Conference Report:  
Summary and Recommendations

First National Conference on Children in the Digital Age:

Together for Safer Internet for Children in Thailand

8 and 9 February 2023
Eastin Grand Hotel, Sathon, Bangkok

Scan the QR code to access all conference material using the password “ForEveryChild2023”
1. Objectives of the national conference
The national conference held on 8-9 Feb 2023 was jointly organized by UNICEF Thailand, in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (MDES), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and ECPAT International to promote dialogue and knowledge sharing on safer internet for children and young people in Thailand, address child online sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), and explore the role of the private sector and ICT industries. Children and young people participated, and the conference sought to foster coordination among different actors in Thailand. The conference is timely, given the ongoing work by various organisations to address issues affecting children in the digital environment, and the deliberations will inform the development of a comprehensive national child protection strategy for both online and offline environments.

2. Participants and Audience
This conference was attended on average by 230 participants (online and in-person) for all session. Some sessions had a participation of over 350 participants while others were close to attended by close to 180.

February 8. Day 1: Child online protection in Thailand: Current situation, Challenges, Opportunities, and the Way Forward

1. Welcome and opening remarks
Ms. Kyungsun Kim from UNICEF Thailand Country Office highlighted the benefits and risks of internet use for children in Thailand and discussed UNICEF's "Disrupting Harm" initiative to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Mr. Chuti Krairiksh, Minister of Social Development and Human Security, thanked UNICEF for its leadership and discussed the Thai government's intention to declare child protection as a national agenda. Dr. Wetang Phuangsup, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, stated MDES's commitment to protecting children from online sexual exploitation and abuse and discussed Thailand 4.0. Ms. Thanyaporn Krichtitayawuth, Executive Director of the Global Compact Network Thailand, discussed the association’s cooperation with UNICEF, campaign on "Family Friendly Business" policies, and work with digital network partners to protect children from digital harm.
The session discussed the current situation and risks related to child online protection in Thailand. It presented data from various surveys and studies, and included the perspective and priorities of children. The session was moderated by Muhammad Rafiq Khan, the Chief Child Protection of UNICEF Thailand.

Daniel Kardefelt Winther from UNICEF Office of Research and Andrea Varrella from ECPAT International presented the findings from the Disrupting Harm in Thailand report. The study found that an estimated 400,000 children aged 12-17 in Thailand had been subjected to online sexual abuse in the past year, and perpetrators were most often people known to the child. Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram were the most common social media platforms where children were targeted for online sexual abuse. Only 1-4% of cases were formally reported to helplines or the police due to a lack of capacity in law enforcement, justice, and social support systems. To disrupt harm in Thailand, the study recommended explicitly criminalizing specific OCSEA-related crimes, such as live-streaming of child sexual abuse, online grooming, and sexual extortion, improving the capacity of the social service workforce, and fostering an environment where children are comfortable seeking advice, help, and conversation about sex. Other recommendations included providing awareness to educate different stakeholders on child online protection (COP) and providing more access to reporting procedures for children, parents, and caregivers.

Presented by Ms. Shiromi Samarakoon, the ITU's Rapid Assessment on Child Online Protection in Thailand found that 83% of Thailand's population of 71,601,103 uses the internet. The study revealed that various types of online harm such as contact with paedophiles, online grooming, cyberbullying, and live streaming, were committed against vulnerable children. Perpetrators approached children through different platforms, including the dark web and encrypted messaging services. The report also stated that COVID-19 had significantly increased online child sexual exploitation activity. While several reporting channels and legal frameworks were in place, some gaps and challenges remained, including a lack of systems to combat online violence against children, insufficient awareness among children about online safety, and the absence of industry collaboration.

Dr. Srida Tanta-Athipanich, Director of the Internet Foundation for the Development of Thailand, presented an overview of the situation of Child Online Protection (COP) in Thailand. She highlighted the low ranking of Thailand’s Digital Intelligence Quotient in terms of cyber risks and digital competency, as assessed by a survey of 30 countries. The Internet Foundation for the Development of Thailand has been working to improve COP in the country, including with Thailand Safe Internet Coalition establishing Thailand Safer Internet Day, developing safe content for children with the private sector, and partnering with Thai Hotline and INHOPE to prevent and eliminate CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material).

