Dear <<First Name>>

Will AI expand rights or entrench inequality?

Last Friday, as part of International Women's Month, we convened '*Rights. Justice. Action – Inclusive AI & Governance in Africa*' in partnership with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Nigerian Bar Association – Section on Business Law (NBA-SBL)**.

The central question was straightforward:
As AI adoption accelerates, will it expand rights or entrench existing inequalities?

Bringing together leaders across law, technology, development, and the private sector, the discussion underscored a consistent theme: the trajectory of AI will be determined less by the technology itself, and more by the institutional systems within which it is deployed.

What emerged

AI will scale existing systems

AI does not operate in isolation. Where underlying data and institutional structures are flawed, those flaws are likely to be reproduced and amplified.

Data is not neutral and Africa must build its own

There was broad consensus on the need for primary, locally relevant data. Continued reliance on external datasets often not designed for African contexts creates structural blind spots, particularly for women and underserved communities.

Governance must evolve alongside technology

While digital systems will move faster than institutions, accountability cannot be deferred. Responsibility ultimately rests with institutions, not algorithms.

Africa's approach must be context-specific

There was a clear caution against adopting global models without adaptation. Effective AI governance will need to reflect local institutional realities, regulatory capacity, and social context.

The conversation featured contributions from Sesan Sulaiman (Templars), Chinyere Okorocha (Jackson, Etti & Edu), Bode Abifarin (Strata), Adetoun Sulaimon (Hugo), Paul Turay (UNDP), and Femi Odewunmi (Creative Intelligence Group).

What comes next

During the session, we introduced AWB's Human Capital & Governance Framework (HCGF), a proprietary, Africa-led product developed over several years as part of our work on institutional effectiveness and the conditions required for both women and men to thrive in the workplace.

HCGF takes a systems-based view of organisations, focusing on how decisions are made, enforced, and experienced in practice. Rather than centring intent, it examines the underlying structures, incentives, and reporting lines that shape outcomes.

As the discussion highlighted, these same dynamics increasingly apply to AI systems where outcomes are determined not only by the technology itself, but by the

institutional environments in which it is deployed.

AWB is now preparing to work with a small number of organisations to pilot the framework in practice.

Organisations currently assessing governance structures, institutional performance, or the implications of AI adoption may find it useful to engage at this stage: awb@africanwomenonboard.org

Ahead

The Remarkable African Women's Leadership Conference (RAW), the continent's first convening focused on women's leadership, returns to Nairobi on **May 21st** as part of the 2026 Africa Soft Power Summit (May 20–23).

RAW positions women's leadership as institutional infrastructure, integral to economic design, capital allocation, policy effectiveness, and long-term resilience in a changing global economy.

Find out more | Get your tickets

Thank you.

The AWB Team