

Women, Trust and the New AI Reality

Why the Future of Artificial Intelligence Begins with Trust

When I first entered the field of artificial intelligence, I believed that technology itself would be the greatest challenge. Yet the more I worked at the intersection of government, business, academia, and international cooperation, the more I realized that the real challenge lies elsewhere. It lies on trust.

I represent Kazakhstan, a country that is still rarely included in the global conversation on artificial intelligence. That is precisely why it is so important to me not only to participate in international discussions, but also to demonstrate that our region can do more than adopt technologies developed elsewhere. We can contribute ideas, shape standards, and help define the future of AI.

My professional journey has unfolded in a field where women remain significantly underrepresented, particularly in technology, public policy, and strategic decision-making. According to the World Economic Forum, women account for only about one-third of the global AI workforce, with even fewer holding senior technical leadership positions. These figures reflect a reality I have encountered throughout my own career.

For me, however, this has never been solely about equal opportunities. It has always been about making better decisions.

Artificial intelligence is already reshaping healthcare, education, public services, security, and the global economy. When technologies are designed and governed by people with similar experiences and perspectives, they are more likely to reproduce existing biases and limitations. Diversity among those who develop, deploy, and regulate AI is therefore not simply a matter of representation—it is essential for creating technologies that society can genuinely trust.

Over the past several years, I have had the opportunity to contribute to discussions on AI legislation, bring together government institutions, businesses, researchers, and industry experts, promote the responsible adoption of AI in healthcare, and represent Kazakhstan at international forums dedicated to AI governance and digital transformation.

These experiences have led me to a simple conclusion: innovation and regulation are not competing priorities. On the contrary, clear rules, strong institutions, and independent oversight enable innovation to develop faster, more responsibly, and with greater public confidence.

Today, I find myself thinking less about how many new AI models will emerge over the coming years and more about the ecosystem we are building around them.

I believe that one of the next essential steps is the creation of independent AI Trust Labs—centres dedicated to evaluating, testing, and validating artificial intelligence systems before they are deployed at scale. These laboratories should bring together governments, universities, healthcare professionals, researchers, businesses, and international experts to assess the safety, reliability, effectiveness, and ethical implications of AI technologies.

But laboratories alone are not enough.

Countries need comprehensive trusted AI ecosystems that combine modern legislation, scientific research, talent development, computing infrastructure, high-quality data, international collaboration, and support for innovative companies. Artificial intelligence is no longer merely a technological issue. It has become a matter of national competitiveness, institutional quality, and sustainable economic development.

I do not want Central Asia to remain only a market for technologies developed elsewhere. I want to see a region that generates its own research, develops its own AI solutions, establishes its own standards, and builds its own centres of excellence—a region that participates in the global AI dialogue not as an observer, but as an equal partner.

Within this ecosystem, women should naturally be represented among researchers, engineers, entrepreneurs, laboratory directors, regulators, and decision-makers. Not because diversity targets require it, but because the strongest technologies emerge when different perspectives, experiences, and life stories come together.

I often think about the young women who are studying programming, data science, and artificial intelligence today in Kazakhstan and across Central Asia. I hope that in the years ahead, they will never have to wonder whether there is a place for them at the table where important decisions are made. I hope they will be judged by their knowledge, their ideas, and their willingness to take responsibility.

That is why international initiatives such as the Women Digital Leadership Award are so important. They do more than recognize individual achievements. They amplify women's ideas, expertise, and leadership, giving them a platform to be heard internationally. In doing so, they help shape a new generation of leaders who will not simply participate in the future of artificial intelligence—they will help define it.

The future of AI will not be determined solely by computing power, larger datasets, or more sophisticated algorithms. It will depend on whether we are able to build institutions that people trust.

And if one day Central Asia becomes a region known not only for adopting artificial intelligence but also for shaping international standards for responsible AI—with women among those leading that transformation—I will know that we are moving in the right direction.