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of science and technology  
جامعة زمزم للعلوم والتكنولوجيا  
Connects Learning to Real Life



Ministry of  
Communications  
and Technology

# The AI Summit Somalia

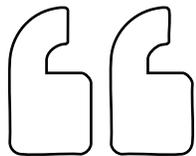
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# Introduction

The AI Summit Somalia 2024, a groundbreaking event, marked a historic moment as the first AI summit ever held in Somalia. This milestone event united a diverse array of stakeholders, including government decision-makers, representatives from regional AI communities such as AI Kenya and Zindi Africa, academics, civil society members, technology industry professionals, and AI enthusiasts. Together, they explored the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in Somalia's development.

Co-organized by the Ministry of Communication and Technology of Somalia and Zamzam University of Science and Technology (ZUST), the summit was bolstered by partnerships with organizations like Zindi Africa, PyCon Somalia, BINA Somalia, and the Center for Media and Technology. Generous sponsorships from Google, Super Sign, Hormuud Telecom, and Somtel Somalia further underscored the importance and scale of the event.



**The 1st AI Summit Somalia featured a dynamic program including welcome speeches, opening remarks, insightful keynote addresses, engaging panel discussions, project showcases, and impactful closing remarks.**



**This full-day summit was carefully designed to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation.**

It featured a dynamic program including welcome speeches, opening remarks, insightful keynote addresses, engaging panel discussions, project showcases, and impactful closing remarks. The summit set the stage for a collective vision to harness AI for Somalia's sustainable growth and technological advancement.



# Welcome Remarks

The summit commenced with welcome remarks by Eng. Ahmed Osman Ali, co-founder and president of the AI Somalia Community, as well as the deputy rector of Zamzam University of Science and Technology. Eng. Ahmed outlined the rationale for establishing the AI Somalia Community in 2023, highlighting its mission and the achievements realized to date. He emphasized that AI Somalia is a community-driven initiative aimed at fostering the responsible development and application of artificial intelligence (AI) in Somalia. The community serves as a platform for Somalis to learn about AI, exchange ideas, and collaborate on innovative projects.

During his address, Eng. Ahmed also introduced the "AI Summit Somalia" as an annual event designed to bring together key stakeholders in Somalia's AI ecosystem. He noted that the summit will serve as a forum for engagement with international AI experts, enabling them to contribute to the growth and development of AI in Somalia.

Eng. Ahmed concluded his remarks by expressing gratitude to all participants, partners, sponsors, and co-organizers for their support and collaboration.

## Eng. Ahmed Osman Ali

Co-founder and President,  
AI Somalia Community



PRELIMINARY SKILLS



## Opening Remarks

The official opening remarks were delivered by H.E. Ahmed Osman Dirie, State Minister of the Ministry of Communication and Technology of Somalia. In his speech, the Minister highlighted the transformative potential of AI in addressing Somalia's development challenges and emphasized the importance of responsible AI practices. He praised the AI Somalia community for organizing the summit, calling it a critical platform for innovation and collaboration. H.E. Ahmed Osman Dirie also committed the Ministry's support for fostering AI education and policies that align with the nation's developmental goals.

### H.E. Ahmed Osman Dirie

State Minister, Ministry of Communication and Technology of Somalia.



The Rector of Zamzam University of Science and Technology, Mohamud Mohamed Hassan Harbi, spoke passionately about the university's dedication to advancing technology in Somalia. He highlighted ZUST's pivotal role in supporting AI research and fostering innovation through initiatives like this summit. The Rector reaffirmed ZUST's commitment to being at the forefront of Somalia's technological revolution, emphasizing the need for strong partnerships and sustained efforts to nurture local talent.

### **Mohamud Mohamed Hassan Harbi**

The Rector of Zamzam University of Science and Technology

H.E. Mustaf Y. Shiekh, Director of the National Communication Authority, delivered a compelling address on the urgency of establishing a National AI Strategy. He underscored the importance of integrating AI into Somalia's policy framework to ensure equitable growth and to harness its potential for societal benefit. Director Mustaf emphasized the role of collaboration between government, academia, and industry in shaping an AI ecosystem that serves the nation's unique needs.

### **H.E. Mustaf Y. Shiekh**

Director of the National Communication Authority of Somalia

# The 2024 Summit in Numbers



# 4

## Sponsors:

Google, Super Sign, Hormuud Telecom, and Somtel Somalia, demonstrating significant support for AI initiatives

# 4+

## Innovations Showcased:

Highlighting AI-driven solutions tailored for Somalia's unique challenges.

# 1<sup>st</sup>

## AI Summit in Somalia

Marking a historic milestone for the country's technological development.

# 200+

## Participants:

Including government officials, academics, industry leaders, and AI enthusiasts.

# 5+

## International Experts:

Including Guests from Zindi Africa and Ai Kenya Community

# 2

## Panels and Keynotes:

Addressing themes such as responsible AI, agriculture, AI for career development, cyber-security, and societal impact.