Ms. Watwaree Chaimongkol, a children representative and Young People Advisory Board (YPAB) member, presented the top three child online safety priorities from children's perspectives in Thailand. She conducted a personal survey which showed that on average, Thai children spent around 3 to 8 hours daily on the internet, with a significant portion being spent on social media.
She highlighted that there were both positive and negative impacts of internet access, including mental health issues, grooming, hate speech, physical health, bullying, and online child sexual exploitation and abuse. She also shared that 81% of children were confident about safely using the internet and social media (U Report). However, many admitted they do not know where to seek help if they encounter online abuse. When it comes to online child sexual exploitation and abuse, there were three groups of children victims i.e. those who know the reporting mechanism and report; those who know but do not report; and those do not know and do not report. Ms. Watwaree also introduced the U-Report Thailand platform as a means for children to express their opinions, share their problems, and learn how to use the internet safely. Lastly, she shared that children learned the most about online safety from the internet/ online, followed by school and other sources.

The Q&A session addressed various issues related to child online protection in Thailand. Questions were raised regarding guidelines for identifying non-compliant internet service providers, access to compensation for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and impediments in elevating efficiency before laws are passed. The importance of proactive prevention and protection, educating children and parents about digital literacy, and teaching children to say "No" were emphasized. The best way to deliver the message to young people was also discussed, suggesting the use of youth-friendly platforms and collaboration with the private sector. Specific examples of CSAM were not discussed as it was emphasized that each case requires a different solution and handling methods.

**Session 1. Recommendations**

During the session, several recommendations were made to help create a safer online environment for children in Thailand based on the findings of research reports and assessments presented.

1. Explicitly criminalizing OCSEA-related crimes such as live-streaming of child sexual abuse, online grooming, and sexual extortion.
2. Ensuring that the National Child Protection Strategy 2023-2027 covers all forms of OCSEA and allocating adequate financial resources for its implementation.
3. Investing in improving the capacity of the social service workforce, including staff in schools, health workers, as well as enhance the law enforcement, judicial and legal professional and those providing psychosocial support.
4. Creating an environment where children are comfortable seeking advice, help, and starting conversations about online risks with trusted adults, and promoting healthy relationships, online reputation, digital footprint, informed consent, online privacy, and other OCSEA concerns, as well as providing information on available formal reporting channels.
5. Providing awareness on school internet safety policies, classroom online safety pledges, and school online learning guidelines.
6. Adapting national-scale awareness and education programs about child sexual exploitation and abuse through a coordinated approach and unified messages that cover a wide range of issues, including hotlines and helplines.
Session 2: OCSEA Survivors’ perspective and its impact on mental health

This session discussed the findings of a report on Disrupting Harm in Thailand, which showed that many children in Thailand feel they can rely on their interpersonal networks for support, but a significant number never disclose experiences of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) due to stigma from their community, low status of children in society, and taboos around discussing sex and sexuality. The session explored ways to better support survivors and address the stigma around reporting. The moderator was Ms. Sirirath Chunnasart from UNICEF Thailand.

In this session, **Ms. Wirawan Mosby**, Director of the HUG Project, played a video clip of a girl named Nong Metoo, who was an OCSEA survivor. Nong Metoo shared her struggles of reporting her sexual abuse to the police over the past two years without any progress, and the trauma and grief she faced while awaiting procedural justice and action from law enforcement. Unfortunately, Nong Metoo passed away on 21 December 2022. Her message highlighted the failure of keeping justice above the red tape and called for more active involvement of those in the law enforcement, legal, and judicial sectors.

While reflecting on the helpline, **Mr. Ilya Smirnoff**, Director of Childline Foundation, discussed the power of chatlines as a media tool for young people to exchange personal matters. He also highlighted the challenges of technology, which is constantly changing, including the complicated vocabulary used in social media. He noted that there were fewer reports of OCSEA due to children losing trust in the justice system and feeling unheard during the inquiry process. Interestingly, the perpetrators remained the same while the victims were always new.

