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| Contribution by the Philippines | |
| THE PHILIPPINES’ INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES ON CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION | |
| **Purpose**  The purpose of this document is to share the Philippines’ initiatives and best practices in Child Online Protection to member states and sector members in line with Resolution 179 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022).  **Action required**  The CWG-COP is invited to **note** this document.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [Resolution 179](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-179-E.pdf) (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) - ITU's role in child online protection | |

**Introduction**

The Philippines is a major producer of child sex abuse materials globally, with 80% of Filipino children at risk of online sexual abuse. Factors contributing to high online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) in the Philippines include English language literacy, technology access, financial infrastructure, and societal norms. This study investigates OSAEC in the Philippines, covering child exposure, rescue, reporting, prosecution, and intervention.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The 2022 Disrupting Harm Study conducted by UNICEF, ECPAT International, and Interpol reveals that 2 of 10 Filipino internet-using children aged 12-17 were subjected to online sexual abuse and exploitation in 2021, which place the Philippines as the number 1 country with the highest number of OSAEC victims among the 13 countries that participated in the study. Reports increased by 265% during the COVID-19 pandemic, with additional reports filed in the Philippines from March to May 2020.

**Initiatives and Best Practices of the Philippines on Child Online Protection**

1. **Legislations and Policies**
2. *Republic Act (RA) 11930, also known as the “Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM)*

The Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM Act or R.A. 11930, enacted on July 30, 2022, strengthens law enforcement tools, expands responsibilities for social media platforms and other internet and financial intermediaries, promotes the use of videotaped in-depth disclosure interviews to prevent the re-traumatization of victim-survivors, and provides comprehensive guidelines to combat OSAEC.

1. *RA 9208, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, as expanded by RA 10364*

It punishes the act of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, adoption, providing, offering, maintaining or receipt of a child for the purpose of pornography. This law establishes the necessary institutional mechanisms to protect and support trafficked persons, and provides penalties for its violations.

1. *RA 10175, the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012*

This law increases the penalties of offenses in the Anti-Child Pornography Act when they are committed through a computer system.

1. *RA 7610, the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, more commonly known as the “Child Abuse Law”*

This law provides special protection to children, which include not only those below 18 years old, but also individuals who are unable to protect themselves from harm due to a physical or mental disability or condition. The law punishes the sexual abuse of a child in various forms, including child prostitution, child trafficking, other neglects of cruelty and abuse, obscene shows and employment of children beyond safe parameters.

1. *Child Online Safeguarding Policy*

The Department of Information and Communications Technology has passed the Department Circular No. 015 s. 2020 or Child Online Safeguarding Policy (COSP) for its Free Internet Access in Public Places Program to protect all Filipinos, especially children, from the harms of the Internet. The COSP was crafted and issued as a safety mechanism for the implementation of RA 10929 or the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act of 2017. Realizing that there are risks associated with people’s increased access to the Internet, safety nets such as the COSP must be in place.

From its inception in 2018, the Child Online Safeguarding Policy per Department Circular 15, series of 2020 was issued in 2020[[2]](#footnote-2). To disseminate the COSP effectively and reach wider reach, a COSP primer[[3]](#footnote-3) was also released and made available publicly.

Aside from the series of seminars are workshops conducted for COSP, a COSP website[[4]](#footnote-4) was also created, launched, and maintained to ensure sustainability of the advocacy ensuring safe cyberspace for children.

1. **One Government Approach**

For efficient implementation of Republic Act 11930 or the Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAM Act, its Implementing Rules and Regulations was signed in 2023 ensuring the protection of every child against all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation, especially those committed with the use of information and communications technology (ICT). The IRR was developed by various Government agencies where DICT seated as Vice Chair.

Various law enforcement agencies were mandated to investigate OSEC and arrest the perpetrators such as the Philippine National Police Anti-Cybercrime Group to investigate all cybercrimes and other crimes in which ICT is used. Furthermore, the Philippine National Police Women and Children Protection Center is likewise mandated to respond to crimes involving children. On the other hand, the National Bureau of Investigation Cybercrime Division is tasked with investigating all cyber-related crimes and maintaining an Incident Response Team and Digital Forensic Section.

Meanwhile, the Inter-agency Council Against Child Pornography which was created in 2010 by virtue of Republic Act 9775 or Anti Child Pornography Act of 2009. It was stablished as the body that is primarily tasked to coordinate, monitor, and oversee the implementation of the Act. It is composed of 12 line agency members and 3 non-government organizations and chaired by Department of Social Welfare and Development and Vice-chaired by Department of Justice.

Lastly, the Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) was also established to coordinate, monitor and oversee the implementation of the Anti-Human trafficking Law for coordination between government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Further, the NBI Anti-Human Trafficking Division (AHTRAD) likewise conducts rescue operations for victims of child trafficking.

**Recommendation**

The CWG-COP is invited to **note** this document.

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1. National Study on Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines, (UNICEF,2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://dict.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Department\_Circular\_No\_015\_re\_Safeguarding\_Policy\_for\_the\_Free\_Internet.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://cosp.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Child-Online-Safeguarding-Policy\_Primer-1.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://cosp.ph/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)