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China Development Forum 2026

China in Its 15th Five-Year Plan Period: Advancing High-Quality Development and Creating New Opportunities Together

Symposium on AI Governance: Challenges and Cooperation (Panel Discussion I)

The China Development Forum 2026, hosted by the Development Research Centre of the State Council and organized by the China Development Research Foundation, was held on March 22-23, 2026 at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. On the afternoon of March 23, the Symposium on AI Governance: Challenges and Cooperation was convened. The panelists for Panel Discussion I were LI Meng, Chairman of Chinese Society for Sustainable Development (CSSD) and Former Vice Minister of Science and Technology; Christopher Pissarides, Professor of London School of Economics & Political Science and 2010 Nobel Laureate in Economics; Joshua Ramo, Chairman & CEO, Sornay; and XUE Lan, Dean & Professor, Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University. The session was chaired by LI Zuojun, Director-General of the Institute of Public Administration and Human Resources, Development Research Centre of the State Council.

In his remarks, **LI Meng** proposed that AI should follow a path of inclusive development, aiming to achieve four objectives, namely, Speed

(technological innovation and economic growth), Temperature (benefiting the people and promoting social equity), Greenness (green and low-carbon development for sustainability), and Goodness (AI for good, being safe and controllable). To realize this inclusive development, LI Meng shared five pathways: First, we need to move from improving individual efficiency to driving broader economic growth, and build AI that is friendly to total factor productivity (TFP). Second, we should shift our focus from replacing human labor to creating new jobs, and develop AI that is employment-friendly. Third, we must transition from high energy consumption to low-carbon operations, and pursue AI that is green and low-carbon friendly. Fourth, we should move beyond AGI anxiety toward a future of human-AI coevolution, and foster AI that is human-machine friendly. Fifth, we should extend from exclusive access for a single country or enterprise to AI as a global public good, and develop global-friendly AI. Looking to the future, LI Meng emphasized that humanity must maintain primacy and play a leading role in the development of AI. Humans must define the future of AI, rather than allowing AI to develop the capacity to define the human future. It is imperative to resolutely prevent AI from developing capabilities that escape human control. This requires international cooperation and agile governance to promote the construction of a new ecology for an intelligent society within the framework of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Christopher Pissarides argued that the choice of an AI governance model depends not only on political considerations but also on economic and social factors. He elaborated on AI governance from the perspectives of the state, enterprises, and workers. For states, although human labor still dominates today's workforce, delayed governance of AI risks could easily lead to irreversible damage. At the same time, overregulation must

be avoided—if regulation stifles innovation, it becomes self-defeating rather than truly protective. At the national level, AI governance can draw on the sandbox mechanism used in fintech regulation. For example, high-risk AI applications should be required to undergo stress tests and pilot verification within controlled environments before being approved for release by regulatory authorities. In addition, for new types of applications, an advisory group composed of experts from the technical, social, and economic fields could conduct comprehensive assessments, with low-risk applications exempted from the sandbox. The EU's AI Act establishes such a risk-tiered regulatory system.

He proposed that state regulation should serve as the baseline for AI governance, while internal corporate governance is the key to practical implementation. Although AI may displace some jobs, it will also create new employment opportunities. The core of this transition is to safeguard workers' employability. Enterprises need to shift their mindset, moving away from viewing labor as a cost and instead treating workers as stakeholders, while increasing investment in lifelong education and retraining. At the same time, through joint efforts by governments and enterprises, workers should have a voice in the deployment of AI technologies, intrusive surveillance should be avoided, AI biases should be prevented, and workers' concerns about skill obsolescence leading to diminished interests should be addressed. He noted that AI has transformative potential and can empower areas such as improving people's livelihoods, combating diseases, and addressing climate change. However, realizing its positive impact requires sound governance. AI governance models may take different forms depending on regional, political, social, and economic priorities, but they must adhere to principles such as forward-looking and inclusive governance. Based on the goal of technology serving the public interest, it is essential to balance

innovation and security to achieve multi-win outcomes.

Joshua Ramo shared his insights on AI governance from the perspectives of competition and cooperation. Different technologies require different governance models, and choosing the right model for AI is especially critical. At present, the tech community tends to view AI governance as a winner-take-all race. However, this mindset gives rise to two questions that lack clear answers: Where is the finish line of this AI race, and how should winning and losing be defined? Ramo observed that although US tech giants such as Microsoft and Facebook have already formed winner-take-all dynamics, mobile operating systems like iOS and Android represent a case of healthy competition and coexistence. Thus, the winner-take-all approach is not the only path forward. In conclusion, Ramo argued for abandoning the race mentality and adopting a mindset of cultivating different gardens. He compared the development of AI to cultivating diverse, independent gardens, each growing autonomously while remaining interconnected. Rather than opposing one another, they embrace mutual consideration, thereby maintaining the ecological stability of AI development.

XUE Lan pointed out that intelligent agent tools, represented by OpenClaw, are rapidly gaining traction. Unlike traditional large AI models, intelligent agents can autonomously complete complex tasks. However, the development of intelligent agents brings new governance challenges. First, the risk of malicious use has increased. For example, in an evaluation of 3,984 “skills” compatible with OpenClaw, researchers found that 36.8% of them had security issues. Second, the risk of AI hallucinations has become more prominent, including issues in reasoning, execution, perception, and memory. Third, the impact of intelligent agents on employment is expected to grow further. XUE Lan argued that the governance of intelligent agents must adhere to the principles of

"human-centered and AI for good" and emphasize "agile governance and multi-stakeholder co-governance." This requires a threefold transformation: from content security to behavioral security, from static control to dynamic boundary management, and from single-risk prevention to trustworthy interaction. In terms of specific governance measures to address these challenges, at the technical level, measures such as permission isolation, full-process monitoring, and the establishment of trusted execution environments should be implemented to ensure that agent behavior is verifiable, intervenable, and traceable. At the regulatory level, it is necessary to clarify the boundaries of rights and responsibilities, standardize user authorization and platform accountability, establish a clear order for innovation and development, and set up a tiered, inclusive, and prudent regulatory system. At the societal level, the focus should be on workforce reskilling, employment buffers, social protection, and public education.

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— Background Information —

The China Development Forum (CDF) is hosted by the Development Research Centre of the State Council and organized by the China Development Research Foundation. Since its inception in 2000, the Forum has been dedicated to the mission of "engaging with the world for common prosperity." It has served as an important platform for high-level, professional dialogue among China's senior government officials, global business leaders, representatives from international organizations, as well as scholars from both China and around the world.

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