



Africa Safer Internet Day 2021 Celebration Concept and Programme Document

Background

At the Accra Forum on Child Online Protection in October 2019, member states resolved that effective 2020 the International Telecommunications Union's Regional Office for Africa should mobilize for the Africa Safer Internet Day (ASID) celebration on the continent. This will enable the choice of the theme for the celebration to take on board the peculiar and diverse needs of the continent.

Over the years, **Safer Internet Day** has become a landmark event in the online safety calendar. 2021 will see the 18th celebration with actions across the globe. Starting as an initiative of the EU Safe Borders project in 2004 and taken up by **the Insafe network** as one of its earliest actions in 2005, Safer Internet Day has grown beyond its traditional geographic zone and is now celebrated in approximately 170 countries worldwide, coordinated by the INSAFE/INHOPE Network.

Date and theme for the celebration:

The celebration for the 2021 will take place on **Tuesday February 9th 2021**. African countries will rally and focus on the theme "**Positioning and Partnering for Child Online Protection**". The day calls on all stakeholders to come together to discuss and promote how to make the internet a safer and better place for all, especially for children and young people.

After a lot of discussion on what Africa's priorities should be as a continent it was an obvious choice for the Africa group to settle on the theme **Positioning and Partnering for Child Online Protection** to enable the continent digest the revised ITU 2020 Child Online Protection Guidelines to avoid a repeat of what happened with the first edition of the guidelines. It is expected that by the close of 2021, at least 75% of the countries in Africa will be in the process of developing their own country specific COP strategies.

The 2021 Africa Safer Internet Day celebration is, more than ever before, determined to keeping children safe online. It requires a collaborative and coordinated regional and international response, demanding the active involvement and support of a broad number of stakeholders –



from industry stakeholders including private sector platforms, service providers and network operators, to governments and civil society.

Working with the African theme:

In 2019 alone, 71% of children were online according to a study by UNICEF. The imposition of the lockdown in 2020 presumably contributed to about 1 billion children affected by violence, neglect and abuse online.

Parents are having to juggle work commitments which left many parents unable to supervise their children, leaving young people at risk of accessing inappropriate content or being targeted by criminals in the production of child sexual abuse material.

There is also a growing global awareness about the challenges children face in the online world. Most children under the age of 18 do not know a world without the Internet. In fact, the world has never been more digitalized than we have it now. *The adoption of the COP Guidelines was an important milestone, recognizing the fast-changing conditions in the online environment as well as the need to maximize potentials and minimize risks for our children who spend ever more time online. There is a need in Africa and this need requires the Guidelines to be embraced and implemented by relevant stakeholders at all levels and across sectors in Africa.*

Recognizing this, in 2018 ITU Member States requested something more than the timely refresh of the COP Guidelines that has been undertaken periodically in the past. Instead, these new revised guidelines have been re-thought, re-written and re-designed from the ground up to reflect the very significant shifts in the digital landscape in which children find themselves.

Suffice it to say that even with the above, Africa has not fared so well in the last 10 years regarding Child Online Protection hence the seemingly rigorous plan by this ASID for countries to position themselves for the implementation of measures in safeguarding children and young people online.

In addition to responding to new developments in digital technologies and platforms, this new edition addresses an important lacuna: the situation faced by children with disabilities, for whom the online world offers a particularly crucial lifeline to a full – and fulfilling – social participation. Consideration of the special needs of migrant children and other vulnerable groups has also been included.

With increasing digitalization, children are more able to get access to education, to connect to peers and to use the enormous potential the internet provides to them. However, the risks that the online world brings to them have exponentially grown. And online, unlike offline, risks can be



present 24/7. From issues of privacy to violent and inappropriate content, to Internet scammers and the spectra of online grooming, sexual abuse and exploitation, today's children face many risks. Recent developments such as the COVID-19 lockdowns exacerbated even more the day-to-day problems faced by children and their parents. In addition, the COVID-19 global pandemic saw a surge in the number of children joining the online world for the first time, to support their studies and maintain social interaction.