**Dr. Sombat Tapanaya**, Founder of Peace Culture Foundation (PCF) presented on the growing threat of online grooming and the importance of peer advocacy for youth to prevent child sexual abuse. There is still a high prevalence of child sexual abuse and online perpetrators causing severe and long-lasting impact on victims' mental health and learning ability. Bystanders may not know what to do, and online grooming can lead to extortion and sexual abuse. The PCF has implemented prevention through direct education programs in schools, with initial efforts being piloted in small groups of high school students, who are assigned to advocate among peers. The PCF has provided 18 workshops in schools and 3 workshops outside schools, covering 1,446 middle school and high school students and 200 technical college students. The upcoming workshops will include training for 80 teachers from private schools in Chiang Mai and a documentary production by Thai PBS channel. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdlDDkQmKxY)

**Dr. Varoth Chotpitayasunondh**, spokesperson for the Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, highlighted the severe impact that child sexual abuse has on the mental and emotional well-being of children. He emphasized the need to view victims as individuals and not just as cases or routine work, and to understand the root cause of their trauma. Dr. Varoth stressed the importance of collaboration and a common mindset among stakeholders, including law enforcement, police officials, and NGOs working in child protection.
Ms. Noppana Charoentham, Head of Rayong Shelter for Children and Families, DCY discussed the multi-sectoral case management services for child survivors and the role of shelters. She noted that the shelter was the last resort for children who were sexually abused and that preventive measures were more effective than protective action. It was important to educate children on how to use social media safely and smartly and to raise their awareness on the potential harms of internet and the consequences of being deceived by perpetrators. She also emphasized the need to provide support for transgender children and not abandon them. The number of child survivors under the Emergency Shelter for children and family in Rayong significantly increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the person who abused the child was usually someone close to them, such as a father, uncle, step-father, or teacher.

The session concluded with keys aspects and challenges facing children. Justice procedures that are not child-friendly and lack child sensitivity can cause repeated harm to children, and it is necessary to minimize their emotional and psychological trauma. Delivery of child-friendly justice is possible by focusing on building the child’s confidence in the whole system and understanding their needs and emotions. Educating parents on how to raise their children positively is important to prevent them from becoming victims. Challenges include the lack of trust in the system, the prevalence of the internet, and the lack of information on certain areas like sexual harassment, transgender, LGBTQ, or vulnerabilities of migrant children. Thai society and those in the private sector play a crucial role in changing the norms and attitudes towards children by understanding their needs, emotions and using their power to care for them.

Session 2. Recommendations

The panellists highlighted challenges and recommended a few solutions for supporting survivors and addressing the stigma around reporting OCSEA that include:

1. Provide safe spaces for survivors to share their experiences and receive support from trained professionals and peers.
2. Educate the public and community at large on the impact of OCSEA and its stigma, and the importance of reporting and supporting survivors.
3. Improve the justice system’s response to reports of OCSEA, including ensuring that victims are treated with respect and dignity and have access to child-friendly justice procedures.
4. Strengthen prevention efforts through social media and direct education in schools, with a focus on empowering teachers and parents and developing the recognition of harmful effects of grooming behaviour.
5. Provide ongoing training for teachers, parents, social workers, and health workers on how to recognize signs of OCSEA and respond effectively.
6. Work to overcome access denial from school principals and gain continual support from Provincial Social Development Offices and Provincial Education Offices.
7. Recruit students and Child and Youth Council members for training to become facilitators.
8. Develop simple and easy-to-understand material to identify grooming behaviour to prevent abuse from happening in the first place and empower the community and parents.
The session discussed the current response plans and frameworks related to prevention and response to violence against children including OCSEA and online safety, including their implementation and progress. The session also identified key challenges faced during implementation and discussed future interventions planned to address these challenges. The session was moderated by Santi Siritheerajesd from UNICEF Thailand.

**Pol.Maj.Gen. Niwet Arpawasin**, Deputy Commander of Cybercrime Investigation Bureau, Royal Thai Police (CCIB, TICAC), highlighted the nature of technology-enabled crimes against children and women, with a focus on online scams, sexual abuse, and offenses under the Computer Crime Act. Mr Niwet indicated that online financial scams were one of the crucial issues apart from OCSEA. He shared details of the platform MySis ChatBot, which is a hotline for reporting incidents online with legal advice service provided by an AI system for children, women, and LGBTQ victims of domestic violence and sexual offense. He concluded his presentation by discussing the increase in cybercrime cases reporting since January 2023, with 187,229 online cases under 22 categories reported to Thai Police between March 2022 - January 2023, with a total damage cost of 29,244,246,396 Baht.

