

ITU/MIC Strategic Dialogue **on Safer Internet Environment for Children**

Draft Chairman's report

Children and young people can benefit greatly from being online, but they also face dangers in cyberspace. As a result, a global response is needed from all segments of society in order to address what has become a global issue.

For this reason, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), within the context of the Child Online Protection Initiative, together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) Japan organized a Strategic Dialogue on Safer Internet Environment for Children that took place on 2-3 June in Tokyo, Japan.

The Tokyo Strategic Dialogue provided a platform for policy-makers, regulators, industry, civil society, research and academia to exchange views, experiences, guidelines and self-regulatory initiatives regarding key policy and strategic approaches in the area of child online protection.

The Tokyo Strategic Dialogue also examined the dimensions of child e-safety, including information about the dangers facing children online, the tools presently available to reduce the risks to them, including current, new and emerging information and communications technologies (ICTs) and finally, recommendations and key activities which could be undertaken in this area.

This Strategic Dialogue was open not only to ITU Membership but also to any individual or company from a Member State of ITU who wished to contribute to this very important topic.

H.E. Mr. Kunio Hatoyama, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan opened the strategic dialogue by welcoming the participants.

Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) welcomed the participants and outlined the timely organization of this dialogue.

Mr. Shun Sakurai, Director-General, Telecommunications Bureau, MIC Japan delivered a keynote speech.

Prof. Masao Horibe, Professor Emeritus of Hitotsubashi University, Japan chaired the strategic dialogue for the two-day meeting.

Ms. Cristina Buetti presented the Child Online Protection (COP) which has been developed by ITU as part of its Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) and aims to tackle cybersecurity holistically. COP has been established as an international collaborative network for action to promote the online protection of children and young people worldwide by providing guidance on safe online behaviour in conjunction with other UN agencies and partners.

This Strategic Dialogue had 5 substantive sessions: “When Corps Play COP”, “Safer Internet for Children: Supporting Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Protect Children Online to Empower Them to Become Smart Users of Information and Communications Technologies”, “Cybersafe: National & Regional Initiatives”, “Promoting Safer Internet: Raising Awareness and User Education”, and “Children & Cyberspace: The Need for a Global Approach”.

Session 1: When Corps Play COP. This session presented practical tools and approaches developed by industry to help minimize risk.

Session 2: Safer Internet for Children: Supporting Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Protect Children Online to Empower Them to Become Smart Users of Information and Communications technologies. This session looked at how to promote a multi-stakeholder approach to protect our most valuable resource – our children and empower them to become safer online.

Session 3: Cybersafe: National & Regional Initiatives. This session presented national and regional initiatives on child online safety.

Session 4: Promoting Safer Internet: Raising Awareness and User Education. This session provided an overview of ongoing efforts in raising awareness and promoting user education to enhance online safety.

Session 5: Children & Cyberspace: The Need for a Global Approach. A global response is needed to tackle the growing number of risks faced by children and young people online. This session looked at international efforts to protect children from cyber-exploitation and to promote child online protection globally.

The event website provides links to the final programme, presentations, electronic contributions, the Chairman’s Report, meeting summary and audio archives. The website contains a wealth of related materials and in itself provides a valuable resource for the future.

Approximately 200 participants (Annex 1) took part in the strategic dialogue, representing a range of government policy-makers and regulators, international and intergovernmental organizations, privacy groups, representatives of communications service providers and ICT companies, academics, civil society organizations, and other interest groups.

Tokyo Communiqué on Safer Internet Environment for Children

In the framework of child online protection efforts taking place on the national, regional and international levels, and in recognition of the year-long Call for Action launched by Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General of ITU on 18 May 2009 to consider the year 2009- 2010 the child online safety year, a Strategic Dialogue on Safer Internet Environment for Children took place in Tokyo, Japan on 2-3 June 2009.

The Tokyo Dialogue represented an immediate step forward to further the child safety agenda on the regional and international levels.

The Dialogue hosted representatives of a number of supportive governments, as well as international organizations and NGOs, who are committed to enhance the child on line safety agenda.

At the end of the dialogue, participants to the ITU/ MIC Strategic Dialogue on "Safer Internet Environment for Children" agreed to the following:

1 Developing a basic framework for achieving safety

- For an accurate analysis of the existing conditions regarding harmful content to children, and in order to identify common policy issues in different regions, we recommend the setting up of a working group of concerned ITU Member States representing the different regions to exchange views and work on the subject matter. The working group will attempt to develop common approaches to policy-making concerning the subject matter, taking into consideration the diverse needs, social and cultural backgrounds of ITU Member States.
- Recognizing the hugely beneficial impacts of the internet and related technologies, both for society in general and for children and young people in particular, it is nonetheless also recognized that its roll out has also led to a number of unforeseen, unintended and unwanted consequences for child safety.
- In order to minimize the opportunity for young people to access to illegal or harmful content or to be exposed to illegal or harmful contacts it is important to follow a twin track approach: to promote educational and awareness initiatives among all relevant players, with a particular focus on children, parents, guardians and educators, and also to promote the continued introduction of technical measures. These may include filtering services, parental controls and other emerging technologies. Except in relation to illegal content, it is desirable that technical solutions are flexible and can be customized.
- In order to encourage concerted actions across countries in this field and provide protection to ensure safer internet use throughout the world, it is important to continue to actively promote information sharing at the international level. For instance, one of the aims could be to develop a Common Code of Conduct for Championing Safety for Children Online. It is desirable that the ITU, through the Child Online Protection Initiative continues to provide the platform for such information sharing.

2 Promoting voluntary initiatives in the private sector

- Voluntary self-regulatory initiatives in the private sector should play a primary role in creating a safer internet environment. Promoting such voluntary, self-regulatory initiatives is thus a top priority issue.
- To this end, the various players in the internet industry should work together to agree to common approaches to industry self-regulation as a principle that all internet-related players share and it is beneficial that a variety of players promote their initiatives. In particular,

framework-based approaches underpinned by national self-regulatory approaches are more effective in adapting to fast moving technologies and allowing for national differences in societal standards.

- Governments are invited to provide support and encouragement in areas such as technology development, while respecting the voluntary initiatives of the private sector and being consistent with freedom of expression. ITU, as an international forum can provide support and expertise in developing common code of conducts and related recommendations to protect children online. The aim would be to develop a widely shared approach which could be promoted across the whole industry.

3 Promoting user education initiatives

Improving user media literacy is vital in order to ensure safer internet use. In particular, in terms of protection of children and young people, it is important to improve media literacy levels not only among children and young people (the actual users) but also among parents, guardians and educators.

- Awareness raising campaigns and other initiatives to improve media literacy levels are desired to be implemented through a coordinated combination of initiatives targeted at households, communities and schools, rather than isolated initiatives in each area.
- It is desirable to set up an overall framework to facilitate such coordinated initiatives, and to ensure that all users receive support where required. It was noted that the Child Online Protection Initiative provides a platform where this information can be shared and coordinated.

Participants recommended that the Tokyo Communiqué be circulated and used as the basis for further suitable actions by ITU Membership, to promote the child online protection agenda on the international level.

This Chairman's report and the Tokyo Communiqué will be forwarded to the ITU Telecom Forum (5-9 October 2009), which is expected to build upon the outcome of this strategic dialogue, as a step towards preparing for the ITU Council 2009, to be held from 20 October to 30 October 2009.

Based on this understanding, participants confidently expect that the importance of child online protection will be further recognized at other relevant meetings in the future, including the ITU Telecom Forum, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the APEC TelMin Meeting, the OECD Ministerial Meeting, the G8 Summit and other related international meetings.

Annex 1: List of Participants