

## RESOLUTION 67 (Rev. Kigali, 2022)

### **The role of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector in child online protection**

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Kigali 2022),

*recognizing*

- a) that children's rights is a relevant topic in the context of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- b) high Internet user growth rates, particularly in the young population of all Member States;
- c) that there is an urgent need and global demand for the protection of children from exploitation and exposure to risks and harm when using telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly mobile technologies;
- d) that many of them will participate in the youth programmes of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and will become active members in the development of coordination mechanisms with youth forums,

*recalling*

- a) the memorandum of understanding between the secretariat of the Union and Child Helpline International (CHI);
- b) Resolution 1306 adopted by the ITU Council at its 2009 session, under which the Council Working Group on Child Online Protection (CWG-COP) was set up, and the group's mandate defined by the ITU members in close collaboration with the secretariat of the Union;
- c) the outcomes of the work accomplished by CWG-COP;
- d) Resolution 179 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in child online protection;

*e)* that the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (New York, 1989), bearing in mind that the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in Articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in Article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children;

*f)* that, within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the States Parties undertook to protect the child from all forms of exploitation and sexual abuse, and for that purpose, in particular, to take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent (a) the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials (Article 34);

*g)* that the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes for States Parties that children have the right to freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, especially those aimed at promoting their social, spiritual and moral well-being and their physical and mental health;

*h)* that pursuant to Article 10 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (New York, 2000) on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the States Parties shall take all necessary steps to strengthen international cooperation by multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for acts involving the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and child sex tourism; and shall also promote international cooperation and coordination between their authorities, national and international non-governmental organizations and international organizations;

*i)* that United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 20/8, adopted on 5 July 2012, states that "the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online";

- j)* that the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted its General comment No. 25 (2021), on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, which outlines how States Parties should implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to the digital environment;
- k)* that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), in the Tunis Commitment of 2005 (§ 24), recognized the role of ICTs in the protection of children and in enhancing the development of children, urging Member States to strengthen action to protect children from abuse and defend their rights in the context of ICTs;
- l)* that Resolution 45 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of this conference, on mechanisms for enhancing cooperation on cybersecurity, including countering and combating spam, recognizes the role of telecommunications/ICTs in the protection of children and in enhancing their development and that action to protect children from abuse and defend their rights in the context of telecommunications/ICTs should be strengthened, emphasizing that the best interests of the child are a key consideration;
- m)* that, during the 2012 WSIS Forum in Geneva, a meeting was organized with partners in the Child Online Protection (COP) initiative, which achieved an important outcome, namely the agreement to work closely with the Family Online Safety Institute and the Internet Watch Foundation in order to provide the necessary assistance to Member States;
- n)* Resolution 17 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of this conference, which invites nations to pursue regional initiatives;
- o)* the work under way in Question 3/2 of Study Group 2 of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), on cybersecurity, which includes child online protection, as well as other relevant activities in the ITU Sectors, and activities of CWG-COP,

*taking into account*

- a)* that there are online risks that children are exposed to on the Internet, which have diversified and multiplied with the rapid development of information technology and telecommunication devices;
- b)* that the Internet is a major platform for many different types of educational, cultural and entertainment activities and plays a very important role in the provision of education for children, enriching the curriculum and helping to bridge language and other barriers between the children of all nations;

