

RESOLUTION 67 (Rev. Baku, 2025)

Role of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector in child online protection

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Baku, 2025),

recognizing

- a) that children's rights is a relevant topic within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- b) the high Internet user growth rates, particularly among the young population across all Member States;
- c) the urgent need and global demand to protect children from exploitation and exposure to risks and harm in the digital environment (particularly online);
- d) that many young people will participate in youth programmes facilitated by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and will become active members in the development of coordination mechanisms with youth forums;
- e) that digital skills development, especially for children and their caregivers, is a key enabler of safe online behaviour, and that national authorities and partners are developing public policies and educational initiatives aimed at promoting online safety and digital skills,

recalling

- a) the memorandum of understanding between the secretariat of the Union and Child Helpline International;
- b) Resolution 1306 (C09, last amended C24) of the ITU Council, under which the Council Working Group on Child Online Protection (CWG-COP) had been set up and its mandate defined by ITU members in close collaboration with the secretariat of the Union;
- c) the outcomes of the work accomplished by CWG-COP and the Correspondence Group on child online protection established under Study Group 17 of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector;

d) Resolution 179 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) 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 had already 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 (UNGA) on 20 November 1959 and further 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 committed themselves to protecting the children from all forms of exploitation and sexual abuse, and for that purpose, in particular, to taking all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to protect children from information and material that may be harmful to their well-being (Article 17) and to preventing: (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; and (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, as well as 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 UNGA Resolution 75/176, adopted on 16 December 2020, on the right to privacy in the digital age, affirms that "the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, including the right to privacy, with special regard given to the protection of children";
- k)* that the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted 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;
- l)* that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), in the Tunis Commitment of 2005 (§ 24), recognized the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the protection of children and in enhancing the development of children, urging Member States to strengthen action to safeguard children from abuse and defend their rights in the context of ICTs;
- m)* that Resolution 45 (Rev. Baku, 2025) 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;
- n)* 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;
- o)* Resolution 17 (Rev. Baku, 2025) of this conference, which invites nations to pursue regional initiatives;

p) the work under Question 3/2 of Study Group 2 of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), on cybersecurity, which in previous periods included child online protection, as well as other relevant study Questions and activities in the ITU Sectors, and the activities of CWG-COP and other relevant groups,

taking into account

a) that there are risks that children are exposed to on the Internet, which have diversified and multiplied with the rapid development of information technology and telecommunication devices and online services and applications;

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) that children, while being among the most active users of telecommunications/ICTs, are often the least equipped to recognize and manage online risks, and therefore require specific protections and support mechanisms;

d) the increasingly widespread access to telecommunications/ICTs worldwide, in particular the Internet, and use thereof by children, at times without proper supervision;

e) the importance of empowering children in the use of telecommunications/ICTs, so that they can develop ICT knowledge and skills to make critical and safe use of the Internet, through digital literacy;

f) the need for children to use telecommunication/ICT tools, with emphasis on the importance of protecting them online;

g) the need to protect children's data when they are being collected and processed to produce statistics and indicators on child online protection;

h) the need to safeguard a child's privacy, including their personal data, when they are online, and the need to understand children's experiences, ensuring that the rights of the child and their interests are fully respected throughout this process;

- i)* 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;
- j)* 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;
- k)* the technical difficulties involved in establishing a single harmonized global child helpline number, and, given these challenges, the opportunity to provide complementary online help services;
- l)* that the number of children who possess or use devices such as mobile phones is constantly increasing;
- m)* that, as children begin to use telecommunication/ICT devices, they may be exposed to online risks;
- n)* that several countries have adopted restrictions for the use of mobile devices by children in school, when these technologies are not supporting learning activities;
- o)* that several countries are developing national policies that encourage safe use of online services and applications by children, and possible limitations on this use;
- p)* the need to continue working at both global and regional levels to find available technological solutions and tools aimed at protecting children online, such as age assurance systems informed by a risk-based approach, as well as to develop innovative applications to make it easier for children to communicate with child online protection helplines;
- q)* the activities undertaken by ITU in the area of child online protection at 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;

r) the activities undertaken by many countries in recent years to enhance child online protection, 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 and strengthen 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 frameworks, strategies, implementation of approaches, best practices, capacity building, and cooperative efforts that can be promoted for the benefit of children;

2 to support the coordination of ITU-D study group work with CWG-COP, including through the mutual provision of information on the results of their meetings in the liaison statement format, so as to work to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize impact related to child online protection;

3 to encourage Member States, Sector Members and Academia to submit best practices and lessons learned 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, work to avoid duplication, and ensure that available resources are used widely and efficiently for the greatest possible impact;

5 to continue to assist Member States, in particular developing countries¹, in developing their national child online protection strategies, public policies and associated capacity-development programmes, as well as implementing frameworks, approaches and best practices to enhance and promote child online protection, in collaboration with stakeholders;

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

- 6 to promote capacity building, including 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 support 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, including Member States;
- 8 to investigate suitable mechanisms for encouraging developing countries to participate in the work of CWG-COP, including through awareness-raising and the provision of technical or capacity-building support, as appropriate;
- 9 to encourage Member States to develop national educational campaigns, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, aimed at promoting digital skills, critical thinking and safety online among children, their families, caregivers and educators, with a view to addressing online risks;
- 10 to coordinate with the ITU regional offices on the submission of quarterly reports to CWG-COP and on ways of advancing child online protection efforts at the regional level;
- 11 to promote the use of data and evidence to guide the design and evaluation of national child online protection strategies, including support for the development of indicators and surveys;
- 12 to collect and share information on experiences, indicators and research about restricting the use of mobile devices by children in school, as well as information regarding the possible limitations, and safe use, of online services and applications by children;
- 13 to support the work of CWG-COP by organizing orientation sessions for experts in connection with meetings of the group;
- 14 to continue to mobilize resources to develop, update, foster localization of, and widely disseminate child online protection materials developed by ITU-D, tailored to different groups and stakeholders, as applicable, and translated into all ITU official languages, through the ITU website and ITU regional offices, within the limits of available financial resources;

15 to promote and support regional initiatives and partnerships with international organizations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders aimed at strengthening national and regional capacities for child online protection, including through awareness-raising, digital skills programmes, policy development, and the deployment of telecommunication/ICT services and technologies;

16 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, relevant ITU-D study groups, and related programmes within ITU-D, for the purposes of comprehensive discussion and exchange of information on legal, technical, organizational and procedural issues, taking into consideration measures to ensure the protection of data, including personally identifiable information related to telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, as well as capacity building and international cooperation for protecting children online;

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

3 to enable and encourage the active participation of youth and child rights organizations in the development of policies and programmes related to online safety,

invites Member States

1 to consider establishing national child online protection policies and strategies;

2 to design guidelines and strategies that promote the safe use of telecommunication/ICT services and technologies in schools, prioritizing their application for learning;

3 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;

- 4 to work closely with all stakeholders to promote the allocation of national and regional telephone numbers for child online protection;
- 5 to consider working closely with all stakeholders to promote the use of digital support services and contact mechanisms dedicated to child online protection and reporting of online abuse;
- 6 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 and regional comparisons;
- 7 to develop different regulatory approaches in cooperation with the private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations;
- 8 to make use of and facilitate the dissemination of training courses, guidance and other materials on child online protection, as well as youth-led initiatives that have been developed through BDT processes, among interested parties and training establishments;
- 9 to consider views and inputs from children and young people, in accordance with national legislation, when developing child online protection strategies,

invites Sector Members

- 1 to incorporate processes and to develop solutions and practical tools to help protect children by making it easier for them to communicate with child online protection helplines;
- 2 to design and develop their services with innovative solutions and practical tools in order to mitigate any risks that they pose to children;
- 3 to take into account their role in child online protection;
- 4 to continue activities in the area of child online protection that foster digital skills development and the empowerment of children to safely use telecommunication/ICT services and technologies;

- 5 to keep Member States informed of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and tools for protecting children online, taking into account best practices from industry and other interested stakeholders;
- 6 to share best practices and research findings with ITU and other stakeholders to facilitate coordinated, evidence-based action on child online protection;
- 7 to continue developing transparent child online protection measures in telecommunication/ICT services and technologies aimed at ensuring a safe, open and accessible digital environment for children.