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| CALL FOR ITU GENERAL SECRETARIAT ON ENHANCING THE UNION'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORMATS AND IN RELEVANT DISCUSSIONS |

**1. Introduction**

We believe that greater ITU involvement in discussions on the global agenda in other major fora, in particular child online protection, is urgently needed.

ITU launched the Child Online Protection Initiative in November 2008 that was endorsed by the UN Secretary-General, Heads of State, Ministers and heads of international organizations from around the world. In June 2020, ITU launched its new 2020 Guidelines on Child Online Protection, which is a comprehensive set of recommendations for children, parents and educators, industry and policymakers on how to contribute to the development of a safe and empowering online environment for children and young people. The new guidelines were re-designed from the ground up to reflect the significant shifts in the digital landscape in which children find themselves, such as the Internet of Things, connected toys, online gaming, robotics, machine learning and artificial intelligence. In addition, this new edition addresses an important lacuna: the situation faced by children with disabilities, for whom the online world offers a particularly crucial lifeline to full and fulfilling social participation. Consideration of the special needs of migrant children and other vulnerable groups has also been included.

Moreover, in 2010 ITU was the first international organization that made an attempt to provide an overall statistical framework related to the measurement of child online protection with a particular emphasis on measures that are suitable for international comparison, and published the subsequent report. In 2013 ITU in collaboration with ACOPEA and Facebook launched E-safety pilot program to promote child online safety in Africa as part of its Child Online Protection initiative.

There is also very active work being done by ITU bodies. At the Council level Working Group on Child Online Protection is in force to raise awareness on child online safety issues and assist to cooperate accordingly. At the operational level in ITU Telecommunication Development sector the child online protection is very actively discussed within its cybersecurity track and many efforts are made by the Telecommunication Development Bureau.

Despite the briefly highlighted ITU experience and efforts in protecting children online, it is regrettable to note the low level of ITU engagement in thematic discussions that are taking place in other international formats.

For example, under the Italian presidency of the G20 in 2021, as an annex to the ministerial declaration at the ministerial level the “G20 High Level Principles for Children Protection and Empowerment in the Digital Environment” were endorsed. These principles are based solely on the principles and recommendations contained in the OECD Recommendation on Children in the Digital Environment.

Noting the high level of preparation of these OECD and G20 documents, we believe that cooperation of other international formats with ITU on this topic is imperative, since the Union has extensive practice in covering the issue of child protection online. Despite the proposal of the Russian Federation, supported by a number of G20 member countries, to include in these principles complementary ideas and provisions from the ITU 2020 Guidelines on Child Online Protection, the document in its final form does not reflect the experience and best practices of ITU. It seems possible that this situation is due to the fact that ITU did not personally take part in the preparation and discussion of these principles.

At the same time, a number of other organizations of the UN system, in particular, UNCTAD took an active part in the work on the final documents of the G20 in 2021, which is noted in the ministerial declaration of 2021.

Not only on the topic of child online protection, but also on ITU's global engagement, it is important for ITU to closely follow the thematic work in other international formats and take an active part in their discussions, advocating for extensive experience and excellent work of ITU and its Member States to be taken into account in work on key issues on the global agenda outside the Union.

**2. Proposal**

We call on the ITU General Secretariat to intensify the Union's involvement in other international formats and related discussions so that the vast experience and excellent work of ITU and its Member States are taken into account in working on key issues on the global agenda outside the Union.

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