

RESOLUTION 179 (REV. BUCHAREST, 2022)

ITU's role in child online protection

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Bucharest, 2022),

recognizing

- a) United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 70/1, on transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which addresses various aspects of child online protection in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 16;
- b) Resolution 175 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, on telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;
- c) Resolution 67 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on the role of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in child online protection;
- d) Resolution 45 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of WTDC, on mechanisms for enhancing cooperation on cybersecurity, including countering and combating spam;
- e) other relevant ITU documents,

considering

- a) that the Internet 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;
- b) that the Internet has become a major platform for many different kinds of educational, cultural and entertainment activities for children;

- c) that children are among the most active participants online;
- d) that parents, guardians, educators and communities who have responsibility for children's activities may need guidance on mediation approaches on how to protect children online;
- e) that child online protection initiatives always consider the empowerment of the child online and have due regard to an equal balancing of children's right to be protected from harm and their civil and political rights, as well as their access to online opportunities;
- f) that there is an urgent need and global demand for the protection of children from exploitation and exposure to danger and deception when using the Internet or ICTs;
- g) the growing development, diversification and spread of access to ICTs worldwide, in particular the Internet, and the increasingly widespread use thereof by children, at times with no mediation, control or guidance;
- h) that, in order to address the issue of cybersecurity for children, it is critical that proactive measures be employed in order to protect children online at national, regional or international level;
- i) the requirement for international cooperation and continued application of a multistakeholder approach in order to promote social responsibility in the ICT sector so as to effectively make use of the variety of tools available to build confidence in the use of ICT networks and services, reducing the risks for children;
- j) that child online protection is a subject of valid international global interest and is listed in the priorities of the world community's global agenda;
- k) that child online protection involves a national, regional and international collaborative network, in conjunction with other United Nations agencies and partners, for action to promote the online protection of children by providing guidance on safe online behaviour and appropriate practical tools,

recalling

- a)* the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by UNGA on 20 November 1989 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and all relevant United Nations resolutions regarding child protection and child online protection;
- b)* that, within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the States Parties undertook to protect the child from all forms of exploitation and sexual abuse, and for that purpose, in particular, to take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent 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; c) the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials (Article 34);
- c)* 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;
- d)* United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 20/8, adopted on 5 July 2012, which stresses that "the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online";

e) that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), in the Tunis Commitment of 2005 (§ 24), recognized the role of ICTs in the protection of children and in enhancing the development of children, urging Member States to strengthen action to protect children from abuse and defend their rights in the context of ICTs, emphasizing that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration; accordingly, the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (§ 90 q)) set forth the commitment to using ICTs as a tool to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the SDGs set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the WSIS action lines, by, *inter alia*, incorporating regulatory, self-regulatory and other effective policies and frameworks to protect children and young people from abuse and exploitation through ICTs into national plans of action and e-strategies;

f) ITU Council Resolution 1305 (Modified 2019), which invites Member States to recognize the topic of protecting children and young people from abuse and exploitation as one of the international Internet-related public policy matters;

g) Council Resolution 1306 (Modified 2015), which sets out the mandate of the Council Working Group on child online protection (CWG-COP), with the participation of Member States and Sector Members and the contribution and participation of all relevant stakeholders;

h) that, during the 2012 WSIS Forum, held in Geneva, a meeting was held with associates of the Child Online Protection (COP) initiative, at which it was agreed to work closely with the Family Online Safety Institute and the Internet Watch Foundation to provide necessary assistance to Member States,

recalling further

a) that ITU is the moderator/facilitator for WSIS Action Line C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs);

b) that the COP initiative was presented to the High-Level Segment of the Council in 2008, where it was endorsed by the Heads of State, ministers and heads of international organizations globally;

c) that ITU, in collaboration with its COP members, has created four sets of guidelines for the protection of children in cyberspace, namely: guidelines for children, for parents and educators, for industry, and for policy-makers, and continues to revise and update these guidelines to ensure consistency with industry trends and practices;

d) that Recommendation ITU-T E.1100 of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), on specification of an international numbering resource for use in the provisioning of international help lines, provides alternative numbering resources to overcome the technical difficulties that have made it impossible to establish a single globally harmonized national number, as provided for in Supplement 5 to Recommendation ITU-T E.164 (11/2009), and that the contributions that the different ITU-T study groups can make are very important in identifying practical solutions and tools to facilitate access to child online protection hotlines worldwide,