# Keynote Speakers **Bio**

## Abdoulaye Diack

Program Manager at Google AI, Accra

A seasoned leader in AI/ML research and operations, Abdoulaye drives talent-building programs and applied AI research projects across Africa. With over 20 years of engineering and management expertise, he has spearheaded initiatives in mobile financial services, payments, and big data solutions for Telcos. Previously with Google Brain, Abdoulaye continues to shape Africa's AI ecosystem by leveraging cutting-edge technology and fostering innovation.



## Ahmed Unshur

Research Data Scientist

Ahmed's groundbreaking research bridges the realms of artificial intelligence, psychology, and social dynamics. His work emphasizes the integration of ethical considerations into AI systems, guided by the core principles of Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Ethics (FATE). Ahmed's contributions have advanced responsible AI applications, ensuring inclusivity and equity in diverse fields such as healthcare, education, and policy-making. Beyond research, Ahmed actively mentors aspiring data scientists, sharing insights on the intersection of technology and human behavior.

## Husein O. Abdullahi

Registrar at SIMAD University

With expertise in AI applications in agriculture, Husein focuses on leveraging technology to address food security and environmental challenges in Somalia. He is deeply committed to integrating artificial intelligence into Somalia's agricultural landscape, enabling innovative solutions like automation, improved resource management, and data-driven decision-making. His efforts aim to position Somalia as a regional leader in utilizing AI for socioeconomic progress.

## Alfred ONGERE

Founder of AI Kenya

Alfred, a prominent advocate for AI in Africa, has been instrumental in building strong AI communities and fostering collaboration to tackle the continent's unique challenges. His work focuses on creating local AI solutions for sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and education, while nurturing talent through initiatives such as Deep Learning Indaba and Zindi. By championing innovation and sustainable development, Alfred continues to shape Africa's AI landscape.





**Omar Ahmed Salad**  
Cyber Security Researcher

A seasoned cybersecurity expert and researcher with dual master's degrees in Cybersecurity and Certified Ethical Hacking (CEH Master). With a robust background in penetration testing, Omar specializes in identifying vulnerabilities, strengthening systems against cyber threats, and advancing research in the ever-evolving field of cybersecurity. As a dedicated ethical hacker, Omar has a proven track record of conducting in-depth security assessments, uncovering risks, and implementing cutting-edge solutions to safeguard digital environments.

**Eng. Mohamed H. Quardi**  
Cybersecurity Expert

With a wealth of experience in cybersecurity, Mohamed is at the forefront of leveraging AI to fortify security infrastructures and mitigate risks in the digital age. His innovative solutions have redefined how organizations approach cyber defense, employing predictive analytics and machine learning to preempt threats. Mohamed is also a sought-after speaker and consultant, sharing expertise on emerging trends in AI-driven security and fostering collaborations to combat global cyber challenges. His commitment to building secure digital ecosystems has made him a leader in his field.

**Ruth Nduta Muriithi**  
Zindi Africa Ambassador

Ruth is a passionate advocate for data science and artificial intelligence as tools for driving sustainable development across Africa. Through her role as a Zindi Africa Ambassador, she has spearheaded initiatives connecting data science enthusiasts with real-world challenges, inspiring innovation and actionable solutions. Ruth's efforts have empowered countless professionals and students to harness the power of data for social impact, addressing critical issues such as poverty, education, and climate change. Her vision is to create a thriving, inclusive tech community that propels Africa's growth.

## Thematic Highlights

The AI Summit Somalia 2024 explored transformative themes through its keynote speeches and panel discussions, offering a comprehensive understanding of AI's potential and challenges in the Somali context. Key highlights include:



### Responsible AI Development:

Speakers underscored the critical importance of ethical AI frameworks. The FATE principles (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Ethics) were discussed as foundational to ensuring responsible development and deployment of AI technologies. Participants emphasized building trust and accountability in AI systems to benefit Somali society.



### AI for Career Development:

Abdoulaye Diack, Program Manager for Google AI in Accra, Ghana, delivered a thought-provoking keynote via a pre-recorded video titled 'Launching Your AI Research Career: Inspirations, Skills, and Making a Difference.' Abdoulaye offered practical advice, valuable guidelines, and motivational insights on building a successful AI research career while emphasizing the importance of making a meaningful impact.

He also shared compelling data showcasing how Mogadishu has transformed over the past decade, highlighting changes in the number and height of buildings. This analysis illustrated how AI can be a powerful tool for addressing national challenges and driving development, demonstrating its potential to foster sustainable growth and innovation in

## AI in Agriculture

10bn

Estimation of the global population by 2050.



Feeding this population will require a

70%

increase in food production.

Husein Osman Abdullahi, Registrar at SIMAD University, delivered a compelling presentation on "The Role of AI in Improving Agricultural Operations." He highlighted global challenges such as feeding an estimated 10 billion people by 2050, requiring a 70% increase in food production amidst climate change and resource constraints. Husein detailed Somalia's agricultural challenges, including climate issues, limited technology access, financial constraints, security concerns, and market instability. He emphasized that AI offers innovative solutions such as automation, cost efficiency, improved soil and water management, and data-driven decisions, presenting AI as a critical tool for agricultural sustainability in Somalia and beyond.



