

Message from the President of INAT – May 2026

We define appropriate technology as “technology that empowers people and their communities”. Empowering communities must be an egalitarian democratic process that eliminates economic and social inequality. Empowering individuals means each person must be able to control their labor and the benefits from their labor. Political and economic policies direct the development and deployment of technology and techniques that impact the labor process.

The Appropriate Technology Manifesto (ATM) points out historically how these policies have been driven by a ‘conquest mentality’. This ideological perspective, promoted by capitalism, justifies the destruction of the environment, the displacement of indigenous populations, enslavement, and exploitation as collateral damage in the process of technological advancement. Billions are spent on the conquest of space, sub-atomic particles, and genomic identification. This conquest is done to provide profits for the wealthy, not to advance the standard of living for the billions of people on this planet. The ATM guides technology policy toward appropriate technology. Directives are outlined for different stakeholder categories. The stakeholder categories of private sector, government, educational institutions, international agencies, NGOs/non-profits, and Concerned individuals are considered. Unfortunately, this apolitical approach overlooks two important stakeholder categories: political parties and workers’ organizations (Unions, federations of workers’ organizations).

May 1st is recognized globally as Workers’ Day. Organizations and communities across the world organize various manifestations to celebrate past victories of workers and call for further empowerment of workers. At the end of the month, people across Africa and the African diaspora commemorated African Liberation Day (May 25th), acknowledging Africa’s political independence victories. It also served to mobilize and organize to continue the fight to empower the masses of Africans. INAT shares the goal of empowering the masses. We extend on the ATM, calling for workers’ organizations and political parties to plot a technology policy agenda to empower the ordinary man and woman.

Workers’ organizations have the ability and responsibility to examine the dynamics of their production environments. The goals of reducing workplace alienation, improving safety, and advancing environmental compatibility require changes in technology engagement. The process of improving working conditions and workers’ benefits must seek to control the production process, not simply make requests for concessions.

The dominant political party controls the state apparatus. Competing political parties seek to gain control of the state. Political parties must position themselves as servants of the people and present clear plans to bring control of production to the workers and their communities. This is a manner of advocating appropriate technologies and techniques.

To encourage innovation and empower more people, China is promoting the “one-person company” (OPC). In the May 22-28, 2026, *China Daily*, Shi Jing and Wang Ying explain how “AI tools from code generations to content engines – are dramatically lowering the cost of starting and running a company.” According to the article, in 2026, an OPC spends \$200 to develop a software-as-a-service product in under 30 days, and over 16 million OPCs are in operation across China. Not all OPCs will succeed, but with government support and the backing of the ruling political party, the number of OPCs will grow. We must keep a watchful eye on what innovations develop and how they shape the future of the masses and the direction of AI technology. Is this an approach that political parties should advocate for their respective countries? Will the emergence of OPCs lead to a new form of worker collaboration and organization that can impact technology policy?