

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Africa AI Village at UNGA 2026

#### Building the Institutions That Will Shape the Future of AI in the Global South

##### Official Digital@UNGA 2026 Affiliate Session

The Global South does not have an AI ideas problem. Across Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions, governments are developing strategies, researchers are producing knowledge, startups are building solutions and institutions are advancing new approaches to the opportunities and risks presented by artificial intelligence.

The challenge is what happens next. Too often, knowledge remains within individual institutions. Lessons from implementation do not travel easily across countries. Promising pilots struggle to become sustained institutional capability. Technical communities, policymakers and development institutions operate in parallel. And participation in global AI conversations does not always translate into meaningful influence over the technologies, infrastructure and standards being shaped.

The challenge is one of continuity. The Global South increasingly has a voice in the AI conversation. The next question is whether it has the institutions, partnerships and pathways required to turn that voice into capability, contribution and influence. Under the theme **Building the Institutions That Will Shape the Future of AI in the Global South**, the Africa AI Village will convene leaders across government, multilateral institutions, technology, research, innovation, youth and development to explore what must be built to ensure that the Global South does not simply participate in the AI future, but helps shape it.

The full-day convening will continue a conversation begun at the South–South Dialogue on AI at the India AI Impact Summit in February 2026, before applying its central question to one of the most immediate frontiers in AI: the emerging standards and technical foundations of agentic AI.

#### Moving towards Influence

The South–South Dialogue on AI brought together 258 participants from more than 30 countries and 135 organisations around a shared challenge: how can collaboration among countries and institutions of the Global South become more consequential?

The Dialogue identified five areas where collaboration must increasingly deliver:

- moving operational learning across contexts;
- making institutional absorption fundable;
- designing and financing shared infrastructure;

- strengthening bargaining power in standards and governance; and
- funding continuity.

The findings pointed to a fundamental gap. The challenge is building the mechanisms capable of carrying dialogue forward. If a country develops an effective approach, how does that knowledge move? If an institution learns from implementation, who helps another institution absorb and adapt that learning? If the Global South identifies a shared concern in governance or standards, what mechanism carries that concern into the processes where decisions are being made?

These are institutional questions. They require stronger connections between: talent and opportunity; research and implementation; builders and policymakers; local innovation and regional collaboration; Global South priorities and global decision-making.

Africa AI Village at UNGA will take this conversation one step further: *What institutional infrastructure is required to turn participation into influence?*

The objective is not to create another institution. Instead, we want to identify how existing institutions, communities and partnerships can work together to create the continuity infrastructure that the Global South increasingly needs to shape its AI future.

## A Practical Test: Who Shapes the Future of Agentic AI?

The urgency of this question is becoming increasingly visible in the development of agentic AI.

AI is moving beyond systems that primarily generate information. Emerging agentic systems can interact with tools and data, execute multi-step tasks and operate across connected digital environments. Alongside these developments, the technical foundations governing how such systems interact are rapidly evolving.

Questions around interoperability, identity, authorization, security, accountability and interactions between AI agents are increasingly being addressed through emerging protocols, technical practices and standards.

These foundations are still being shaped.

For the Global South, this presents both an opportunity and a test. Meaningful participation in standards and technical development does not happen simply by having a voice in a policy discussion. It requires builders who understand the technology, institutions that understand the stakes and pathways capable of translating real-world experience into credible contributions.

This is where the broader institutional challenge becomes practical.



*How does the Global South move from having a voice about the future of agentic AI to contributing to the foundations being built today?*

The afternoon of Africa AI Village will therefore be dedicated to:

## A Global South Workshop on Agentic AI Standards

The workshop will bring together policymakers, developers, researchers, technical experts, standards communities and ecosystem leaders to define the pathway required for meaningful Global South participation.

The discussion will explore:

- What is already being built within the emerging agentic AI ecosystem?
- Where are Global South builders and institutions currently participating?
- What knowledge and capacity are needed to engage meaningfully?
- How can African and Global South use cases and realities inform emerging standards?
- What mechanisms are needed to connect policy priorities with technical communities?
- How can participation continue beyond a single workshop?

The workshop will establish the basis for a longer process, including Agentic AI 101 Masterclasses, a Global South Agentic AI Standards Survey and technical validation through the MCP Dev Summit Nairobi.

This creates a deliberate pathway:

Understand → Listen → Define → Validate → Contribute

UNGA will bring together the institutions required to establish the pathway. The work will then continue with the broader ecosystem and technical community.

## The Africa AI Village at UNGA

Africa AI Village is designed as more than a convening. It is a platform for connecting critical AI conversations to the institutions and people required to carry them forward.

As an officially validated Digital@UNGA 2026 Affiliate Session, the Village provides an opportunity to bring together stakeholders who do not always sit in the same room: governments and developers, youth and policymakers, researchers and implementers, African institutions and global technical communities.

The day will follow one central thread.

### **Morning: From Dialogue to Capability**



The first half will continue the South–South conversation by examining the institutional foundations required for sustained AI capability and influence.

The discussion will ask:

**What must we build together to ensure that learning, talent, innovation and collaboration do not remain fragmented?**

Conversations will explore how institutions can better connect capability, research, innovation and implementation, while creating stronger pathways for young people and technical communities to participate in shaping the AI future.

## **Afternoon: From Voice to Contribution**

The second half will turn to agentic AI as a practical test of the day's central proposition.

If the Global South is to shape AI, what does it take to participate while its emerging technical foundations are still being built?

The Agentic AI Standards Workshop will explore how the Global South can build the capacity, evidence base, technical networks and institutional mechanisms needed to develop meaningful contributions to emerging standards discussions.

The workshop will also establish a clear bridge to the **MCP Dev Summit Nairobi**, where priorities emerging from the broader consultation can be explored and technically validated with developers and practitioners building the agentic AI stack.

## **Expected Outcomes**

Africa AI Village will prioritise continuity over declarations and meaningful next steps over an extensive list of commitments.

The expected outcomes are:

### **1. A Shared Institutional Agenda**

Greater clarity on the institutions, mechanisms and partnerships required to move South–South AI collaboration from dialogue to sustained capability and influence.

### **2. A Global South Agentic AI Standards Participation Pathway**



An initial roadmap for building capacity, gathering evidence and connecting Global South stakeholders to the emerging technical and standards ecosystem.

### **3. Stronger Partnerships Across the AI Ecosystem**

New connections between institutions working across youth, research, applied AI, innovation, policy, technical development and standards.

### **4. Continuity from UNGA to Action**

A defined pathway from the Africa AI Village to further consultation, capacity-building and technical validation at the MCP Dev Summit Nairobi.

## **Why Now**

The future of AI is still being shaped.

For the Global South, the question is whether participation will remain episodic, joining conversations, responding to technologies and adapting to systems designed elsewhere, or whether countries and institutions can build the capacity to participate earlier, more consistently and more meaningfully.

That requires more than another AI strategy or another global convening. It requires institutions capable of carrying knowledge forward, developing talent, connecting builders to decision-makers and creating pathways through which Global South experience can shape global systems.

The journey from India to UNGA and Nairobi reflects that ambition:

- India asked: What must South-South collaboration deliver?
- UNGA asks: What must we build to turn voice into influence?
- MCP Nairobi asks: How do we turn that influence into credible technical contribution?

Africa AI Village at UNGA is built around one central conviction that The Global South does not need to wait for the future of AI to be decided before building the institutions capable of shaping it.