### Cybersecurity and AI:

Eng. Mohamed Hamdi Ouardi, a leading cybersecurity expert, presented on “AI: The Double-Edged Sword for Cybersecurity.” He explored how AI enhances cybersecurity through advanced tools like Darktrace, CrowdStrike Falcon, and Cylance Protect, which identify anomalies and prevent threats. Hamdi also cautioned about the risks of AI misuse, emphasizing the need for vigilance and robust safeguards.

### AI’s Societal Impact:

Ahmed Unshur, a research data scientist, addressed “Beyond Algorithms: The Psychological and Social Dimensions of AI.” He discussed AI’s influence on human cognition, behavior, and societal norms, highlighting issues of bias, fairness, and group dynamics. Ahmed advocated for ethical AI development using the 3-D Dependable AI framework (Design, Develop, Deploy) and stressed fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and community involvement to ensure AI’s positive societal impact.

### Regional Collaboration in AI Innovation:

Collaborative efforts with regional AI communities, such as AI Kenya and Zindi Africa, were highlighted as key drivers of innovation and sustainable development in Africa. Ruth Nduta Muriithi, Zindi Africa Ambassador, delivered an insightful presentation on “Leveraging Data Science to Accelerate AI for SDGs.” She showcased Zindi’s impactful initiatives, which span over 190 countries and engage a thriving community of 70,000+ users. Ruth emphasized the critical role of skills like Python (used by 83% of Zindi’s community) and SQL (44%) in developing data-driven solutions to address the continent’s challenges.

Similarly, Alfred ONGERE, founder and program manager of the AI Kenya Community, presented on “Empowering Regional Growth: The Role of AI Communities in Advancing the AI Ecosystem in East Africa.” Alfred underscored the transformative power of AI communities in shaping Africa’s AI landscape, particularly in East Africa. Drawing from his experiences, he highlighted the achievements of AI Kenya, showcasing successful initiatives that have fostered regional growth and collaboration within the AI ecosystem.



## Innovations and Case Studies

### Garaad Tech Hub:

This Somali-based initiative focuses on creating AI-driven solutions tailored to local challenges. The hub showcased its work in areas such as education, agriculture, and healthcare.



### Somali Language Processing:

Highlighted advancements in natural language processing (NLP) tools for the Somali language, including automated translation and virtual assistant technologies. In Somalia, where literacy rates are low, and a significant portion of the population relies on mobile transactions, small business owners face challenges in navigating text-based notifications. Technologies with Text-to-Speech (TTS) capabilities in the Somali language are critical to bridge this gap. Such innovations enable users to have SMS messages, including payment confirmations and fee reminders, read aloud, thereby enhancing accessibility and ensuring broader inclusivity in the cashless economy.



**In Somalia, where literacy rates are low, and a significant portion of the population relies on mobile transactions, small business owners face challenges in navigating text-based notifications.**

65  
%

The EY 2023 survey of global business leaders found 65% of CEOs believe more work is needed to address AI's social, ethical and criminal risks.

## Policy Recommendations

The summit concluded with actionable policy recommendations aimed at fostering a sustainable and inclusive AI ecosystem in Somalia:

### Conduct an AI Readiness Assessment:

to undertake a nationwide evaluation to gauge Somalia's existing AI capabilities, identify infrastructure gaps, and prioritize areas for intervention. This assessment will provide a roadmap for aligning AI development with national needs and opportunities.

### Develop a National AI Strategy:

to design a comprehensive strategy tailored to Somalia's unique context, emphasizing equitable access, innovation, and ethical AI practices. The strategy should outline actionable steps to integrate AI into key sectors, including agriculture, education, and public services.

### Focus on Ethical AI Development:

to implement frameworks like the FATE principles (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Ethics) to ensure that AI systems are equitable, transparent, and aligned with societal values. Promote policies that prevent misuse and foster trust in AI technologies.

### Develop a National AI Strategy:

to design a comprehensive strategy tailored to Somalia's unique context, emphasizing equitable access, innovation, and ethical AI practices. The strategy should outline actionable steps to integrate AI into key sectors, including agriculture, education, and public services.

### Establish a National AI Council:

to form a dedicated council comprising representatives from government, academia, industry, and civil society to provide strategic direction for AI initiatives. The council will oversee policy implementation, ensure alignment with national goals, and serve as a platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration.



**Establish a National AI Center:**

to create a centralized body to coordinate AI initiatives, unify stakeholders, and act as a hub for research, policy implementation, and collaboration. The center should also focus on fostering local talent and facilitating international partnerships.

**Promote AI Education and Awareness:**

to introduce AI into educational curricula at various levels, from primary schools to higher education, to build foundational knowledge. Public awareness campaigns should highlight AI’s potential benefits, ethical considerations, and opportunities for community engagement.

**Leverage AI for Socioeconomic Development:**

to identify and scale AI solutions that address critical challenges in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and infrastructure. Encourage innovative projects like Garaad Tech Hub and Somali language processing tools to serve as benchmarks for future initiatives.





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Theme:  
AI for Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) in Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Theme →

AI for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Post-Conflict Reconstruction



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