2020 Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR)

*Digital transformation to accelerate achievement of the SDGs
– Digital development, partnerships and funding*

6-7 October 2020, 12:00 – 15:00 CAR (Virtual meeting)
with preparatory break-out sessions on 5 October 2020 (12:00 – 13:30 CAT time)

CONTRIBUTION BY Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority, Zambia

TITLE: ZICTA Child Online Protection Strategy Programme

EXPECTED DURATION OF PRESENTATION: [5 minutes]

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❖ **Africa Regional Initiatives:** [Select the Regional Initiative(s) relevant for your contribution]

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 1** – Building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 2** – Promotion of emerging broadband technologies

[**Yes**/No] **AFR Regional initiative 3** – Building trust and security in the use of telecommunications/ information and communication technology

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 4** – Strengthening human and institutional capacity building

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 5** – Management and monitoring of the radio-frequency spectrum and transition to digital broadcasting

❖ **Related ITU development thematic:** [Select the thematic area(s) relevant for your contribution]

[Yes/No] Networks and digital infrastructure

[**Yes**/No] Cybersecurity

[Yes/No] Emergency telecommunications

[Yes/No] Environment

[Yes/No] Digital policy and regulation

[Yes/No] Capacity development

[Yes/No] Digital services and applications

[Yes/No] Digital inclusion

[Yes/No] Digital innovation ecosystems

[Yes/No] Statistics and data for evidence-based decision making

❖ **Year(s) of implementation:** [Select the year(s) for which your action/project/initiative is relevant]

[Yes/No] 2018	[Yes/No] 2019	[Yes/No] 2020	[Yes/No] 2021	[Yes/No] Others

❖ COVID-19 response related initiative: [Please indicate if your action/project/initiative is relevant for COVID-19 response]

[Yes/No] COVID-19 response related initiative

Background

1.1 Child Online Protection Strategy

The Authority remain committed to pursue its mandate whilst safeguarding the interest and rights of all the stakeholders including the Consumers of ICTs. In January 2018, ZICTA conducted a series of Child Online Protection National Strategy Validation Workshops to validate the COP National Strategy based on recommendations from participants and to ensure alignment with ITU guidelines on COP.

In our bid to ensure children are protected online, Zambia through the Ministry of Transport and Communications, working with ZICTA and other key strategic partners and stakeholders developed a National Child Online Protection Strategy which was launched on August 27, 2020 by the Honorable Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr. Mutotwe Kafwaya, MP.

The idea behind this strategy is to implement a well-coordinated approach in dealing with online risks and illicit content amongst all critical stakeholders involved in child protection.

The launch which was preceded by a series various awareness messages disseminated through radio, television, social media platforms, bulk SMS, website as well as print media was attended by 50 invited dignitaries from ZICTA's key stakeholders, while most of the people followed the proceeding virtually.

The COP Framework for Zambia takes a holistic approach by applying the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) framework for COP based on the five work areas (pillars) of the COP initiative namely; Legal measures, Technical and Procedural measures, Organizational Structures, Capacity Building and International Cooperation. The overarching goal of the strategy is to develop a sustainable Action and Implementation Plan to be executed in the country over a five (5) year period from 2020 to 2024.

1.2 Child Online Protection – IWF Reporting Portal

In line with Strategic Objective 3.7 of the 2017 – 2021 Strategic Plan and in conformity with Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 which aims to end all forms of violence by 2030 and ITU Resolution Number 179 on Child Online Protection, Zambia, through the Authority, signed an agreement with the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) to reinforce the nation's ability to mitigate online risk against children.

The Authority launched an IWF reporting portal for Child Sexual Images online in 2018. The IWF Portal enables the host country in this case Zambia to provide a reporting service for its citizens to report images and videos of child sexual abuse when they spot it on the internet with the objective of taking down images or videos from the internet.

1.3 Strategic Partnership

Currently the Authority is working with other strategic institutions such as Zambia Police Service (ZPS), the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC), Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC),Facebook,

GSMA, Lifeline/Childline Zambia among others in our endeavour to ensure a safe and secure cyber space, and also proactively ensure that consumers in the ICT sector are protected.

1.4 Child Online Protection Toolkit

The findings of the 2018 National ICT survey revealed that Children as young as five years had access to internet without parental supervision. Recognizing the risks and challenges of internet usage, the Authority has developed the Child Online protection Information toolkit for parents and educators to help provide information about the child online protection system to help parents and educators find their way and to participate in making informed decisions about children's use of the internet.

The toolkit provides parents and educators with information about Safety and Privacy, rights, Children's behavior online, What the Law says on Cybercrime in Zambia, how they can protect their Children Online, how to tell that a child is a victim of cybercrime, how to make a complaint and where to find support.

2.0 Conclusion

Children in Zambia are exposed to online risks and illicit content. This is as a result of exponential increase of ICT penetration rate in Zambia. Most of the children are not aware of the risks and illicit content online but nonetheless this has not stopped them from accessing internet services. Especially now with the COVID – 19 there has been an increased number of children and young people accessing internet as schools are closed

Proposal

The Development of the National COP Strategy has been necessitated by the need to address the persistent and emerging child welfare online risks through enhanced policy, legal, institutional reforms as well as multi-stakeholder collaboration. Further, the formulation of the strategy draws its necessity in view of the following prevailing developments in usage of ICTs:

   i.   The need to have a deliberate strategy for minimising the impact of cyber threats to the child;

   ii.   To develop a well-coordinated approach to dealing with online risks and illicit content and their impact on the child;

   iii. To implement international best practice and various measures for effectively fighting abuses against children in the cyberspace; and

   iv.   To align and act as a tool for effectively implementing the National Child Policy of 2015 as well as the Government's aspirations and priorities pertaining to the welfare and development of children

The Strategy intends to create synergies from all sectors and relevant stakeholders in order to promote and ensure a safe and empowering online experience for children. Collaboration with other key stakeholders has been identified as one of the major ingredients to the successful implementation of the identified action plans in the Child Online Strategy.

It is envisaged that the strategy will adequately deal with the protection of children from emerging online risks and vulnerabilities in a holistic and coherent manner by incorporating all relevant stakeholders in the provision of human resources, material and/or financial support.

The strategy gives a clear mandate to the Ministry responsible for ICTs, the Ministry responsible for child development, Regulators, private sector, civil society and other Line Ministries/institutions to mainstream child online protection in all sectors. It sets priority areas of

action at the National, Sectoral, Provincial, District and Community levels in terms of coordination, support, planning, resource allocation and implementation of COP programmes.

The Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) continues to play an important role in helping consumers understand their rights and protect their interests through Consumer education and information dissemination. To this end, the Authority has continued to develop a regulatory framework that promotes safety for children online hence the launch of the National Child online protection Strategy.

One of the key objectives of the Authority is to promote consumer awareness and protect the interests and rights of children in the ICT sector through an effective regulatory regime. The Authority recognizes that an informed consumer is an empowered one; and thereby plays a critical role in the development of the ICT sector. To this effect it is important for awareness programmes on child online protection that educate children, guardians and industry to be made a priority to enhance Child safety.

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