



**International Telecommunication Union  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR AFRICA**

**Kampala Outcomes and Recommendations on Child Online Protection**

*Conference on Africa Child Online Protection (ACOP): Empowering the Future Digital citizens*

The Regional Conference on Africa Child Online Protection (ACOP): Empowering the Future Digital citizens took place from 15-16 December 2014 in Kampala, Uganda. The event was organized by the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Several sessions were co-organized with Facebook, UNICEF, UNODC and ECPAT International. The First Lady of the Republic of Uganda H.E. Janet Kataaha Museveni and the Hon. Eng. John Nasasira, Minister of Information and Communications Technology of Uganda also attended the event and the First Lady gave the Keynote Address.



The Regional Conference was the first international event of its nature, focusing on Child Online Protection in the African region. More than 200 participants from 21 African countries, comprising of policymakers, business leaders, International Organizations and representatives from civil society, attended the event to share information on existing activities within the African countries and define a way forward to consolidate the activities towards a regional framework for cooperation. In addition, the workshop helped regional stakeholders to further discuss the risks and points of weakness, and evaluate appropriate tools and approaches to promote growth of a safe and responsible young population online.

The two days conference touched upon different issues related to online safety for children in line with the ITU COP five strategic pillars. The main outcomes are presented as follows:

### **In the Opening Remarks...**

“COP is about protection as much as it is about education, giving children sensible, age appropriate education about what to expect on the Internet. We need to teach young children not only how to stay safe online, but also how to behave online too” “The subject at hand is most important to us as parents and leaders.”

“I want to urge you participants to think about the kind of society we want to build, each one of us and collectively in our respective capacities can contribute to a society where children could be safe. Lets work together to protect our most valuable and most vulnerable yet precious asset in our society, our children”.  
The First Lady of the Republic of Uganda H.E. Janet Kataaha Museveni

“This Conference is timely, COP is our duty and responsibility, it is important that children learn how to use ICTs, in a way that allows them to develop safe and responsible practices on the Internet and to develop the skills that would support and enhance their lives when they become adults”. the Hon. Eng. John Nasasira, Minister of Information and Communications Technology of Uganda

“ITU is committed to connecting children around the world safely and responsibly. COP is not only ethically important but it also makes good business sense” Mr. Andrew Rugege, Regional Director for Africa.

### **Understanding the digital landscape: opportunities, risks and challenges faced by young children in the online environment**

- Technology and connectivity is the foundation to fast track development in Africa – creating informed communities, citizenship, and influencing economic growth.
- Most effective investment for the public sector can come from connectivity in rural areas especially in Africa where mobile phone usage increase could create a level playing field and bring development to these communities.
- Connectivity allows children and young people to share ideas and also provide input on policies and programs being designed for them.
- Research, collection of data and evidence-based approach are key to formulating the right policies and reflect the current situation of internet usage among young people. All children need to be represented in consultation.
- It's about behavior: children and parents need to learn the type of online behavior they need to adopt. Digital literacy, as well as the importance of parental engagement with children are crucial.
  - Setting up Helplines: children need to be heard, they have the right to be helped. A proper infrastructure to get the number in place, with counselling staff ready to help the victims has been recognized as crucial.
  - Involving the industry: it is important to look at companies' policies, partnerships and technical solutions. Local communities can be reached by the actions of NGOs who will understand the local culture and language of the users.
  - Scale up COP initiatives including knowledge, skills and experience to Africa, Inclusive of all stakeholders in COP.
  - Elaborate various COP best Practices and trends.

- Target different strategies to deal with different types of risk that children and young people face online: -
  - o Youth involvement at all levels of the process: to formulate their ideas and needs, be an integral part of defining and implementing the roll-out of solutions, and be fully informed on how their ideas help shape the future.
  - o Include ministries of education to work with industry and NGOs so that teachers can have a clear definition of their task and have nationally validated resources and support services to build the competencies required to become responsible citizens.
  - o Even though most countries do not have specific institutions to monitor child sexual abuse material online, there is indeed legislation geared towards child protection.
  - o Working together, there is a need to explore all necessary initiatives geared towards child online protection, and ultimately come up with a framework that will identify institutions that will own up the responsibility in each country.

### **Country workshop: sharing national roadmaps and measures to reduce online crimes related to children**

- Government needs to:
  - engage with partners to make sure that educational programs are put in place according to the national government infrastructure;
  - keep their legislative and regulatory frameworks updated;
  - establish tools and policies for engaging children and parents;
  - Engage with national stakeholders who can address child online safety in a harmonized and coordinate manner. In this regard, for countries that have established the national CIRT it is key to bring together international organizations, civil society and private sector to respond efficiently to reports related to online crime targeting children and young people;
  - have international and regional organizations working together to harmonize measures when it comes to national strategies implementation;
  - carry out studies to establish user habits of children and awareness levels of parents and guardians (here being teachers and other significant adults); and
  - Consider appointing a CoP champion at the national level.

### **Legal perspectives**

- **Updating and Harmonizing Regional Legislation on Child Online Protection**
  - Countries must work to update and harmonize their legislation on child online protection. Legislation governing police investigations, the definition of criminal offences, evidence admissible in the courtroom, extradition, and sentencing guidelines should be tailored to maximize the potential for protecting children online and investigating, prosecuting, and punishing offenders. Law reform commissions should engage in periodic reviews of this legislation to ensure that it is updated on a regular basis to keep pace with evolving child online protection needs.
  - Countries may work on the updates by assessing the national legislation and harmonize their legislation at regional level on COP by taking into account the work on harmonization of legislation which was done with the help of the ITU-EU HIPSSA project.
  - Encourage countries to develop national strategies on COP, as well as the legislation in the field of Information Society, such as on data protection and electronic commerce and electronic evidence (as these aspects indirectly concern children and child safety online) and so to allow the better empowerment of children in the Information Society.

- **Ratifying the African Union Cybercrime Convention**
  - Countries must ratify the Cybercrime Convention as soon as possible. Moreover, they should consider using the definitions and guidelines for legislation ensuring child online protection, which are contained in the convention, as a template for their own national legislation.
- **Providing for Child-Friendly Courtrooms**
  - Countries must take steps to ensure that children are protected and feel comfortable when their presence is required in courtroom proceedings regarding child online protection. The use of child psychologists, anatomically correct dolls, video-link, and other measures should be considered.
  - These measures should be made available where resources permit.
  - Develop mechanisms on child victims' assistance.
- **Building the Capacity of State Actors who Investigate, Prosecute, and Punish Persons who Abuse Children Online**
  - Investigative bodies, prosecutors, and judges must receive capacity-building training to sensitize them to child online protection. In particular, they should receive training on the overarching subjects of digital forensics and electronic evidence.
  - Provide Defense Counsel in addition to law enforcement, prosecutors and the judiciary as requiring assistance.
  - Build COP capacity for professionals working with children.

#### **The role of Industry: how business can promote safety for children**

- Industry has a responsibility to help young people navigate the Internet safely, and to do what they can to create a safe space to support African youth to lead digital innovation.
- Industry cannot do it alone; a multi stakeholder approach, including appropriate regulations, law enforcement support, civil society engagement and parental involvement are critical.
- COP makes good business sense.
- **Recommendations for next steps from and for industry in Africa include:**
  - Creation of a regional and/or country-specific multi-stakeholder platform or organization to be a focal point for future action.
  - Education for civil society and government on the most popular platforms, so they are aware of functionality, privacy and child safety tools.
  - Industry understanding of local context, including how children are accessing the Internet, so industry can develop locally relevant tools and guidance and more solutions that recognize that children may not have access to traditional telephony.
  - Industry participation to provide input on child safety to add to national educational curriculum requirements.
  - Industry commitment to prevent their customers from accessing child sexual abuse material
  - Greater coordination and resource allocation to address what happens after incidents are reported to helplines.

#### **Education as a vehicle to empower children and young people**

- Education and awareness are key to empowering and building resilience online. Developing education and awareness resources and the ways of providing appropriate training tailored to all

stakeholders, children and children with disabilities, parents and policy makers without reinventing the wheel are essential to building a safe online experience for children.

- **Recommendations for next steps:**

- Encouraging educational programmes, workshops and mechanisms for education and awareness, and information dissemination to parents, children and other stakeholders.
- Equipping teachers and schools well with the skills to support younger children.
- Building teachers capacity through training and provide them with the right tools to develop resources.
- Engaging children while developing the resources and delivering them as well.
- Fostering ongoing digital skills and internet safety training for young people.
- Building more industry partnerships with non-profit safety advocates who are creating and providing useful online safety information.
- Creating a community environment for online safety so as to reinforce parental activity and involvement.
- Seeking to promote users' awareness of how and to whom to report abuse and concerns, including where available, specialized external agencies and law enforcement bodies.
- Share knowledge, experience and resources.

### **Empowering Youth to be Good Digital Citizens**

- ICTs reach's out where traditional communication technologies do not. Children and young people need access to information so they can make informed decisions, this is not only confined to information provision on COP, but also other areas of protection and empowerment. For example, information regarding how to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, other forms of life-saving information.
- Children and young people need to have a say on issues that affect their lives. For example, Platforms such as UNICEF's U-Report allow youth to provide input and allow policy-makers and others to know what the youth population is thinking, providing Voice to children and young people.
- Allow children and young people an opportunity for positive community participation to not only provide input, but also lead and develop programs focused on their interest building confidence.
- No one industry can do this alone. Cross-sectoral partnerships, including the government, private sector and civil society, are key to creating impactful programs that can reach a greater population. "When you want to go fast go alone. When you want to go far, go together." – African Proverb