3rd Global Simulation, 25–26 April 2026

Background Information for Prospective Participants

1. Context

The **AI Negotiation Challenge – 3rd Global Simulation** is a practice-oriented initiative designed to encourage the **safe, effective, and responsible integration of artificial intelligence into diplomacy and multilateral negotiation**. It provides a controlled yet realistic environment in which participants can experiment with AI-assisted negotiation while preserving human agency, leadership, and accountability.

The Global Simulation on 25 – 26 April 2026 hosted by the Harvard Kennedy School of Government constitutes builds directly on two prior editions:

- March 2025: a hybrid simulation hosted by Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences involving 27 teams involving more than 100 participants from around the world negotiating a multilateral climate conference.

- May 2025: a hybrid simulation hosted by the Geneva Graduate Institute involving 18 teams with over 70 participants across Europe, the Middle East and Africa negotiating a multilateral process on migration in Europe.

Each edition addresses a pressing contemporary global issue and frames the simulation as a structured opportunity to apply AI tools to real-world multilateral challenges. Participants develop practical experience in using AI in ways, while maintaining clear human agency and control. The 2026 Global Simulation is organised as a three-round competition that recognises team performance and excellence—both in the quality of AI integration and in the strength of negotiation strategy, leadership, and coalition-building capacity.

2. Background and Rationale

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping the analytical environment of diplomacy: negotiators increasingly operate in settings characterized by high data density, accelerated decision cycles, and intense public scrutiny. While AI tools can significantly enhance preparation, analysis, and scenario exploration, they also

introduce risks related to automation bias, erosion of responsibility, and implicit delegation of authority.

The AI Negotiation Challenge addresses this tension by treating AI not as a negotiating actor, but as cognitive support structure that must be consciously triggered and governed by human negotiators. The Global Simulation allows participants to test how AI can support multilateral negotiation without replacing human judgment or accountability.

The third edition continues this approach while engaging with a new thematic domain of high strategic sensitivity: The New Frontier of Diplomacy: Security and cooperation in the Arctic.

3. Strategic Objectives

The Global Simulation pursues the following strategic objectives:

- Promote responsible and disciplined uses of AI in diplomacy and multilateral negotiation.
- Strengthen negotiators' capacity to systematize preparation and analysis while preserving human agency.
- Create a community of practice across academia and professional diplomacy focused on AI governance, and integration.
- Generate practical insights into the limits, risks, and added value of AI-assisted negotiation in complex political environments.

4. Operational Objectives

Operationally, the simulation aims to:

- Provide participants with hands-on experience using their own AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini) in a competitive multilateral setting.
- Test negotiators' ability to integrate AI insights into strategy under pressure and uncertainty.
- Evaluate both innovative uses of AI and the quality of human leadership, reasoning, and ethical restraint in negotiation.

5. Thematic Focus

The 2026 edition will simulate a fictive multilateral conference on the future of security and cooperation in the Arctic as a global public good. By its geography, the Arctic is a zone of increasing strategic friction among major powers. At the same time, it is undergoing profound structural transformation driven by climate change, with far-reaching consequences for its inhabitants, ecosystems, and global stability. In this context, the Arctic is approached not only as a potential source of risk for international security, but also as a testing ground for the renewal of international cooperation and diplomacy in terms of methods, tools, and processes.

Accordingly, the objective of the simulated conference is not to arbitrate current Arctic politics or promote a substantive territorial agenda. It is to build a basis for consensus among the full range of stakeholders affected by the erosion of security and cooperation in the Arctic, understood in its broadest sense. Security and cooperation are therefore approached beyond traditional intergovernmental or military lenses.

The 2026 Global Simulation adopts a human-centred and global public-good perspective that broadens security beyond traditional state-centric or military frameworks. It recognises the Arctic's rapidly changing environment not only as a source of uncertainty, but also as an opportunity for new forms of diplomacy and renewed international cooperation. In this sense, the Arctic's fragility makes it a laboratory for diplomatic innovation, requiring approaches capable of connecting traditional security concerns with human security, environmental security, global economic governance, and scientific cooperation. The simulation therefore places emphasis on:

- The protection of human security and the strengthening of community resilience
- Environmental stewardship and intergenerational responsibility in the face of systemic transformation
- The meaningful participation of indigenous peoples, local communities, scientific actors, and economic stakeholders, consistent with inclusive multilateral practice
- The responsible governance of emerging risks and opportunities generated by Arctic transformation
- The development of integrative diplomatic methods capable of managing interconnected and multifaceted crises that are likely to define the global environment in the decades ahead

This framing legitimises the inclusion of state and non-state actors alike, reflecting the reality that authority, knowledge, and impact in the Arctic are widely distributed.

The conference is explicitly designed as a consensus-seeking multilateral process, modelled on large-scale, multi-stakeholder conferences similar to the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) and other larges multistakeholder conferences. It integrates Track I, Track II, and Track III diplomacy and focuses on process rather than outcome: how inclusive, legitimate, and disciplined cooperation can be planned and conducted under conditions of geopolitical fragmentation, climate and economic uncertainties, and high global stakes.

Within this complex and dynamic framework, artificial intelligence is used as a planning and sense-making infrastructure to support the design of strategies, sequencing of tactical moves, and pathway to coalition-building in a multilateral conference.

6. Simulation Format and Process

Overall Format:

- Hybrid event, hosted at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government
- Integrated into a course for mid-career Master's students in public policy and frontline negotiation.
- Open to external teams of graduate students and negotiation professionals.