**Ms. Orapin Sak-eiam**, Children Specialist, Department of Children and Youth, MSDHS, discussed the national strategies for child and youth protection, including the drafting of the second National Child Protection Strategy 2023-2027, which will include both online and offline child protection issues. The plan will facilitate the implementation at the decentralized level, leading to more applicable preventive and protective measures to combat child exploitation and abuse. She shared that DCY also reskilled and upskilled the working team at shelters to better handle and care for child survivors. She mentioned the formation of the Thailand Safe Internet Coalition and role it would play to engage all stakeholder including the private sector to prevent and respond to online risks through a unified community mobilization campaign. Lastly, she mentioned that community child protection committee were developed to implement government policies at the village, district, and provincial levels.

**Mr. Ekapong Rimcharone**, Deputy Secretary General of the Office of the National Digital Economy and Society Commission, emphasized the importance of raising awareness and building resilience and awareness among children and young people to protect themselves from cybercrimes including online safety risks. He highlighted the need for all ministries to be aware of the digital world and work together to prevent and protect children and youth from cyber threats, including child extortion, exploitation, and abuse. He stressed the importance of the public and private sectors working together to protect children, as perpetrators often observe and follow a child's behavior before committing a crime. He also noted the challenges of distinguishing between real and fake news, and the vulnerability of children and young people who lack experience in handling online risks.

**Mr. Chana Summart**, Director of the MOE Safety Center at the Ministry of Education, discussed the Ministry's policy to protect children in educational institutions against cyber threats such as sexual harassment and bullying. He outlined three measures to achieve an environment in schools that is safe to learn, including protecting against online safety risks, cultivating life skills
in children and young people, and suppressing the root of the problem. Mr. Chana also discussed
the online technology threats such as cyberbullying, mis/disinformation, and online fraud, and
provided five cautions to stay safe from online risks. He addressed the effects of sexual
harassment and cyberbullying and suggested ways to raise awareness among children and young
people, including self-defence skills, decision-making skills, and how to identify and report
online abusive behaviour. Finally, he discussed preventive approaches and remedies for bullying,
such as encouraging them to identify and report all types of abusive behaviour (online /offline)
and encouraging them to participate in healthy online habits.

The Q&A session covered various topics related to child and youth protection policies in
Thailand. Ms. Orapin emphasised the importance of listening to the needs and opinions of
children and youths in policymaking. Mr. Ekapong mentioned the generation gap as a potential
challenge in implementing online safety policies effectively. Mr. Chana talked about the Ministry
of Education's efforts to prioritise the voices of young people in policymaking and working
closely with other government agencies for child protection. Mr. Niwet highlighted the
importance of the Royal Thai Police's policy on taking care of both child victims and offenders, as
well as the impact of the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) on cyber security investigations
related to child sexual exploitation and abuse. Finally, a question was asked about measures to
prevent the dissemination of sextortion videos before evidence is ready, and recommendations
were given for victims to report to the police or Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Unit.

Session 3. Recommendations

The esteemed panelists also provided some practical suggestions and recommendations to
improve the current national response to tackle child online sexual exploitation and abuse.
1. Strengthen laws and regulations to address OCSEA and other online crimes
   comprehensively.
2. Increase awareness among children, women, families and LGBTQ community to identify
   and report OCSEA and other online crimes using available hotline including MySis ChatBot
   platform.
3. Encourage social media platforms and private sector to cooperate in taking down CSAM
   from the internet.
4. Develop and implement intervention programs to address the rising OCSEA, cyberbullying
   and other risky online behavior systematically through schools.
The session discussed extraterritorial nature of cybercrimes affecting children including OCSEA and how to address them at national, regional, and international levels. Speakers also shared their perspectives on online and contact abuse with transnational jurisdictions and the travel and tourism industry. The session was moderated by Mr. Guillaume Landry, Executive Director of ECPAT International.

