Digital Policy Alert

# Labour in International AI Frameworks

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Our text-level analysis of nine international AI frameworks shows that labour is found across six of the nine frameworks. It is not part of either of the G7 documents, the Principles and the Code of Conduct, or the Council of Europe Framework Convention. A total of seven provisions address labour, with various degrees of focus and actionability.

- Three provisions, in the ASEAN Guide, the UN General Assembly resolution, and the UNESCO Recommendation, focus on labour as the core concern, while four provisions only touch upon labour tangentially.
- Three provisions across two frameworks, the ASEAN Guide and the UNESCO Recommendation, provide actionable measures to address the impact of AI on workers. The remaining four provisions address labour in non-actionable language, including the UN General Assembly resolution's core provision on labour markets.
- The ASEAN Guide has the most provisions on labour (2), all of which are also actionable.

We now outline the prevalence, focus, and actionability of relevant provisions in each international framework, before summarising their language.

## OECD AI Principles

One OECD AI Principle addresses labour. Principle 1.5 (Accountability) covers it tangentially and is non-actionable: section (c) names labour rights as one of several risk categories that should be addressed by risk management.

## UN General Assembly resolution

One provision in the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/78/265, sub-paragraph 6(q), addresses labour. The provision is core and non-actionable. It encourages research and international cooperation to develop measures for identifying and assessing the impacts of AI deployment on labour markets. It also encourages support for mitigating potential negative consequences for workforces, and programmes on digital training and capacity building. It gives particular attention to developing and least developed countries, but names no concrete measure to protect workers.

## ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics

Two provisions in the ASEAN Guide relate to labour. Labour is of core relevance in one provision and tangential to one. Both are actionable. The Guide's labour measures are addressed to deployers, making it the only framework in the dataset with actionable labour measures addressed to organisations rather than states.

- Principle 4, on human-centricity, is core. It states that an extension of the principle of human-centricity is ensuring that the adoption and large-scale deployment of AI does not "unduly disrupt labour and job prospects without proper assessment". It encourages deployers to carry out impact assessments for a systematic, stakeholder-based review and to consider how jobs can be redesigned to incorporate AI, pointing to national guidance on job redesign.

- Section 4, on stakeholder interaction and communication, is tangential. It calls on deployers to communicate adequately with employees about the AI systems deployed and how they change workflows, and to provide training and education so employees can work with AI. It also calls on deployers to redesign jobs so that AI augments workers' existing skills rather than rendering them redundant.

## ASEAN Expanded Guide on AI Governance and Ethics – Generative AI

The Expanded Guide on Generative AI builds on the 2024 Guide, adapting its underlying principles to the generative AI context. One provision, Section 1.3, relates to labour tangentially, and without naming an actionable measure. Under its human-centricity principle, it names "employment disruptions" only as a possible consequence of an approach that is not human-centric. It does not restate the 2024 Guide's call for workforce impact assessments and job redesign.

## UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI

One provision, Policy Area 10, addresses labour as a core concern. The provision names actionable measures. The policy area is addressed to Member States.

Policy Area 10, on economy and labour, calls on Member States to work with companies, civil society, workers and unions to ensure a "fair transition for at-risk employees" (paragraph 118). This includes upskilling and reskilling programmes, mechanisms to retain employees during transition periods and "safety net" programmes for those who cannot be retrained. It is the only provision in the dataset to set out transition measures for workers displaced by AI. The same paragraph calls for enhanced social protection, public funding for these programmes and a review of tax regimes to counteract unemployment caused by AI-based automation. The policy area also calls for assessing the impact of AI on labour markets and education requirements (paragraph 116), collaboration on skills (paragraph 117) and research on local labour impacts (paragraph 119). Its material on competition (paragraph 120) is unrelated.

## Joint Declaration on AI, Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom

One provision, Principle 5, relates to labour tangentially. It is non-actionable. Principle 5, on equitable access to opportunities, states that equitable access to AI can help people meet their "labour, economic, cultural and social needs". The Principle goes on to name closing the digital divide and promoting digital literacy as priorities, and does not name any specific measure for workers.

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