Participants and Roles:

- Approximately 40 stakeholders represented by team of 3 to 5 participants
- Teams apply as a group and are assigned roles; roles cannot be chosen.

This reassignment is deliberate, to avoid politicisation of the simulation scenario and to incentivise the use of AI to explore unfamiliar perspectives.

Preparation Phase:

- Teams receive their role approximately one week before the simulation.
- Teams participate in optional briefing sessions organised by the AI Negotiation Challenge Community of Practice. Teams also have the possibility to watch short tutorial videos on how to craft their GPT as well as use this GPT in negotiations.
- On the day prior to the simulation, teams are invited to participate to a thematic briefing session on the object of the conference that is security and cooperation in the Arctic delivered by experts.
- Participants can then join the simulation on 26 April with their own AI capabilities and experiences

A symbolic USD 40 fee per team applies to ensure commitment (waived for Harvard-based teams, participants from partner organisations and AINC community members).

Simulation Timeline

Day 1 – Saturday, 25 April 2026

- 3-hour thematic briefings by experts on Arctic security and cooperation.
- Historical and comparative perspectives (Arctic Council, OSCE, CSCE Helsinki process).
- Orientation to the simulation and procedural rules.
- Round 1 – Teams start working on their position paper. Deadline for submission is opening of Day 2.

Day 2 – Sunday, 26 April 2026: Competitive Simulation

- All teams present their position paper.
- New disruptive information is introduced on the morning of the round.
- Submissions are reviewed by the jury.

Round 2 – Coalition Building (2h30)

The presidency of the conference introduces key drivers for a possible agreement.

- Teams engage in intensive consultations to build coalitions.
- Teams will use their AI model to find appropriate language for their coalition position.
- Coalition building is primarily human-to-human (online and on-site).
- Teams submit revised positions and coalition configurations.
- Jury members circulate in meeting rooms.

30-minute jury deliberations. Five finalist coalitions/teams advance to Round 3.

Round 3 – Drafting of the Conference Final Declaration (1h00)

- Finalist teams meet in the office of the conference presidency, representing their coalition.
- They negotiate and draft a shared declaration on security and cooperation in the Arctic.
- This round is intentionally human-driven, testing leadership, judgment, and trust.

7. Evaluation Criteria

The jury evaluates teams on:

- Quality and discipline of AI integration (not automation).
- Strategic reasoning and adaptation under uncertainty.
- Ability to build coalitions and manage adversarial dynamics.
- Preservation of human agency, leadership, and accountability.

Performance is not defined by dominance, but by responsible and effective negotiation practice. The criteria will be shared in advance.

All participants will receive a Certificate of participation. All teams selected for Round 3 will receive a Certificate of Excellence. The winning team will receive the 2026 AI Negotiation Challenge Global Award.

8. Audience

The simulation targets:

- Mid-career graduate students.
- Young negotiation professionals.
- Mid-career practitioners in diplomacy, policy, and international affairs.

Special attention is given to recruiting participants from countries directly affected by Arctic security and cooperation dynamics, while maintaining the principle of assigned roles.

9. Training and Optional Course

Briefing sessions will be provided at no cost to all registered teams by the AI Negotiation Challenge Community of Practice. These briefing sessions are not courses *per se*, but practical preparation support. All participants will have access to video tutorials:

- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence for Negotiators: An accessible overview of AI principles and applications specific to negotiation contexts.
- Setting Up Your GPT: A step-by-step guide to configuring and personalizing your AI assistant using GPT technologies.
- Crafting Your AI Assistant: Techniques for tailoring AI capabilities to enhance negotiation planning and strategies.

FATC will offer a separate and optional advanced course on negotiating with AI (9 hours over three days) for a fee of USD 240 per individual, with 20% of seats offered free for students and professionals from the Global South through a waiting list. Participation in the FATC course is not required for the simulation and confers no competitive advantage.

(See in Annex 1 for the Calendar of preparatory activities)

10. Organisation and Governance

The Global Simulation is organised by Frontline Associate Training Center (FATC) under the AI Negotiation Challenge initiative. It is conducted in collaboration with Harvard University and other partner universities. Jury members, organisers, coaches, and facilitators participate on a voluntary basis. The initiative is non-profit; all revenues are reinvested in the event. Harvard University hosts the live simulation as part of an academic course but does not sponsor or endorse the initiative. Responsibility for design and content rests solely with FATC.

11. Contact

For further information, please contact:

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Annex 1: Calendar of preparatory activities (all Boston ET time)

For more information on dates, Zoom links and time zones, please visit: https://www.ai-negotiation-challenge.org/calendar

2026 Global Simulation Information Sessions (Open Access)

- Thursday, March 5, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Monday, March 23, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Thursday, April 9, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

2026 Global simulation Participant Briefing Sessions (Registered Participants)

- Monday, March 9, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Thursday, March 26, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
- Monday, April 20, 2026, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

FATC Negotiating with AI Advanced Course (paid registration required):

- Friday, April 3, 2026, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Monday, April 6, 2026, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Speaker Series Sessions (for the AINC Community Activities)

- Speaker Series: Implications of AI for Managers and Institutional Workflows
  Friday, March 11, 2026, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
- Speaker Series: Efficiency vs. Effectiveness in AI-Assisted Negotiation — Limits of Probabilistic Models
  Friday, March 18, 2026, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM