Online Regional Dialogue on the 2020 ITU COP Guidelines and Opportunities for Implementation in the Arab Region
Monday 23 November 2020 (11:00-13:00) Cairo time

BACKGROUND

The Internet has transformed how we live. It is entirely integrated into the lives of children and young people, making it impossible to consider the digital and physical worlds separately. The trend used to be that one third of all Internet users today are children and young people, and UNICEF estimates that 71 per cent of young people are already online[1]. Notwithstanding the wide digital divides which exist in Arab region, between the urban and rural areas as well as between those who have resources and those who are less fortunate, one could be sure that the COVID19 pandemic has pushed everyone online by default and this should compel us to double any efforts towards supporting children and young people's lives online.

Digital technologies have opened up many new ways to communicate, learn, play games, enjoy music and engage in a vast array of cultural, educational and skill-enhancing activities. The Internet can provide crucial access to health and educational services as well as information on topics that are important for young people but may be taboo in their societies.

However, just as children and young people are often at the forefront of adopting and adapting to the new connected technologies together with the opportunities and benefits they bring, they are also being exposed to a range of content, contact and conduct threats and harms online. It is important for policy-makers to appreciate these threats and harms in formulating policy responses.

Governments, the ICT industry and civil society need to work with children and young people to understand their perspectives and spark genuine public debate about risks and opportunities. Supporting children and young people to manage online risks can be effective, but governments must also ensure that there are adequate support services for those who experience harm online, and that children are aware of how to access those services.

Upon the request of the Member States, the Child Online Protection (COP) Guidelines, firstly developed in 2009, have been reviewed and officially launched in June 2020. This way, we will continue the significant effort to create a safe and empowering environment for children and young people by providing tools that support children, parents and educators in the development of digital skills and digital literacy, as well as industry and government stakeholders in the development of corporate and national COP policies and strategies.

In this context, the event will provide a platform for the community of Arab stakeholders dealing with COP as well as for all Arab countries that will implement the COP guidelines to present approaches taken related to keeping children and young persons' safe online and to encourage others to implement the Guidelines. It will also offer a unique opportunity to the countries already rolling out the COP guidelines to meet and present progress made so far and exchange their national practices. It will give the opportunity to involve all relevant stakeholders by bringing them together for a common goal – protecting and empowering our children and future generations online and offline. This way throwing light on

---

[1] https://www.unicef.org/sowc2017/

perspective of improvement while adapting to country-specific cases and together reflect on the future of cybersecurity and child online protection.

BROAD OBJECTIVES

This Regional Dialogue is aimed at:

1. Creating awareness of the new revised guidelines on Child Online Protection (COP).
2. Discussing ways of getting other stakeholders involved in protecting children and young people online in the Arab region.
3. Adapting the COP guidelines for Children and Educators in a more friendly and acceptable form while contextualizing it for the Arab region.
4. Highlighting the available tools and resources from the Child Online Protection initiative by ITU.
5. Promoting a multi-stakeholder approach for COP implementation in the Arab region (
6. Discuss opportunities for implementation of all sets of COP Guidelines in the region

LOCATIONS FOR EVENTS

7. The Regional Dialogue will be held online (virtual).

DATE

8. Monday 23rd November 2020
9. Hashtag for the weeklong celebration is #COPArab

Draft Program

Welcome Remark

Session 1: Multi-stakeholders perspectives

Session2: Policies and Industry perspectives

Beneficiaries:

The regional launch of the COP Guidelines is open for all the relevant stakeholders, therefore, addressed to government representatives of all relevant ministries, regulators, private sector/ICT industry, academia, NGOs, civil society including children, and their families as well as any other interested stakeholders of the ITU Member States, Sector Members and Associates in the Arab Region.

How to get involved

All information on registration and other related information can be found on the following link: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Pages/Events/2020/COP/COP.aspx

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Rouda AlAmir Ali, Programme Officer, ITU Arab Regional Office (e-mail: Rouda.AlamirAli@itu.int)