Country : The Republic of India
Committee : Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Agenda : Formulating Strategies for the Secure Integration of Al in Labor Markets and Social Infrastructure

The Republic of India is a country located in South Asia, it is the most populous country and one of the largest economies in the world. This large population brings along a wide variety of needs. India believes in the importance of using artificial intelligence to find solutions to meet these needs. India, one of the signatories of the Bletchley Declaration, has a national strategy regarding artificial intelligence focused on striking a delicate balance between promoting innovation and mitigating risk. India has evaluated various sectors that will be affected by AI. Among the focused sectors are agriculture, education, smart cities and infrastructure, smart mobility and transportation, with a particular emphasis on the healthcare sector.

Worldwide, many people face limited access to healthcare services. The majority of the Indian population lives in rural areas and they experience this problem. Healthcare is one of the most dynamic, but challenging, sectors in India. Yet, it faces major challenges of quality, accessibility and affordability for a large section of the population. One of the major problems is the shortage of qualified healthcare professionals and services such as qualified doctors, nurses, technicians, and infrastructure. Non-uniform accessibility to healthcare across the country with physical access continuing to be the major barrier to both preventive and curative health services, and glaring disparity between rural and urban India. Patients have to travel substantial distances for basic and advanced healthcare services. The fact that the majority of patients only seek hospital care when the illness has reached an advanced stage increases the cost of care and reduces the chance of recovery. The Government of India has been making a series of large scale interventions to address India's healthcare challenges, including the transformation of 150,000 Health and Wellness Centers, developing district hospitals to cater to long-term care for non-communicable diseases, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, promoting e-Health, etc. India is working with Microsoft and Forus Health to roll out a technology for early detection of diabetic retinopathy as a pilot project. . 3Nethra, developed by Forus Health, is a portable device that can screen for common eye problem. Integrating AI capabilities to this device using Microsoft's retinal imaging APIs enables operators of 3Nethra device to get AI-powered insights even when they are working at eye checkup camps in remote areas with nil or intermittent connectivity to the cloud.

AI solutions can augment the scarce personnel and lab facilities; help overcome the barriers to access and solve the accessibility problem; through early detection, diagnostic, decision making, and treatment, cater to a large part of the world. AI-supported healthcare solutions can make healthcare services more forward-looking, providing not only "sick" care but genuine "health" care. This change occurs primarily by focusing on disease prevention. India is ready to collaborate with all countries, especially those with high rural populations, to ensure access to healthcare services.India is open to international collaboration to increase access to healthcare services and strengthen healthcare infrastructure, and is committed to taking steps in this direction.

References:

1- The OECD AI Policy Observatory / NITI Aayog - National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (2018)
2- The OECD AI Policy Observatory / NITI Aayog – Responsible AI (2021)
3- The Bletchley Declaration by Countries Attending the AI Safety Summit (2023)