Police Captain Khemachart Prakaihongmanee, the Director of the Child Sexual Exploitation Crime Center at the Ministry of Justice, outlined the special powers granted to the DSI (Department of Special Investigation), such as undercover operations and electronic tapping, to investigate and prevent transnational and organized crime. The lack of a national victim database, sex offender registry, and grooming law were highlighted as major challenges, along with account takeover. Referral channels with Interpol, the FANC group, NCMEC (National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children), and INHOPE.org were also discussed.

Julian Francisco Millan Platero, a Cybercrime Prevention Officer at UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), explained that digital evidence plays a critical role in handling cases of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, even when the victim is not physically present. While digital evidence is often associated with electronic crimes, traditional evidence such as witness statements and written documentation are still necessary in some countries where digitalisation is still new. However, digitalisation has facilitated the sharing and exchange of information among law enforcement agencies, helping to overcome obstacles posed by differences in legislation and law enforcement practices between countries. Mr. Julian also presented on CSAM as evidence in OSEAC cases (on day two of the conference). CSAM refers to any representation, whether offline or through ICT, depicting a child engaged in real or simulated sexual activities or being exploited as a sexual object. The definition of "child" also includes those presented or depicted as children. CSAM can be used as evidence in OSEAC cases.

Ms. Kristina Amerhauser, Programme Manager of Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, discussed the nexus between organised crime and online child sexual exploitation and abuse. She highlighted that a lot of child sexual exploitation and abuse-related crimes are not reported to law enforcement or child protection organisations. Child sexual exploitation and abuse is generally gratification-driven rather than profit-driven, and it involves loosely connected actors or "criminal freelancers". The decline in child sex tourism operators has given rise to online "shows" and the use of payment platforms. Data gaps and further research are needed to understand the networks driving child sexual exploitation and abuse, the impact of COVID-19, the use of cryptocurrencies, and social media groups and messaging apps.

Ms. Smita Mitra, Criminal Intelligence Specialist, INTERPOL, discussed the importance of connecting with Interpol's International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database to address transnational crimes against children. She mentioned that 68 out of 195 Interpol member states had specialised units connected to the ICSE database. She mentioned that the report "Disrupting Harm" provided recommendations for capable law enforcement and legal machinery to criminalise grooming and OCSEA. Ms. Mitra emphasised the importance of collaborating and working towards enabling Thailand's law enforcement to address this crime area.
Janine Enniss, from the Australian Federal Police (AFP), discussed the challenges and opportunities in addressing transnational crimes related to OCSEA. The AFP-led ACCCE Unit (Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation) focuses on Australians involved in the sexual abuse of children offshore and the production and supply of CSAM. The AFP works with 15 dedicated law enforcement agencies in the Virtual Global Taskforce to tackle global threat of child sexual abuse, which sets strategic direction and advice, with subgroups on end-to-end encryption, mental wellbeing of officers, and sharing hash set values. Legislative reform, streamlining investigation and prosecution processes, victim identification, prevention, and training/education are ongoing opportunities. The challenges include live streaming of child abuse due to COVID and travel restrictions, digital forensics, end-to-end encryption, and younger offenders.

During the Q&A session, various topics related to online child sexual exploitation and abuse were discussed. One question was about potential violations by blue-marked business accounts on social media platforms, but the speakers did not have any information on it. Another question was about the growing trend of extortion for financial gain in this field and the challenges of tracking the money flow. A question was also raised on why more countries are not connected to the Interpol’s ICSE (International Child Sexual Exploitation) database, and the answer highlighted the need for specialized units and willingness from member countries. Lastly, a question was asked about investigations on high-risk countries flagged in financial transaction reports, but the answer suggested that it is internal police machinery and further clarification could be provided by the Cyber Crime Investigation Bureau of the Royal Thai Police.

### Session 4. Recommendations

The panelists made the following recommendations for the Thailand to consider.

