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BILL GATES: THERE IS NO PLAN

BGF-AIWS: The Time to Act Is Now

On August 26, 2026, Bill Gates published a 6,000-word essay on Gates Notes, “The turbulent AI era is here. The choices we make now are critical.” It is the most urgent statement he has made on this subject.

His argument is that AI will be either the greatest equalizer ever invented or the worst source of injustice, and that the transition now beginning will be among the most turbulent in human history. He is not arguing against AI. He remains strongly optimistic about what it can do in medicine, education, agriculture, scientific research, clean energy and government services. His concern is that those benefits will not reach everyone on their own, and that the disruption arriving alongside them has not been prepared for.

He names three risks. On employment, the jobs most exposed are entry- and mid-level, and where earlier transitions unfolded across generations, this one may arrive within a decade — and it substitutes for human cognition rather than for muscle. On harmful use, he points to cyberattack, to bioterrorism, to autonomous weapons, and to the possibility that increasingly capable models begin to act against our interests and are no longer

under our control. On children, relationships and critical thinking, he is careful: he writes that the body of evidence is still small and mixed.

His central conclusion: there is no plan to ease the entry into the AI era.

He proposes three responses. New domestic institutions to coordinate across agencies, and an international body drawing on the inspection regimes built for nuclear weapons, the regulation of international aviation, and the agreements that protected the ozone layer. “Human Reserved” — domains deliberately set aside for people, as land is set aside from development. And a rebalancing of taxation, so that the code no longer nudges an employer toward replacing a person with a machine.

Where Gates and BGF-AIWS Already Stand on the Same Ground

In the essay, Gates cites the encyclical of Pope Leo XIV on safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence, *Magnifica Humanitas*, as laying a strong foundation for the work that needs to be done.

That is the foundation on which the Boston Global Forum and AIWS are already building. The encyclical was signed on May 15, 2026 and released to the public on May 25 — the same day the Lumina Declaration on Human Dignity was issued. In early 2027, BGF will bring the Constitution for Humanity in the Age of AI to Rome for consultation with the Holy See.

Two streams of moral and institutional work converged on the same conclusion: that the question raised by artificial intelligence is, before it is anything else, a question about the human person.

Where the Work Must Now Go Further

Gates is right about the danger and right that there is no plan. But his three proposals share a single weakness.

All three remain incomplete at the point of enforcement.

Gates says so himself about Human Reserved: he does not know who would decide what is reserved for people, by what criteria, or how companies would be prevented from using machines anyway. Those are not policy details. They are questions of authority, of standards, and of verification — the three questions on which any real answer depends.

The tax proposal meets the same wall. A levy imposed through metered AI tokens may be collected where there is an invoice. But a model running on privately owned hardware may cross no comparable metering boundary and produce no token bill. Unless the tax architecture reaches compute, hardware, or another verifiable layer, it risks burdening the visible path while leaving the less visible one comparatively free.

The international framework meets it too. Gates acknowledges that it would require cooperation between the United States and China, and an agreement without a means of verification is a declaration, not a regime.

Beyond that, the two countries differ on an important question: the extent to which citizens hold the power to check their own government, so that no government may turn AI to purposes harmful to humanity. Between two powers in intense competition, is such a proposal workable?

Every one of these proposals requires a layer at which compliance can be verified. That layer cannot be built out of law alone, because law arrives after the fact and stops at the border. It has to reach into the systems themselves — and finally into the hardware on which they run.

This is the work the Boston Global Forum and AIWS have been building since 2012, and through AIWS since 2017:

- AIWS Trust Infrastructure — concrete mechanisms for accountability, verification, Human-in-Command, and trustworthy AI systems. These are the instruments by which a question such as “who decides, and how would we know?” stops being rhetorical.
- The Constitution for Humanity in the Age of AI — constitutional foundations that protect the human person and restrain both machine power and illegitimate human power exercised through AI.
- Constitutional Silicon, advanced in Beacon Papers No. 9, “Civilization Begins with the Chip” — AI chips designed from their foundations to embody human command, bounded authority, verifiability, security and constitutional accountability. The values of the AI Age cannot live only in declarations, regulations and software. They must be built into the physical foundations of AI itself. This is a foundational part of the enforcement architecture the essay is missing.
- AIWS Civilization — the Civilization of Human-AI Co-Creation: an architecture in which AI advances while humanity advances further.

A Transition, or a Founding

There is one further difference, and it is not a matter of emphasis.

Gates treats what is coming as a transition to be managed — a period of disruption between one settled order and the next, to be cushioned by institutions, taxation and reserved employment. That work is necessary and BGF supports it.

But this is not only a transition. It is a founding. A civilization is being formed in which human beings and non-human intelligence will act together, and a founding is not managed. It is constituted. That is why the Boston Global Forum and AIWS have not

written a policy recommendation but a Constitution for Humanity — and why the values of this age are being carried down to the level of the chip. Institutions govern within a settlement. Constitutions establish one.

The Time to Act

The essential ideas and foundations now exist. What is needed is the courage to act together.

Recognizing the urgency of this moment, Nguyen Anh Tuan, Co-founder, Co-Chair and CEO of the Boston Global Forum and Founder and Chief Architect of AIWS, has written to the recipients of the World Leader for Peace and Security Award and the World Leader in AIWS Award, and to the America 250: AI Pioneers, calling on them to join a common effort for humanity in the AI Age.

BGF-AIWS invites governments, international organizations, technology leaders, universities, businesses, civil society and individuals of conscience to join in building and implementing AIWS Trust Infrastructure, the Constitution for Humanity in the Age of AI, Constitutional Silicon, and AIWS Civilization.

The turbulent AI era is already here. The choices made now will shape generations. Warning must become architecture; architecture must become institutions and infrastructure; and these foundations must now become action — so that AI strengthens human dignity, freedom, peace, creativity, and a better future for all.

Read Bill Gates's essay, "The turbulent AI era is here. The choices we make now are critical," at gatesnotes.com.