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|  | **Document CWG-COP-22/INF/1** |
| **10 January 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Note by the Secretary-General | |
| ITU INDUSTRY CONNECT: QUARTERLY INTERSECTORAL DISCUSSIONS ON CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION | |
| **Purpose**  The objective of this document is to outline the concept and framework for *ITU Industry Connect: Quarterly Intersectoral Discussions on Child Online Protection*, a series of closed, solution-oriented webinars allow dialogue between industry, Member States and other relevant stakeholders. These sessions aim to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange between sectors to address emerging challenges and opportunities in Child Online Protection (COP). By leveraging ITU's role as a neutral convener, the initiative seeks to promote cross-sectoral dialogue, share best practices, and drive actionable strategies to create a safer, more empowering online environment for children.  **Action required**  This document is transmitted to the Council Working Group on child online protection **for information**. | |

***ITU Industry Connect:   
Quarterly intersectoral Discussions on Child Online Protection***

**A conversation series   
  
Fostering Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange  
  
DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

Background

It is estimated that one in three Internet users is under the age of 18. And while the online environment has proven to be beneficial for children to thrive, it also poses risks to their safety and wellbeing: The rapid increase in children's use of digital platforms, including gaming, social media, and emerging technologies such as AI, AR and VR, has brought new challenges to ensuring their safety online. More and more sectors are starting to realize the critical importance of a protective and empowering digital environment.

Globally, important steps are being taken forward to better protect children online. Recent legislative efforts, such as the **Digital Service Act** in the EU, **Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA)** in the U.S. and the **Online Safety Act** in the UK, or the most recent social media ban for children under 16 years of age in Australia[[1]](#footnote-1), highlight the urgency for collective action to protect children from risks exacerbated by platform design, usage, and insufficient safeguards. But they also show that dialogue between the sectors remains crucial to enable information sharing, and mutual learning to better prevent and respond to online safety challenges.

The ITU’s **Child Online Protection (COP)** initiative is uniquely positioned to address these challenges through a neutral platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue, fostering cooperation between ITU members, private sector leaders, policymakers, CSOs and subject-matter experts.

Overview

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) through its Development Bureau (BDT) proposes a series of quarterly online discussions titled *"Child Online Protection in Action: Industry Perspectives"*.

These closed, two-hour webinars will bring together ITU members, non-members, and industry representatives to share knowledge, best practices, and insights on emerging topics related to Child Online Protection (COP).

By fostering a conversational, solution-oriented approach, the sessions aim to promote collaboration across sectors while strengthening ITU’s role as a convener of global efforts for a safer online environment for children.

Objectives

 **Facilitate cross-sectoral and targeted dialogue** to share insights, innovations, challenges and strategies on urgent topics related to child online safety, leveraging insights from the tech industry and global legislative and regulatory trends.

 **Engage private sector leaders** **and Member States** in informal, meaningful exchanges on emerging trends and challenges.

 **Promote industry participation** by inviting representatives from Big tech companies and other key players to share best practices, challenges, and new solutions.

 **Explore actionable takeaways** to empower stakeholders in advancing COP initiatives globally.

 **Highlight ITU’s leadership** in COP by offering a neutral platform for discussion and collaboration.

 **Encourage collaboration** between ITU members and potential members to create actionable strategies for addressing online risks to children.

 **Support ITU membership expansion efforts** by engaging non-members and fostering their alignment with ITU-D initiatives.

Format

 **Frequency:** One session per quarter, held on the 17th of the last month of each quarter (March-June-September-December). The specific date remains subject to confirmation.

 **Duration:** Two hours per session (15 min of expert organisations setting the scene (academia, UN, CSOs), 45 minutes for industry presentations, 60 minutes for moderated dialogue around guiding questions).

 **Language Support:** Sessions will be fully translated and interpreted into all official ITU languages, supported by sponsorship, subject to availability.

 **Platform:** Virtual (Zoom or similar platform).

Participants

Participants will be invited to join individual sessions from ITU members and relevant non-members (including potential future members), subject-matter experts from private sector policy teams, Member State representatives including regulatory authorities, CSOs and relevant COP stakeholders.

Content

While risks to children often span multiple platforms simultaneously—such as social media, gaming platforms, including those using VR and AR as well as AI tools—and are relevant across various digital spaces, the proposed approach will enable sectors to discuss with platforms within the same type of sector. This ensures that good practices can be effectively transferred and adapted.

Therefore, to facilitate relevant and targeted discussions, each session will focus on a specific type of sector, such as **AI-driven platforms, social media platforms, gaming platforms, streaming services, and educational technology platforms**, among others. These sector-specific sessions will provide participants with the opportunity to share and discuss their initiatives addressing a **wide range of online risks and harms, including, but not limited to, online violence, exposure to harmful or inappropriate content, privacy breaches and risks associated with AI and emerging technologies**.

This approach ensures that while discussions remain highly relevant to each sector, broader thematic issues and shared challenges are also addressed, fostering comprehensive and collaborative solutions across the digital environment.

Expected outcomes

 Enhanced understanding of industry-specific challenges and solutions in COP.

 Strengthened collaboration between Member States, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

 Actionable recommendations for advancing COP strategies globally through collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches.

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1. BBC, 2024, [Australia approves social media ban on under-16s](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=f5ec92657d900170c2e21837c5c516d7a472214f6fb217dc69929d4f74db8c1cJmltdHM9MTczNDM5MzYwMA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=2f403610-0494-6e29-0385-252905656f3d&psq=Australia+social+media+ban+children&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYmJjLmNvbS9uZXdzL2FydGljbGVzL2M4OXZqajBseHg5byM6fjp0ZXh0PUF1c3RyYWxpYSUyMHdpbGwlMjBiYW4lMjBjaGlsZHJlbiUyMHVuZGVyJTIwMTYlMjBmcm9tJTIwdXNpbmcsdG8lMjBBJTI0NTBtJTIwJTI4JTI0MzIuNW0lM0IlMjAlQzIlQTMyNS43bSUyOSUyMGlmJTIwdGhleSUyMGRvbiUyN3QlMjBjb21wbHku&ntb=1). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)