

# DC on Children's Rights in the Digital Environment Annual Report 2023

**Reporting period:** 1 January to 31 December 2023

**Compiler:** ECPAT International (DC Chair)

## Background info about the DC

- The DC Children's Rights in the Digital Environment was established as the DC Child Online Safety (COS) in 2006 at the 2nd IGF in Rio de Janeiro by organizations working with and for children and youth. Its aim was to establish a dialogue and address fundamental and practical issues impacting on child safety in the online environment.
- Since 2006, there have been significant evolutions in the scale and nature of opportunity, risk and harm to which children are exposed in digital environments, and the relevance of the group continues to expand and grow.
- In 2022 and 2023 there have been a series of consultations with DC members regarding the role of the DC within the IGF community, and there has been strong engagement from many members, with renewed energy to champion children's rights as a priority for internet governance within the community.

## Activities conducted in the past year

*Activities within the IGF*

*DC session at the 2024 in Kyoto, Japan*

### **Risk, opportunity and child safety in the age of AI**

Wednesday 11 October 2023

## Speakers

1. Liz Thomas, Microsoft, Private sector, WEOG (onsite)
  2. Sophie Pohle, Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V, Civil Society, WEOG (online)
  3. Katsuhiko Takeda, Childfund Japan, Civil Society, Asia Pacific (onsite)
  4. Jenna Fung, Asia Pacific Youth IGF, Civil Society, Asia Pacific (onsite) – Netmission
  5. Patrick Burton, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Civil Society, Africa (online)
- Onsite Moderator: Amy Crocker, ECPAT International (onsite)
  - Online Moderator: Jim Prendergast, The Galway Strategy Group (onsite)
  - Rapporteur: Jutta Croll, Stiftung Digitale-Chancen (onsite)

## Goals of the session

1. Identify the main impact of AI and new technologies on children globally.
2. Understand young peoples' own perception of risks in virtual worlds based on AI
3. Raising awareness for a child rights-based approach to AI based service development

## Key Session Takeaways

- 1) Children have the right to safe, inclusive age-appropriate digital spaces; these must be in line with the evolving capacities of each child.
- 2) To create such a digital environment for children, we need a broad focus and to take into account the perspectives of children, parents, educators, the private sector, research, policymakers and civil society as much as possible.

### **Call to Action**

- 1) We call upon all IGF stakeholder and members of the DC Child Rights to engage their communities, including children and youth, in ensuring a child rights based-approach in their work.
- 2) We call on the IGF community to join the DC Child Rights to continue and enhance the dialogue initiated at IGF Kyoto 2023.

### *Activities and Outputs beyond the IGF*

Members of the DC are active beyond the IGF on the themes and questions addressed by the DC. While these are not necessarily coordinated by or through the DC, they nevertheless contribute to the broad and deep collective knowledge base upon which the DC operates, and the inform the thinking of the DC and its approach to presenting key child rights issues to the IGF community. A few examples include:

- Child rights-focused submissions to the Global Digital Compact open consultation process, through the DC Coordination Group and as individual organisations.
- Coordination of the APAC YouthIGF in Brisbane, Australia
- Training and youth engagement through the NetMission Academy
- Ongoing promotion of the [DotKids](#) child-friendly content guides and other guiding principles
- Ongoing [co-steer of civil society advocacy](#) around the European Commission Proposal for a Regulation to Prevent and Combat Child Sexual Abuse, including [public opinion polling](#) in the European Union on Child Protection in Digital Environments
- Several DC members are part of the Membership and Secretariat for the EU Better Internet for Kids Special Group on developing a Code of Conduct
- Cooperation with the ASEAN and UNICEF on the 2<sup>nd</sup> regional ICT Forum on Child Online Protection in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Launch and ongoing activities and outputs of the Digital Futures for Children research collaboration between [5Rights Foundation](#) and the [Department of Media and Communications](#) at London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Child rights-focused contribution at several conferences and summits, e.g. COSPRA Nigeria, EuroDIG

### **Updates on internal processes**

Throughout the year and in preparation for the IGF 2023, the Chair initiated online meetings with DC members to:

- 1) Prepare for the session through discussion regarding AI and child rights.
- 2) Discuss and seek consensus on a workplan of activities and priorities.
- 3) Discuss updates from the DC Coordination group meetings.

## **Priorities/objectives for the following year**

In 2024, the DC plans the following actions:

- Reviewing its intersessional goals for knowledge sharing and collaboration
- Working as individual members and collectively where useful to take forward recommendations from discussions in 2023 on:
  - Using the IGF platform to help align, localize and make inclusive approaches to regulation and policy on children's rights in the digital environment.
  - Improve public and broad stakeholder understanding of and participation in debates around technology and society
  - Consider clearer guidance on what the balance of rights, as well as trust and transparency look like for different groups of people in the digital world.
- Exploring regional initiatives and priority themes for IGF Riyadh 2024 that will feed into a session proposal.
- Contributing to the working groups on workshop design, and youth empowerment.
- Increase engagement through regional IGF sessions and topic-relevant events on agreed priority topics.
- Schedule webinars for the IGF community on key aspects of children's rights in the digital environment.
- Maintain a calendar of events to ensure alignment and dialogue across the various UN initiatives that impact upon children's rights in the digital environment.

Report finalised on **28 March 2024** by the Chair of the Dynamic Coalition on children's rights in the digital environment: Amy Crocker – ECPAT International – [amyc@ecpat.org](mailto:amyc@ecpat.org)