEO
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Erik Overland, President
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Garry Jacobs, President & CEO
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Annexes:
- List of The Millennium Project Node Chairs, Institutions, and Regional Networks supporting this letter
- Report: *"International governance issues of the transition from narrow artificial intelligence to artificial general intelligence (AGI)"* (Phase 1 and Phase 2)
- Summary document of proposals *"AGI Background"* prepared for the U.S. Senate.

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AGI Background for the U.S. Senate

Unregulated future AI is likely to be a disaster, warns experts around the world. There are three kinds of AI: narrow, general, and super. **Artificial Narrow Intelligence** (ANI) including generative AI (or GenAI) is narrow, pre-trained tool that exists today and will continue to improve over the coming years. **Artificial General Intelligence** (AGI) does not exist yet, but is expected to act more like an agent than a simple tool, and can re-write its own code, create novel solutions to novel problems similar to humans (sometimes called human-level AI) and can learn moment by moment to continually get smarter.

AGI could emerge within this decade. **Artificial Super Intelligence** (ASI) sometimes called Artificial Superintelligence emerges from AGI to set is own goals independent from human control.

Some progress on ANI governance:

- US-lead and China-lead UN General Assembly resolutions on AI addresses ANI, not AGI
- The EU AI Act and China's Artificial Intelligence Law address ANI, not AGI
- Bletchley Declaration signed by 28 governments addresses ANI, not AGI

The US-China AI cooperation talks might be exploring AGI governance, but that is not publicly known. Previous White House statements and executive orders address ANI, not AGI.

What is needed now?

- Draft text to authorize a national AGI licensing system and authorize NIST to prepare simulations to test the safety of AGI prior to licensing.
- Use Phase 1 and especially Phase 2 of The Millennium Project's AGI governance study to help think through these issues.
- Consider the national suggestions in The Gladstone Defense in Depth: *An Action Plan to Increase the Safety and Security of Advanced AI*.
- Support a UN General Assembly Resolution to form a group of the willing to draft the text of a UN Convention on AI with two sections: one on ANI and one on AGI.

As The Millennium Project Phase 2 AGI report states, "Governing AGI could be the most complex, difficult management problem humanity has ever faced." Furthermore, failure to solve it before proceeding to create AGI systems would be a fatal mistake for human civilization. No entity has the right to make that mistake.

---- Stuart Russell

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