

My participation during the event : ‘THE “CODED GAZE”
OF GENERATIVE AI AT THE INTERSECTION OF
GENDER EQUALITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE’

Is Technology women’s Friend or Foe?

Once I have finished lunch, at about 1 pm on 3/13/2023, I started my walk towards next event “The Coded Gaze of Generative AI at the intersection of Gender equality and Racial Justice” hosted by UN women which is supposed to take place at the Salesforce tower, near Bryant Park, Ohana Floor. It was 20 minutes from the 1st avenue. The event begun at 1:30 pm. My professional interest in AI and how AI can be used for development of a digital economy and sometimes leaving an economy backward were my study during this session.



View from the Ohana Floor, Salesforce Tower

Featured Opening speakers were Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Epsy Campbell Barr. Ms. Phumzile, Founder and Leader, Umlambo Foundation; Vice Chancellor, University of

Johannesburg; Commissioner, Broadband Commission; Chair of the Board, Women Deliver; Former Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women; Former Vice President of South Africa spoke about the tension in the education system in South Africa especially in the higher education system. Poor students receive funding from government and the rich are financially well-off, it is in the middle i.e., the students of civil servants who cannot afford the university education as they are always in the stage of debt.

Especially the girls are the one who are most affected. Parallel digital university was created at Johannesburg which would help students but we should also pay attention to the quality of education they receive and the quality of internet. High level policies did not help much as hoped but UN women helped especially when partnered with technology companies. She stresses on the need to broaden the influence of black women in ICT: address training facilities, policy enabling, access to gadgets, participation at different events and institutes along with foundational training at school level.



The Panelists speaking during the side event

She also stressed on the fact that how AI can influence the vulnerable demographics. The AI algorithms are designed by male dominated technology leaders based on male biased data. She concluded her speech by saying “If women aren’t represented, we are all dead.”

Next was Epsy Campbell Barr, Chairperson, The Permanent Forum of People of African Descent; Former Vice President of Costa Rica and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Ms. Epsy spoke on the gaps that are present in the gender biased society. Access to clean water, essential commodities, use of cell phones to report services, that wasn’t/isn’t available to people of African descent. She also made her point of involving the people of African descent in technology and innovation and Equity, Equality and Justice for women and they need to hang onto it so that no one is left behind.

Justice Faith Betty, co-founder, Revolutionnaire spoke on Artivism that is the art to capture the social activism in the form of paintings. Artivism can be a speech, poem, painting or a hashtag e.g., #blacklivesmatter, #lamaman. She also spoke on Futurism, which are ideas of the future demanding more inclusive picture particularly related to black lives. She also showed us captivating slides of Virtual Fashion show which captured “Africa” in AI databases. She also made a point of how we can use AR, VR and AI to address Racial Justice.

At about 3:30 PM, the event ended and there were cookies and coffee available to the participants. It was great time to interact with panelists and other attendees over a coffee and then at 4:30 PM, I headed back home.

- *Priyanka Prem Kumar, UIMF Member*