taking into account

a) the discussions and online consultations conducted by CWG-COP, and other ITU activities;

b) the existing technological, physical, managerial and organizational tools, at the global, regional and national levels, to protect children online, along with innovative applications to make it easier for children to communicate with child online protection helplines, and the need to continue this work aiming to find available solutions and disseminate them to governments and other stakeholders;

c) the need to protect data being collected to produce statistics and indicators on child online protection;

d) the activities undertaken by ITU in the area of child online protection at the national, regional and international levels, recognizing other multistakeholder activities;

e) the call of the world's youth at the BYND2015 Global Youth Summit (San José, Costa Rica, 2013) for Member States to develop policies to make online communities safe and secure;

f) the many activities of governments, national, regional and international non-governmental organizations and industry organizations that are promoting the exchange of best practices on child online protection;

g) the increase in the use of the Internet, especially by children and the COP activities carried out by ITU during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic;

h) the importance of education and skills to empower children, parents and educators, policy-makers and industry to achieve child online protection,

resolves

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

2 to continue providing assistance and support to Member States, especially developing countries¹, in developing and implementing roadmaps for the COP initiative;

3 to continue to coordinate the COP initiative, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders;

4 to promote collaboration between all stakeholders involved in child online protection, based on the work done in this area, in order to benefit Member States;

5 to support and enhance regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms between Member States and other stakeholders in child online protection;

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

6 to continue efforts, together with relevant international organizations, to support Member States, upon request, to engage in capacity building and awareness raising on child online protection for parents, guardians, educators, policy-makers and communities, as well as relevant representatives of the public and private sectors,

requests the ITU Council

1 to continue the work of CWG-COP, in order to facilitate the membership's input and guidance on ITU's role in child online protection, and to serve as a platform for discussion and exchange of best practices;

2 to facilitate the contribution and participation of all relevant stakeholders in the work of CWG-COP to ensure maximum collaboration in implementing this resolution;

3 to encourage CWG-COP to liaise with the Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues (CWG-Internet), as appropriate, in order to contribute in a mutually beneficial manner to fulfilment of work under the respective mandates of these Council working groups on the relevant issues;

4 to encourage CWG-COP to liaise with ITU-D Study Group 2, sharing the outputs of CWG-COP meetings, to benefit the discussion of the relevant study question;

5 to encourage CWG-COP to conduct online consultations with youth to listen to their views and opinions on different matters related to child online protection, prior to and during its meeting;

6 to continue to make output documents related to child online protection issues publicly accessible without password protection,

instructs the Secretary-General

1 to continue identifying those activities that are carried out by other United Nations organizations in this domain and to coordinate with them appropriately, with the objective of establishing partnerships to maximize and synergize efforts in this important area;

- 2 to coordinate ITU efforts with other United Nations agencies and entities concerned with this issue, in order to contribute to existing global repositories with useful information, statistics and tools concerning child online protection;
- 3 to maintain and promote the online repository of resources on child online protection efforts;
- 4 to continue the coordination of ITU activities with other similar initiatives being undertaken at the national, regional and international levels, in order to eliminate possible overlaps;
- 5 to bring this resolution to the attention of other COP members and of the United Nations Secretary-General, with the aim of increasing the engagement of the United Nations system in child online protection;
- 6 to submit a progress report on the implementation of this resolution to the next plenipotentiary conference;
- 7 to continue to disseminate the documents and reports of CWG-COP to all international organizations and stakeholders involved in such matters, so that they can collaborate fully;
- 8 to encourage Member States, Sector Members and relevant United Nations agencies to share best practices on issues of child online protection with CWG-COP,

instructs the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux

- 1 to continue to coordinate those activities that relate to the implementation of child online protection with respect to the effective application of *resolves* 1, 2 and 3 above, in order to avoid overlapping among the activities of the ITU Bureaux and the General Secretariat;

2 to continue enhancing the COP initiative page on the ITU website to make it more informative for all users, within the available resources;

3 to assist Member States in developing and implementing policies, strategies and standards to enhance the protection of children online,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to report to CWG-COP, as appropriate, on child online protection activities;

2 to collaborate closely with CWG-COP and CWG-Internet and to gain the best possible outputs through the work on the relevant ITU-D study questions and the regional initiatives relevant to protecting children online, while avoiding duplication of effort;