1. Develop a national a sex offender registry in Thailand
2. Strengthen national laws to criminalize all dimensions of OCSEA and grooming; and implement the existing laws to disrupt harm to children.
3. Strengthen international collaboration with organizations and link and use Interpol’s ICSE database
4. Expand the use of digital evidence and improve investigation processes for online child sexual exploitation and abuse
5. Conduct further research on organized crime networks and the use of crypto-currencies, financial flows linked to OCSEA based on the available suspicious transaction reports from different countries.
1. Opening remarks
Ms. Atsuko Okuda, the Regional Director of ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, opened day two of the conference and emphasised that the internet has become an essential part of our daily lives and has created new risks and challenges. In Asia and the Pacific region, 64% of individuals use the internet, while in Thailand, 85% of the population uses the internet. However, as per the Disrupting Harm Report, 9% of children between the ages of 12-17 in Thailand are victims of child sexual exploitation and abuse, and few children use formal reporting mechanisms due to a lack of awareness. She emphasised that the stakeholders at all levels of society need to work together to ensure online safety. ITU has released a new Child Online Protection guideline to provide recommendations for creating a safe and empowering online environment for children and young people.

2. Presentation on the Launch of ITU COP guidelines (policymakers, parents and educators, children, industry)
Ms. Yu Cheng, Project Officer at ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, presented ITU's Child Online Protection Guidelines. In 2020, ITU launched new Child Online Protection (COP) Guidelines, including for policy-makers, industry, parents and educators, and children. These guidelines cover issues around new technological developments, children with disabilities, and four sets of guidelines. ITU has also provided online self-paced trainings on COP for policy-makers and accessible courses for parents, carers, and educators. The ITU Child Online Protection Project for Asia-Pacific has been assisting countries like Pakistan, Bhutan, Thailand, Mongolia, Indonesia, and Cambodia to develop national guidelines, awareness training, and online safety for girls training. Yu Cheng also presented findings and recommendations on Thailand's child online protection gaps and challenges.

3. Regional perspective: Regional Plan of Action and lessons learnt from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ICT Forum on Child Online Protection
Mr. Wanchai Roujanavong, Thailand Representative, ASEAN Commission on The Promotion and Protection of The Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), presented the background and actions of ACWC Thailand in carrying out the Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN. The plan includes promoting a comprehensive legal framework, raising law enforcement levels, establishing national task forces, ensuring effective protection services, strengthening data collection and tracking mechanisms, promoting education, and encouraging private sector participation. The 2022 ASEAN ICT Forum in Cambodia discussed the need for private sector responsibility in protecting children from online harm, designing safe internet programs, and public-private cooperation in developing effective tools and reporting illegal acts.
The session discussed resources and tools available for the private sector in Thailand to prevent online child sexual exploitation and abuse, with a focus on regional and global resources. Mr. Iain Drennan, Executive Director of WeProtect Global Alliance, moderated the session.

Dr. Srida Tanta-Athipanich, Director of the Internet Foundation for the Development of Thailand (IFDT), presented about detecting, reporting, and removing child sexual abuse material. The IFDT was established 20 years ago for child protection and raising awareness of online threats, with www.thaihotline.org as a platform for reporting cyberbullying and sexual abuse in Thailand. In 2022, over 16,000 cases were reported, with most involving child sexual exploitation and abuse. ThaiHotline reports all cases of child abuse and exploitation to law enforcement, requiring further investigation and evidence finding. The development of ISP code of conduct is important to immediately take down or block such content from the internet or servers.

Ms. Kay Chau, the Director of Programs at Tech Coalition, talked about the Project Protect, which was launched two years ago to fight online child sexual abuse (CSA). Tech Coalition developed a new framework called Trust to guide companies in the most important aspects of transparency reporting. The Trust framework is a voluntary framework for industry transparency that was developed for industry and by industry. This framework encourages companies to provide online CSEA transparency reporting, supports the development and improvement of transparency reports, and increases consistency across the report. The framework is based on principles such as reporting should reflect the unique nature of each company’s service, should be regular and evolve over time, and should not compromise privacy and safety. This Trust framework can be considered by the ICT companies in Thailand as well.

Ms. Ida Hyllested, the Corporate Alliances Manager at UNICEF EAPRO, highlighted the importance of companies undertaking human rights due diligence to understand their potential or actual impact on children’s rights. She emphasised that General Comment Number 25 provides legal interpretation notes on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including that a business should undertake child rights due diligence. Ms. Hyllested also explained that child rights impact assessments involve companies analysing their existing policies, systems, and procedures to identify gaps in addressing children’s rights. The engagement of stakeholders, including the children themselves, is crucial in this process. She urged participants to read the call for action by children and young people from the Asian Member States on how the private sector should step up in relation to the online space.

