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The São Paulo Charter on Artificial Intelligence Governance

Guidelines for Brazil and Latin America after the G20 Presidency

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Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are transforming societies and redefining power structures in the governance of data, computation, and innovation, among others. Brazil and other Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries face a dual challenge: to foster competitiveness and economic opportunity through AI, while safeguarding human rights and ethical principles, equity, and democratic accountability. During Brazil's G20 presidency, the national agenda placed unprecedented attention on AI governance, following the international attention with, for example, the work of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Body on AI, the UN Human

Rights Council and its Advisory Committee, whose [study on the impact of AI systems on good governance](#) underscored both institutional risks and opportunities. Building on this momentum, Brazil's G20 cycle helped consolidate and broaden the debate, particularly through the launch of the [São Luís Declaration on Artificial Intelligence](#) - a joint statement from the C20, L20, T20, and W20 engagement groups calling for inclusive, rights-based, and globally interoperable AI governance frameworks, with emphasis on data justice, environmental sustainability, multistakeholder cooperation, and capacity-building across the Global South. Together, these initiatives strengthened the global normative landscape into which Brazil's presidency introduced its own governance priorities. Discussions emphasized that while global frameworks are emerging — notably from the OECD, UNESCO, and the European Union — Latin American perspectives remain underrepresented. The São Paulo Seminar convened public institutions, academia, private sector leaders, and civil-society representatives to deliberate on the institutional pathways necessary to build coherent and adaptive AI governance mechanisms tailored to the region's realities. The seminar concluded that Brazil's experience with the General Data Protection Law (LGPD) and the National Data Protection Agency (ANPD) offers a valuable foundation. Yet, the rapid diffusion of AI systems demands a broader, more integrated governance architecture that transcends data protection and encompasses innovation policy, sectoral regulation, and ethical oversight.

This São Paulo Charter ("Carta de São Paulo" in Portuguese) on Artificial Intelligence Governance is a collective statement developed from discussions at the CEBRI International Seminar on AI Governance held in São Paulo on August 29, 2025, co-organized by the Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI), the Brazilian Observatory of Artificial Intelligence (OBIA/NIC.br), the Center for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at the University of São Paulo (CIAAM/USP), and the International Research Centre in Artificial Intelligence under the auspices of UNESCO (IRCAI). Convened in the context of Brazil's G20 presidency and the region's growing engagement in global digital policy, the Charter articulates a shared vision for an inclusive, transparent, and rights-based governance of AI. Drawing from international lessons and regional realities, it outlines guiding principles, institutional recommendations, and policy pathways to strengthen Brazil's and other LAC countries' capacity for coordinated, accountable, and innovation-friendly AI governance. The Charter aims to serve researchers, civil-society organizations, and policymakers as a reference framework for advancing responsible AI ecosystems across the region.

Recalling the significance of Brazil's presidency of the G20 and its commitment to advance digital transformation and inclusive growth

through ethical and human-centered innovation, this charter recognizes the profound social, economic, and cultural transformations brought by AI across sectors — from health and agriculture to finance and education. It acknowledges the opportunity and responsibility to shape an AI governance model rooted in transparency, accountability, inclusion, and respect for human rights. The charter also affirms that governing AI extends beyond regulation alone: it requires coordinated public policies, meaningful social participation, and a shared commitment to guiding AI development in Brazil and throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Institutional Fragmentation and the Need for Coordination. Brazil already relies on [several normative instruments to resolve legal disputes involving AI](#) — including the General Data Protection Law (LGPD), the Consumer Protection Code, the Civil Code, the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet (*Marco Civil da Internet*, in portuguese), and the Intellectual Property Protection Law, among others. However, none of these frameworks addresses the specific technical and governance challenges posed by AI. Moreover, Brazil lacks a dedicated legal framework and a coordinated governance system to articulate the multiple sectors and regulatory authorities affected by AI technologies, resulting in fragmented oversight and limited institutional coherence. The Charter therefore underscores that effective governance requires institutional coordination, combining sectoral expertise with a transversal authority for harmonization. Each regulator – whether in finance, health, education, or transport – must address AI risks within its domain while contributing to a unified national approach.

Regulation as an Enabler of Innovation. Contrary to the notion that regulation constrains technological development, clear and predictable governance frameworks can stimulate innovation. Legal certainty attracts investment, reduces operational risk, and strengthens international competitiveness. Governance must therefore be dynamic and iterative, a two way street, equipped with mechanisms such as regulatory sandboxes, AI certification and compliance seals, and standardized performance indicators.