3 to consider the outputs of CWG-COP meetings in the deliverables of the relevant study questions;

4 to coordinate with other similar initiatives being undertaken at the national, regional and international level with the objective of establishing partnerships to maximize efforts in this important area;

5 to assist developing countries in drawing the greatest possible attention to child online protection;

6 to update, as appropriate, the child online protection guidelines created by ITU, in collaboration with COP initiative partners, taking into consideration technology developments in the telecommunication/ICT industry, including guidelines on children with disabilities and children with specific needs, and to disseminate them through the ITU regional offices and relevant entities in the six official languages;

7 to disseminate methodological frameworks for data production and statistics on child online protection with the purpose of maximizing data comparison among countries and capacity development for voluntary data production;

8 to consider the needs of children with disabilities and children with specific needs in current and future awareness campaigns undertaken in coordination with the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders and interested countries;

9 to continue to assist Member States, in particular developing countries, in developing their national child online protection strategies in collaboration with stakeholders;

10 to continue promoting training programmes for all stakeholders, including working with COP initiative partners,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to encourage the ITU-T study groups, within the framework of their specific competencies, and considering new technological developments, to continue to explore practical solutions and tools that facilitate access to child online protection hotlines worldwide;

2 to encourage the ITU-T study groups, within the framework of their specific competencies, and considering new technological developments, to seek appropriate solutions to help governments, organizations and educators protect children online (including children with disabilities and children with specific needs);

3 to promote cooperation among the ITU-T study groups, and to liaise with the other Sectors as appropriate;

4 to continue to work with Member States, upon request, on the allocation of a telephone number on a regional basis for child online protection;

5 to assist ITU-T study groups in their various activities related to child online protection, to be performed, as appropriate, in collaboration with other relevant bodies,

invites Member States

- 1 to join and continue participating actively in CWG-COP and in the related ITU activities, for the purposes of a comprehensive discussion and exchange of best-practice information on legal, technical, organizational and procedural issues, as well as capacity building and international cooperation for protecting children online;
- 2 to develop information, to educate and to create consumer-awareness campaigns aimed at all stakeholders, in order to make children aware of the risks that may be encountered online and of measures to protect against such risks;
- 3 to work together to develop awareness campaigns and seek to invest in periodic digital skills training for all stakeholders, to ensure the protection of children online, taking into account the evolving nature of online risks and threats;
- 4 to consider how to improve the number of responses from young people to the CWG-COP youth consultations;
- 5 to exchange information on the current state of legislative, organizational and technical measures in the area of child online protection;
- 6 to support the collection and analysis of data and the production of statistics, disaggregated by sex and age, where possible, on child online protection that will contribute to public policy design and implementation, enabling comparisons between countries and encouraging data production by national statistical offices and other data producers;
- 7 to consider establishing frameworks and strategies for national child online protection and their incorporation into national cybersecurity strategies, as appropriate, taking into account the ITU guidelines on child online protection;
- 8 to foster the allocation of resources to run child online protection hotlines;

- 9 to foster the allocation of specific numbers to service communications dedicated to child online protection;
- 10 to promote the use of parental or other safety tools that are available and accessible for parents, guardians, educators and communities;
- 11 to involve communities and civil-society organizations in child online protection initiatives, socialization and campaigns;
- 12 to establish mechanisms for collaboration among government offices and institutions working on this issue to gather statistical information on access of children to the Internet,

invites Sector Members

- 1 to participate actively in CWG-COP and in other ITU activities, with the aim of informing the ITU membership about technological tools for protecting children online;
- 2 to develop solutions and practical tools to help protect children online and facilitate communication between children and child online protection hotlines;
- 3 to collaborate, within their respective areas of competence, in the dissemination of public policies and initiatives that are implemented for child online protection;
- 4 to work on developing different programmes and tools to increase awareness among parents, guardians, educators and communities;
- 5 to inform Member States about modern technological solutions for child online protection, taking into account the best practices of the sector and of other relevant stakeholders,

invites Member States and Sector Members

- 1 to exchange information on practical methods of identifying and introducing the most effective technologies to contribute to more effective child online protection;
- 2 to apply Recommendation ITU-T E.1100 as appropriate;
- 3 to foster and contribute to consultations on child online protection issues with all stakeholders.

(Guadalajara, 2010) – (Rev. Busan, 2014) – (Rev. Dubai, 2018) – (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)