Ms. Ella Serry, from Australia’s eSafety Commissioner, discussed the Safety by Design program, which works with industry to encourage them to build safety into the design, development and deployment of online platforms and services. The program is based on three core principles, including service provider responsibility, user empowerment and autonomy, and transparency and accountability. The initiative provides a free tool to assess Safety by Design online for startups and established enterprise companies. The Safety by Design principles are being picked up by governments globally and are being embedded into their legislative and regulatory frameworks. Thailand can consider adopting those or look at those during the ongoing policy and legislative review process.
The Q&A session discussed several topics related to online safety for children. Dr. Srida reported that over 16,000 cases were reported to ThaiHotline and INHOPE. They work with INHOPE to take down content and identify victims, and the success of victim identification varies each year. Ella Serry emphasised the private sector’s important role in dealing with the vast volumes of work and images. The second question asked about examples of children’s right online impact assessments conducted by the private sector. Ms. Ida mentioned that the mobile operator sector had been a front-runner in reviewing and scrutinising its existing policies and practices. Many companies in the mobile operator sector agreed to pilot a specific assessment tool developed by UNICEF called a mobile operator child-based impact assessment tool. The third question was about aggregated information for children with disabilities. Dr. Srida mentioned that they currently do not have disaggregated data. Kay Chau emphasised the importance of understanding how underrepresented populations are using platforms and ensuring they can use them safely and shared best practices for encouraging the use of the platform and user reporting.

**Session 5. Recommendations**

The panelists recommended for the adoption a few key approaches to tackle OCSEA in Thailand that include.

1. Develop ISP code of conduct to take down or block CSAM contents from the internet or servers immediately without any condition.
2. Adopt the voluntary framework for industry transparency called Trust, which encourages companies to provide online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) transparency reporting, support the development and improvement of transparency reports, and increase consistency across the report.
3. Implement child rights impact assessments and due diligence processes to understand their potential or actual impacts on children.
The discussion panel was about the involvement of the private sector in preventing and responding to online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Thailand. The panel explored the challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned from the private sector's current practices, including corporate policies, handling of CSAM, creation of safe online spaces, and education. The moderator was Santi Siritheerajesd from UNICEF Thailand. The panel also discussed promoting digital technologies as a means for civic engagement according to the ITU Guidelines.

Ms. Saichon Submakudom, Head of Public Relations Department at AIS, highlighted AIS' Feel Safe (Unjai) Cyber campaign, which aims to promote safe internet usage and create sustainable digital skills through their online learning platform and 4 Digital Skills program. The program focuses on teaching children about staying safe and secure online, understanding personality and rights, online security, and online communication skills.

Ms. Ornuma Rurkpattanapipat, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications and Sustainability Division at DTAC, discussed the company's initiatives for child online protection. DTAC, which has over 20% child users, collaborates with THAIPAT Institute and focuses on capacity building, advocacy campaigns, and collaboration catalysts. The DTAC Safe Internet project focuses on upskilling teachers and students, creating awareness among young children through campaigns like "Hashtag Let Cyberbully Ends at Our Generation," and providing a platform for children and youth to express their opinions freely through the crowdsourcing platform #Let the cyber bully ends at our generation. DTAC also launched a campaign called "Policy" to build awareness on online child exploitation and promote policy hackathons and pitches.

Ms. Rommuk Piachan, Associate Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at True Corporation PCL, presented on True's engagement in child protection activities. True has been cooperating with NBTC and network partners to promote knowledge and prevent online threats and risks through their campaign called "Aware of online world by True Growing Wisdom (True Plookpanya)". True provides edutainment and online training to children and youth, including those children with special needs (autism). The e-learning platform V-Class provides learning sources for various target groups, including primary and secondary school students, higher education students, institutions, teachers, parents, and the public to raise awareness of online threats and know how to protect themselves.