The Central Role of Transparency and Accountability. Transparency was identified as the cornerstone of trustworthy AI. However, caution is needed against a purely formal interpretation of openness. Effective transparency must be contextual — tailored to the needs of regulators, scientists, and citizens alike, while allowing companies to protect certain trade secrets. AI regulatory sandboxes may cater to those needs as safe testing environments. Nevertheless, a certain level of transparency can improve the identification of bias on AI models, and must enable replicability,

auditing, and public comprehension, supported by interoperability standards and shared evaluation methodologies, while respecting legitimate confidentiality constraints. Accountability must extend across the entire AI value chain — from data collection and model training to deployment and impact monitoring. Shared responsibility ensures that every actor is held accountable in proportion to their function.

Learning from International Experiences. The Seminar analyzed comparative governance models across jurisdictions. Some countries established centralized AI agencies; others embedded AI oversight within existing sectoral regulators. The key lesson is that institutional design must fit national contexts, balancing independence with cooperation. International experiences demonstrate the value of continuous monitoring and revision, public consultation, and adaptive regulation. Tools such as AI certifications and regulatory sandboxes can reconcile flexibility with accountability. Participants emphasized that Brazil and Latin America can also contribute new perspectives to global governance — particularly on inclusion, social justice, and cultural diversity — positioning the region as a normative leader rather than a passive policy follower.

The following principles synthesize the consensus reached during the Seminar and form the normative foundation of the *São Paulo Charter*. They are intended to guide national and regional efforts toward an equitable, human-centered, and innovation-driven AI ecosystem.

1. **Human Rights and Inclusion.** AI governance must safeguard human dignity and equality. All systems should respect fundamental human rights, including non-discrimination, freedom of expression, and privacy. Inclusion means ensuring that marginalized communities benefit from AI and are not further excluded by algorithmic bias or unequal access to technology.
2. **Transparency and Explainability.** Transparency is a functional prerequisite for accountability. Additionally, systems must be explainable to relevant audiences — experts, regulators, and the public. Documentation, open standards, and interoperable reporting practices are vital to enable meaningful scrutiny.
3. **Accountability Across the Value Chain.** Responsibility must be shared among all actors in the AI lifecycle — developers, deployers, operators, and users. Mechanisms such as audit logs, traceability systems, and governance and management roles and responsibilities should be implemented to assign duties of care.
4. **Risk-Based Regulation.** Governance should calibrate obligations according to the level of risk posed by AI systems. High-impact

applications (e.g., in health, security, or finance) require stricter oversight, while low-risk uses may be subject to lighter-touch measures.

5. **Adaptive and Participatory Governance.** Given the pace of technological change, governance must be adaptive. Regulatory frameworks should incorporate periodic review, multi-stakeholder participation, and feedback mechanisms. Policies should evolve through empirical scientific evidence and public engagement.

6. **Scientific Integrity and Data Quality.** Robust AI depends on high-quality data and scientific rigor. Open research standards, reproducibility, and ethical data stewardship are essential for trustworthy innovation.

7. **Environmental and Social Sustainability.** AI development and deployment should align with sustainable practices, foster the abandonment of fossil fuels, minimize energy consumption and promote equitable access to digital infrastructure, such as sustainable data centers and affordable computing capacity.

8. **International Cooperation and Knowledge Sharing.** Global challenges demand shared solutions. Brazil and LAC countries should participate actively in international standard-setting, data-governance initiatives, and international research collaborations, ensuring that regional voices shape global norms.

The *São Paulo Charter* translates these principles into actionable recommendations structured around five strategic axes: institutional coordination, regulatory instruments, capacity building, innovation and infrastructure, and international cooperation.

Institutional Coordination

A National Council for AI Governance should operate as a permanent, multistakeholder advisory body that enhances strategic coherence while avoiding the unrealistic expectation that it will directly coordinate regulatory action. Its purpose is to provide evidence-based guidance, identify overlaps and gaps in the regulatory landscape, promote the alignment of principles and standards, and serve as a forum for dialogue among ministries, regulators, civil society, academia, and industry. Within this governance ecosystem, the National Data Protection Agency (ANPD) would continue to play a central technical role by contributing expertise on data governance, algorithmic transparency, and the protection of fundamental rights, while working in cooperation with sectoral regulators to develop joint guidance, shared methodologies for risk assessments, and consistent oversight practices. At the regional level, Brazil should encourage the creation of a Latin American platform for AI regulators and observatories in order to exchange

best practices, learn from sandbox experiences, and refine governance tools, thereby promoting convergence where beneficial while preserving regulatory autonomy.

Regulatory and Innovation Instruments

Regulatory Sandboxes and Living Labs enable experimentation under supervision, reducing uncertainty and encouraging responsible innovation. Brazil's existing initiatives can serve as a regional model. Certification and Auditing Frameworks could be implemented as voluntary certification schemes that assess compliance with transparency and safety standards. Independent audits should verify that AI systems meet declared ethical commitments. Public Procurement Standards can drive ethical AI adoption by requiring compliance with governance criteria, diversity in datasets, and accessibility standards.

Capacity Building and Education

Continuous education in AI, data science, human-centred AI governance and responsible AI is essential for regulatory and judicial institutions to make informed decisions. In the public sector, civil servants should receive training in responsible AI use, data protection, and digital ethics to ensure governance principles are applied consistently across ministries. Academic and research institutions—such as CIAAM/USP and IRCAI—play a key role in leading interdisciplinary studies that connect law, computer science, health and social sciences, providing evidence-based insights for policymaking. Additionally, public outreach initiatives are necessary to communicate on the responsible use of AI.

Innovation, Infrastructure, and Industrial Policy

AI governance should be closely aligned with broader industrial strategy, ensuring that regulatory clarity is paired with policies that foster domestic innovation through incentives for local AI startups, public-private partnerships, and open-innovation ecosystems. At the same time, sustainable data infrastructure must be promoted by encouraging investment in energy-efficient data centers, equitable access to cloud computing, and secure cross-border data connectivity. Additionally, open data and interoperability should be strengthened through public data repositories, standardized metadata, and shared protocols that enable responsible innovation while maintaining accountability.

International and Regional Cooperation

Brazil and other LAC states should engage actively in global forums such as the OECD, UNESCO, and the United Nations to ensure that regional perspectives help shape emerging AI governance norms. On this note, experts agree that it would be beneficial that Brazil and other LAC consider joining the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225), which is open also to Non-Members of the CoE. Building on the foundation of the São Paulo Charter, regional organizations could also develop a Latin American Charter for Responsible AI to strengthen collective bargaining power and promote knowledge exchange to support development of common or complementary AI regulation. The latter should facilitate compliance with AI regulations between countries to facilitate international trade. In addition, deepening South–South collaboration — particularly with African and Asian countries that face similar development challenges — would support equitable technology transfer and foster more inclusive policy design.

Recognizing that AI governance is an evolving process, the São Paulo Charter calls for dynamic mechanisms that promote adaptation, accountability, and public participation. It proposes a biennial review assessing Brazil's and the region's AI governance ecosystem, taking into account emerging technologies and shifting social impacts. Annual multi-stakeholder forums — including public consultations and thematic workshops in areas such as health, education, agriculture, finance, and public administration — should evaluate progress in implementing AI policies. To measure effectiveness, the Charter recommends developing indicators for transparency, explainability, fairness, innovation, and public trust, alongside open digital platforms that centralize regulatory guidance, audit reports, and impact assessments to support ongoing civic oversight. It also encourages international peer-learning initiatives, enabling cross-regional review, shared governance experiences, and the harmonization of ethical standards.

Governments should integrate AI governance within their national development strategies, ensuring alignment and consistency across data protection, innovation, and industrial policies. They must provide stable funding to support research, regulatory capacity, and the necessary digital infrastructure. Additionally, governments should foster meaningful public participation in policy formulation and oversight to promote transparency and trust.

Legislative and executive bodies are urged to implement risk-based oversight and algorithmic-impact assessments. They should cooperate across sectors and jurisdictions through shared frameworks and open dialogue. It is equally important to promote legal clarity to support innovation while safeguarding fundamental rights.

Academic and research institutions should pursue interdisciplinary research that provides empirical evidence to inform policy. They have a vital role in training professionals who can bridge the potential gap between technology and ethics, as well as contributing to public education and literacy on AI.

The private sector should adopt responsible AI approaches throughout the processes of design, testing, and deployment. Companies must maintain transparency in data use and algorithmic decision-making, and actively engage in collaborative standard-setting, complying with national, regional and international regulatory initiatives that align with public objectives.

Civil society organizations should contribute to the governmental and international initiatives that aim to monitor the implementation of AI governance frameworks, and advocate for inclusiveness and equity in digital transformation. They also play a crucial role in facilitating public understanding through accessible communication and independent analysis.

The São Paulo Charter envisions a future in which Brazil and LAC harness artificial intelligence as a force for inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, and democratic strengthening. The Charter asserts that ethical and transparent governance is not an obstacle but a catalyst for innovation and social trust. Brazil and its regional partners possess a unique opportunity to consolidate the legacy of the Brazilian Presidency of G20: a governance model that is globally informed yet regionally grounded, principled yet pragmatic. The commitments articulated herein mark the beginning of a continuous process — a living framework to guide collaboration, experimentation, and collective learning. Through joint effort, Brazil and Latin America can become global pioneers of equitable, responsible, and forward-looking AI governance.

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