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| **Regional Preparatory Meeting  for WTDC-17 for Arab Region (RPM-ARAB)** | P:\SUP\Logos\Post-150th Anniv\ITU-logo-UNblue.jpg |
| **Khartoum, Sudan, 30 January - 1 February 2017** |  |
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| Republic of the Sudan | |
| INITIATIVE FOR THE COUNTRIES OF arab region “ Child Online Protection Center ” | |
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**Priority area**

Regional Initiatives

**Summary**

This document contains a proposal from the Republic of Sudan for a subregional initiative for the Arab countries, entitled “Child Online Protection Center”.

**Expected results**

Establishment of regional Center for the Arab Countries that emporment the policies to protect children online, which recognise all stakeholders to share responsibility and make a safer online environment for children by reducing online threats to children, and to support the primary role of parents in evaluating and minimising risks of harm to their children online as well as offline; also undermine the framework conditions that enable the Internet to operate as a global open platform for communication, innovation, economic growth, and social progress.

**Referenece**

WTDC Resolution 67 (Dubai, 2014)

PP Resolution 179 (Guadalajara, 2010)

Importance of the problem and current situation

An increasing number of children are now using the Internet. They are starting at a younger age, using a variety of devices and spending more time online. The Internet can be a major channel for their education, creativity and self-expression. However, it also carries a spectrum of risks to which children are more vulnerable than adults. Addressing risks faced by children online is becoming a policy priority for an increasing number of governments.

* Facing many complex challenges,
* How to mitigate risks without reducing the opportunities and benefits for children online?
* How to prevent risks while preserving fundamental values for all Internet users, including the children themselves?
* How to ensure that policies are proportionate to the problem and do not unsettle the framework conditions that have enabled the Internet economy to flourish?

Governments are not alone in their efforts to protect children online. Parents, caregivers, educators, business and civil society can also help children to benefit from the Internet. They too have a responsibility to protect them against risks online.

Objectives of the proposed initiative

a. Demonstrate leadership and commitment to protect children online by:

i) Adopting clear objectives at the highest level of Arab Conteries,

ii) Identifying government bodies with responsibility and authority to implement these policy objectives and to co-operate across borders,

iii) Developing policies that are inclusive of all stakeholders and rely on a mix of public and private, voluntary and legal, awareness raising, educational and technical measures to protect children online.

b. Support a co-ordinated response from all stakeholders by facilitating and, as appropriate, establishing:

i) An open dialogue in order to foster synergies, benefit from the expertise of all stakeholders including parents, educators and the children themselves and take into account their perspectives,

ii) Partnerships to develop self- and co-regulatory programmes characterised by transparency and accountability.

c. Foster consistency and coherence of domestic child online protection initiatives across public and private stakeholders. This could include:

i) Ensuring the enforcement of existing protection measures,

ii) Clarifying the categories of risks and harmonising the terminology used to inform the public,

iii) Promoting mutually reinforcing policy measures rather than accumulating isolated or stand-alone, and potentially inconsistent, initiatives.

d. Foster awareness raising and education as essential tools for empowering parents and children by, for example:

i) Integrating Internet literacy and skills in school curricula with a focus on risks and appropriate online behaviour,

ii) Training educators and encouraging other stakeholders to educate and raise awareness of children and parents,

iii) Regularly measuring the evolution of their Internet literacy.

e. Support evidence-based policies for the protection of children online by:

i) Facilitating the further development of a robust empirical and analytical basis, including undertaking longitudinal surveys, with a view to support policy development and implementation through better understanding Internet usage by children, risk evolution and awareness,

ii) Conducting regular impact assessments of policies, including of co- and self-regulatory initiatives.

f. Encourage the development and adoption of technologies for the protection of children online that respect the rights of children and the freedom of other Internet users. This could include:

i) Fostering further research on privacy protective, interoperable and user friendly technical measures, including parental controls and age verification systems,

ii) Promoting the use of technologies which enable children to protect themselves against online risks,

iii) Fostering the assessment of the potential impact of such technical measures in relation to fundamental values such as freedom of expression, privacy protection and the free flow of information, as well as the implementation of appropriate safeguards,

iv) Promoting labelling schemes attesting the trustworthiness, quality and user friendliness of such technical measures.

c. Support regional capacity building efforts to improve policy and operational measures to protect children on the Internet, including the pooling and sharing of successful education and awareness raising tools.

Expected results

A collaborative effort by governments in the Arab Countries, the private sector, civil society and the Internet technical community to build a common understanding of the impact of the Internet on minors and to enhance their protection and support when using the Internet. also to increase cross-border co-operation by governments and enforcement authorities with respect to the protection of minors.

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