Mr. Tri Boonjue, Director of Telecommunications Customer Protection Bureau at National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), discussed the role of NBTC in encouraging public and private sectors to work together on Child Online Protection. He also mentioned the development of a mechanism and structure consisting of stakeholders to engage in child online protection through legal and preventative measures. Mr. Boonjue emphasized the importance of building awareness about online risks and threats among students, lifelong learners, and the public, including specific groups such as disabled persons, transgender individuals, and ethnic minorities. He also mentioned that the focus roles and authorities of the NBTC were the TV media.
Captain Sirinate Rugvong from the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) presented the role of the NCSA in child and youth protection in Thailand. In Partnership with NBTC, NCSA supports the National Cyber Security Plan, enforcing the Cyber Security Act, promoting cooperation between countries and domestic agencies, surveillance and response to cyber threats, personnel curriculum development, and improving the capacity of government agencies and infrastructure important information. The NCSA’s role in child and youth protection also involves building awareness and developing cyber skills, educating young people on cyber threats and online safety, and protecting children and youth in various forms in cooperation with educational institutions in the elementary, secondary level, universities, foundations, and government agencies.

The Q&A session addressed issues related to internet and mobile service providers' efforts to manage call center scams and online fraud, as well as child exploitation and abuse. Participants discussed the limitations of current laws and regulations and the need for cooperation among stakeholders to address these issues. The telecom operators emphasized their responsibility to block illegal content, but also highlighted the technical difficulties in doing so, particularly when the content is produced and hosted outside Thailand. The session also touched on privacy concerns and the need for official documents and notices to request data from service providers. The digital rights community was mentioned briefly in the context of child rights in communication services.

Session 6. Recommendations

Some of the recommendations and opportunities flagged by the panelist include;

1. Developing child online protection curriculum and educating children, youth, teachers, and parents to prevent online risks and threats including awareness raising campaigns for general public
2. Creating safe online spaces for children and youth by promoting digital technologies as means for civic engagement
3. Collaborating with stakeholders such as public and private sectors, civil society and academics to have their engagement in child online protection through legal measures and preventive measures.
4. Follow-up session on the collaboration and engagement with the private sectors and ICT industry on the online safety.
The panel discussion examined the involvement of the private sector in preventing and responding to online child exploitation in Thailand. The discussion centered on corporate policies and procedures, standard processes for handling CSAM, creating safe online spaces, education, and the promotion of digital technologies for civic engagement. The moderator was Ms. Afrooz Kaviani Johnson, a Child Protection Specialist and COP Global Lead at UNICEF NYHQ.

**Ms. Malina Enlund**, Trust and Safety Manager in Southeast Asia at Facebook/Meta discussed Meta's five-pronged approach to making their platforms safer for children, which includes policies, tools, resources, partnerships, and feedback. She highlighted Meta's updated policy on the sexualization of minors and their detection technology to combat child exploitation imagery. Additionally, she discussed NCMEC-Meta's Take it Down portal, which allows minors to take down and/or prevent the sharing of intimate images without their consent by assigning a unique digital fingerprint to such content.

**Dr. Elizabeth Milovidov**, Global Digital Child Safety Lead at The LEGO Group, discussed the company's commitment to protecting children's rights and enhancing their well-being both offline and online. She explained that LEGO embeds safety considerations and features in its products by design, ensuring that they comply with the company's Digital Child Safety policies. She also discussed the LEGO Digital Empowerment Program, which provides resources for children and families to learn about digital child safety and well-being topics.

**Mr. Sunit Shrestha**, Founder and Managing Director, Change Fusion and the founder of MySis Chatbot, talked about the importance of building impact innovation for children. MySis is a chatbot that helps children, youth, and women facing online child issues and domestic violence to find solutions online. MySis is a collaborative platform between different stakeholders working informally to solve these issues. The goal is to work together on the financing side to continue building impact innovation for children.

The panelists discussed the private sector's current practices to prevent and respond to online child sexual exploitation and abuse and other child online protection issues in Thailand. They highlighted opportunities, challenges, and lessons learned from the private sector's role. Facebook/Meta discussed their five-pronged approach to online safety, while LEGO outlined their commitment to protect children's rights and promote digital safety through product design and development and their digital empowerment program. Some of the opportunities identified include:

1. Creating safe online spaces for children by promoting digital technologies as a means for civic engagement
2. