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|  | **Document CWG-COP-19/3** |
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| Contribution by the Philippines | |
| INTEGRATION OF CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION DISCUSSIONS IN ALL GIRLS IN ICT CELEBRATIONS OF ITU MEMBER STATES | |
| **Purpose**  The purpose of this document is to integrate Child Online Protection (COP) discussions in all Girls in ICT celebrations of ITU Member States in line with ITU Resolution 179, 67, 1306, as well as to the ITU’s COP Global Initiative and Decision 631.  **Action required**  The Council is invited to **consider** this document and **adopt** the draft resolution in the [Annex](#Annex).  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [Resolution 179](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-179-E.pdf) (Rev. Bucharest, 2023) - ITU's role in child online protection  [Resolution 67](https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/tdc/D-TDC-WTDC-2022-PDF-E.pdf) (WTDC, Kigali, 2022) - The role of the Telecommunication Development Sector in child online protection  [Resolution 1306](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-cop/Documents/Council-R-1306%20(3).pdf) Council Res 1306 (C09 Modified C15) - ITU's role with regard to International Public Policy Issues concerning Creating a Safer Internet Environment for Children.  [Decision 631](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0125/en) Decision on the implementation of Resolution 70 on “Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in ITU and promoting Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls through Telecommunications/Information and Communication Technologies” | |

**Introduction**

In order to combat the increasing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children, it is important to develop national public awareness efforts and harness global campaigns to build and strengthen national capacities on child online protection. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) recognizes that children are an especially vulnerable group and upholds children’s rights in the digital environment as per the principles set by the UN CRC General Comment No. 25 (2021) on children’s rights in relation to the digital environment.

With the goal to encourage girls and young women to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education; inspire girls and young women to work in STEM careers; and engage the community and promote collaboration through partnerships, the ITU established Girls in ICT in 2011. Every year since it was established, ITU and its partners work together to inspire and encourage girls to pursue a future in ICTs and to empower them by ensuring they have the necessary skills, confidence, and support to achieve their goals.

With over 377,000 girls and young women who have taken part in more than 11,400 International Girls in ICT Day celebrations in 171 countries, the Girls in ICT is an effective global campaign to promote gender equality and at the same time uphold the rights of children against online sexual abuse and exploitation. Further, the wide acceptance of Girls in ICT has a significant impact on promoting gender diversity and inclusion in the ICT industry. This acceptance has paved the way for various events and programs aimed at encouraging young girls and women to pursue careers in ICT fields. This year, the first regional level Girls in ICT ASEAN was conducted following the celebration of the Girls in ICT Philippines.

A statement directly quoted in Girls in ICT Toolkit states that *“it is important to note that while technology and specifically the Internet can provide many benefits and endless supply of knowledge and information, it may pose risks and harms, especially where children are concerned. To safeguard the interactions and privacy of the girls participating in your events, we invite you to consult the Guidelines for Child Online Protection (COP), prepared by ITU and COP partners for a safer and more secure cyber world”* emphasizes the adherence of this initiative to the COP Guideline.

By Resolution 1306 (modified 2015) ITU Council established the Council working group on Child Online Protection (CWG-COP) with the terms of reference to exchange views and promote and work on the subject matter and to report to the Council annually on the activities of CWG-COP.

**Proposal**

The Girls in ICT can be an effective advocacy strategy under the COP Global Initiative to combat online sexual abuse and exploitation of children since its institutionalization has already reached a significant number of girls and young women since its inception in 2011. Further, the wide acceptance of this initiative among Member States opens an opportunity to strengthen COP global initiatives by integrating COP discussions in all Girls in ICT celebrations of ITU Member States.

A constant inclusion in the yearly celebration paves way for policy dialogues and the development of national policy frameworks and legislations for the protection of children from all risks and potential harms that aim to ensure a safe, inclusive, and empowering digital environment.

**Recommendation**

Considering the Girls in ICT as an effective avenue, the Member States and Sector Members are invited to:

1. to maximize the effectiveness of Girls in ICT as a strategy to combat online sexual abuse and exploitation of children through the integration of COP discussions in all Girls in ICT celebrations of ITU Member States;
2. to utilize the Girls in ICT celebrations as platforms to promote awareness among girls and young women about the risks of online abuse and exploitation and to equip girls and young women with digital literacy skills to better understand the implications of their online actions and to critically evaluate online content and communicate safely;
3. to advocate for and support the development of robust national and international policies of ITU Member States aimed at preventing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children;
4. to continuously assess the impact of integrating COP discussions into Girls in ICT initiatives. Measure the effectiveness of these efforts in reducing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children and make necessary adjustments/reforms in the strategies and format.
5. To report the implementation and progress of this initiative at Council Working Group
6. To encourage the implementation through the regional initiatives and discussion at the Regional Development Forums

ANNEX

Draft New Resolution [...]

Integration of child online protection discussions in all Girls in ICT celebrations of ITU Member States

The ITU Council,

considering

*a)* Resolution 179 (Rev. Bucharest, 2023) ITU's role in child online protection;

*b)* Resolution 67 (WTDC, Kigali, 2022) on the role of the Telecommunication Development Sector in child online protection;

*c)* Resolution 1306 Council Res 1306 (C09 Modified C15) on ITU's role with regard to International Public Policy Issues concerning Creating a Safer Internet Environment for Children;

*d)* Resolution 70 adopted by the ITU Council at its 2023 session on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective in ITU and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through telecommunications/information and communication technologies”,

recalling

Resolution 1306 adopted by the 2009 Session of the Council, under which a child online protection working group was set up, with the participation of Member States and Sector Members,

taking into account

Resolution 179 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022​) at the Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022) resolved, under others:

a. to continue the COP initiative as a platform to raise awareness and share best practices on child online safety issues;

b. to continue providing assistance and support to Member States, especially developing countries, in developing and implementing roadmaps for the COP initiative;

c. to continue to coordinate the COP initiative, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders (see full Resolution 179),

recognizing

*a)* that there is imperative need for an urgent collective response to combat Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC);

*b)* that there is a wide acceptance of Girls in ICT among member states with 11,400 International Girls in ICT Day celebrations in 171 countries since 2011;

*c)* that said wide acceptance of Girls in ICT has paved the way for the conduct of the first regional level Girls in ICT ASEAN in 2023;

*d)* that the Girls in ICT initiative is designed to encourage and empower girls and young women to pursue careers in the field of ICT. It aims to bridge the gender gap in the ICT sector by providing opportunities, training, and resources to girls and women interested in technology-related careers,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1 to maximize the effectiveness of Girls in ICT as a strategy to combat online sexual abuse and exploitation of children through the integration of COP discussions in all Girls in ICT celebrations of ITU Member States;

2 to utilize the Girls in ICT celebrations as platforms to promote awareness among girls and young women about the risks of online abuse and exploitation and to equip girls and young women with digital literacy skills to better understand the implications of their online actions and to critically evaluate online content and communicate safely;

3 to advocate for and support the development of robust national and international policies of ITU member states aimed at preventing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children;

4 to continuously assess the impact of integrating COP discussions into Girls in ICT initiatives. Measure the effectiveness of these efforts in reducing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children and make necessary adjustments/reforms in the strategies and format.

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