Threats are multiplying, and perpetrators increasingly operate simultaneously across many different legal jurisdictions, limiting the effectiveness of country-specific responses and redress.

But there are also trends that can be turned into opportunities so that children be empowered in fulfilling their potential and pursuing the realization of their dreams:

Objectives

1. Help countries tackle and approach COP issues in a holistic way without having to prioritize one risk over another.
2. To position agencies within countries to provide the needed leadership in the implementation of the blue print for COP.
3. Identify and remind stakeholders of their role in ensuring a better online environment is created for ALL especially children and young people.
4. Foster a culture of COP with relevant stakeholders backed by policies including the children themselves.
5. Develop, share or contextualize available resources to support children's learning and education.

Expected Outcome by the next Africa Safer Internet Day

For policy-makers, we hope the [Africa specific guidelines and animation videos](#) (Policy, Industry Parents/Guardian, Educators, Children and other resources) will serve as a solid foundation on which to develop inclusive, multi-stakeholder national strategies, including open consultations and dialogues with children, to develop better-targeted measures and more efficient actions. The consultation with children pointed to the need for a friendly and fearless character for young people's engagement and this was done, so we have Sangophone (The COP Mascot) with the name *Sango* at the global stage but it's expected to have a local name at African country levels.



There are also threats could be turned into opportunities leading to children being empowered to fulfil their potential and pursuing the realization of their dreams:

- Digital Technology and Social Media are providing the tools for children to get access to education and social networks. They also provide platforms for young persons to contribute toward their own protection and empowerment by demanding accountability and driving positive change
- Governments are becoming more aware of the need to have updated legal frameworks on child online protection. Their Strategies, Policies, Regulations and Action Plans cannot lag behind the fastened technological, social, economic and political developments
- Parents, educators and children themselves realize the power of knowledge as a tool to protect and empower. Capacity development of all stakeholders is key toward achieving child online protection on the ground
- Increased role of Industry and civil society is growing in scope and importance as we work together to improve the technical solutions and innovative approaches of reaching out to children and all other stakeholders on how to implement the Guidelines.

With a set of clear vision, mission and focused objectives tied to specific results and the strategies to achieve them, based on our values and overarching goal, this Implementation Plan will help government and other partners advance in the implementation of the ITU COP 2020 Guidelines and deepen the impact of our work for every child, starting with the most disadvantaged.

The 5 Strategic Pillars for an effective Child Online Protection

Legal Measures: A strong and comprehensive child protection legislative framework in place at national level to address issues of Internet safety and child online protection.

2. Technical and Procedural Measures: The fact that children and young people are communicating using several platforms, their protection is made apriority by default. It also means that Safety By Design principles ought to be followed on the part of providers.

3. Organizational Structures: Good organizational structures based on multi-stakeholder approach need to be in place at national levels to facilitate the infrastructure for safe and trustworthy digital space.



4. **Capacity building:** Education is the solution to any safety concerns online. An effective awareness raising strategy has to be in place at national levels taking into consideration a country's peculiar needs.

5. **International cooperation:** The Internet knows no boundaries; this said, the COP initiative takes into consideration that online child abuse is a global crime that requires international collaboration.

Typology of Risks to children Online (Details can be found in the COP Guidelines)

- **Content risks:** age-inappropriate content, pornography, violence, discriminatory or hateful content, extremism or content that endorses risky or unhealthy behaviors
- **Contact risks:** child sexual exploitation, grooming, stalking, sextortion, blackmail, and harassment
- **Conduct risks:** bullying, sexting, revenge porn, data misuse, financial abuse, and inappropriate behavior
- **Contract risks:** marketing schemes, fraud, scams, data collection for targeted advertising, misuse and misappropriation of intellectual property, unfair terms and conditions, and weighted search rankings.

What is SAFER internet when it comes to children?

It is expected that the following key strategic stakeholders do the best they could to guarantee that children and young people are safe, equipped and protected at ALL levels.

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE IN SAFER INTERNET	REMARKS
Government	Develop legal and regulatory framework for a safer Internet ecosystem.	
Law Enforcement Agencies	Implement and enforce laws that criminalizes all forms of violence against children.	



<p>Health Care</p>	<p>Have a proper process in place for the treatment of young persons who fall victim to criminal activities through the internet with proper safeguards of their identity and privacy</p>	
<p>Regulators</p>	<p>Control and accountability Detect Block Report</p>	
<p>Companies</p>	<p>-Make sure child users are not exposed to any kind of violence, Detect, Block, Report Provide easy access to support when a threat is found on the network.</p>	
<p>Digital Community</p>	<p>Be vigilant and report any kind of violence against children. -Possess the minimum DQ skills to understand and be aware of the online threats.</p>	
<p>Technology</p>	<p>Design and implement the capability to recognize and protect children with technology solutions. -Adhere and apply Safety By Design principles.</p>	



<p>Parents/Family/Caregivers</p>	<p>They should have DQ skills, understand the online environment and be able to protect children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Monitor and supervise children’s activities. -Limit access -Implement parental controls. 	
<p>Pre-School/Nursery/Schools</p>	<p>Teach DQ skills and emphasize online behaviour.</p> <p>Teach online vigilance.</p> <p>Train parents and caregivers</p>	
<p>Social Workers/Youth org/Civil Society Organizations-CSOs (Non-Governmental Organizations-NGOs & Faith Based Organizations-FBOs) /Helpline/Hotlines</p>	<p>Train on the characteristics of proper digital citizenship and work on putting supportive structures in place to deliver a seamless support to young people facing any issues in this space.</p>	

Methodology

Issues for The Celebration

To help countries **POSITION** and **PARTNER** for a smooth take off for Child Online Protection, we need to have in place:

1. Stakeholders identification and guidance for design and implementation of the country specific framework on COP based on the guidelines.
2. Plan, prepare to undertake research on threat landscape at national levels country.



3. Do a stakeholder mapping and spell out everyone's role in the work including children themselves.
4. Reach out to critical stakeholders in the list of stakeholders' commitments as part of ASID2021 celebration.
5. Try to seek commitment from stakeholders on how to develop Country specific COP framework.
6. Where, How and when incident should be reported.
7. Discuss the format parents, Teachers and children might want to see in messaging.

Here are some of the key questions one should be asking about pieces of media being consumed:

Who is the sender of the message? What is their motive or intent? Who benefits from the message?

What tips and tricks do they use to get their message across? Who is their intended audience?

What are they leaving out? How could others interpret the message differently than you?

Social media sites, of course, have changed our traditional information delivery structures, but these considerations still apply. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is because there is a scammer behind it.

Sustainability Plan

As part of the celebrations there will be the following key activities;

1. Community activities to sensitize the audience about the need to have children protected online.
2. An endorsement session with key stakeholders to support the COP campaign all year.
3. Route marches by school children in all the regions, towns & cities with placards (ASID messages).
4. Sharing and distribution of an SID 2021 branded materials for the general public to read.



5. Radio and TV discussions on Child Online Safety in the local languages as well.
6. A communique or petition submitted to the respective ministries by the children for action.

It is expected that with all the issues taken into consideration during the celebrations, ASID 2021 will:-Create opportunities for up-and-coming developers to use their creativity to explore the subject of child online safety.

-To create awareness among children and young people on the need to be responsible online while making them visible and audible among the stakeholders.

Target Audience ASID 2021

This celebration of this global day is targeting the following stakeholders: Children & young people, parents/guardian/carers, law enforcement agency, Industry, teachers/educators, health workers, Psychologist Associations, Civil society, Social workers, academia, government.

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