- c) the increasingly widespread access to telecommunications/ICTs worldwide, in particular the Internet, and use thereof by children, at times with no control or guidance;
- d) the importance of empowering children in the use of telecommunications/ICTs, so they can develop ICT knowledge and skills to make critical and safe use of the Internet, through digital literacy;
- e) the need for children to use telecommunication/ICT tools, with emphasis on the importance of protecting them online;
- f) the need to protect children's data when they are being collected to produce statistics and indicators on child online protection;
- g) the requirement for a multistakeholder approach, as envisaged by WSIS, in order to promote social responsibility in the telecommunication/ICT sector so as to effectively make use of the variety of tools available to build confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs, reducing the risks identified for children;
- h) that, in order to address the issue of cybersecurity for children, it is critical that proactive measures be taken in order to protect children online at an international level;
- i) the technical difficulties involved in establishing a single harmonized global child helpline number;
- j) that the number of children who possess or use devices such as mobile phones is constantly increasing;
- k) the need to continue working at global and regional levels to find available technological solutions to protect children online, as well as innovative applications to make it easier for children to communicate with child online protection helplines;
- l) the activities undertaken by ITU in the area of child online protection at the regional and international levels, including the development of guidelines and multimedia training courses for children, parents, carers, guardians and educators, and representatives of the private and public sectors;
- m) the activities undertaken by many countries in recent years, including those related to the regional initiatives approved at world telecommunication development conferences (WTDCs),

*resolves to instruct the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau*

- 1 to continue with the activities in the area of child online protection, including supporting activities of the COP initiative with the relevant ITU study group Questions, with a view to providing guidance to Member States on strategies, best practices and cooperative efforts that can be promoted for the benefit of children;
- 2 to support the coordination of ITU-D study group studies with CWG-COP, including through the mutual provision of information on the results of their meetings in the liaison statement format, so as to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize impact related to child online protection;
- 3 to encourage Member States and Sector Members to submit best practices on issues of child online protection to CWG-COP as well as relevant ITU-D study group meetings;
- 4 to support the coordination of the COP initiative with other similar initiatives being undertaken at the national, regional and international levels in order to build partnerships to maximize efforts in this important area;
- 5 to continue to assist Member States, in particular developing countries<sup>1</sup>, in developing their national child online protection strategies in collaboration with stakeholders;
- 6 to promote the dissemination of methodological frameworks for the collection of statistics on child online protection with the purpose of maximizing global data comparison among countries and capacity development;
- 7 to encourage regional coordination in addressing the issue of child online protection, such as through the development and dissemination of guiding principles, in cooperation with ITU regional offices and relevant entities;
- 8 to investigate suitable ways of encouraging developing countries to participate in the work of CWG-COP;

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<sup>1</sup> These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

9 to coordinate with the ITU regional offices on the submission of quarterly reports to CWG-COP and on ways of progressing work on child online protection;

10 to support the work of CWG-COP by organizing orientation sessions for experts in connection with meetings of the group;

11 to facilitate the dissemination, including through the ITU website, of training materials and guidance on child online protection programmes that have been developed through BDT processes, including their translation into ITU official languages, within the limits of available financial resources;

12 to submit a report on the results of implementation of this resolution to the next WTDC,

*invites Member States and Sector Members*

1 to participate actively in all relevant ITU activities, including, *inter alia*, CWG-COP, Study Group 2 Question 3/2, and related programmes within ITU-D, for the purposes of comprehensive discussion and exchange of information on legal, technical, organizational and procedural issues as well as capacity building and international cooperation for protecting children online;

2 to facilitate the availability of child online protection resources in order to educate children, parents, carers, guardians, educators, industry and other relevant stakeholders,

*invites Member States*

1 to consider establishing national child online protection strategies;

2 to implement the above-mentioned actions in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations, so as to improve the effectiveness of child online protection;

3 to work closely with all stakeholders to promote the allocation of national and regional telephone numbers for child online protection;

4 to support the collection and analysis of data to obtain statistics and indicators on child online protection that will contribute to public policy design and implementation, enabling cross-country comparisons;

5 to develop self-regulatory approaches in cooperation with the private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations;

6 to facilitate the dissemination of training courses and guidance on child online protection that have been developed through BDT processes, among interested parties and training establishments,

*invites Sector Members*

1 to develop solutions and applications to help protect children by making it easier for children to communicate with child online protection helplines;

2 to keep Member States informed of modern technological solutions for protecting children online, taking into account best practices from industry and other interested stakeholders.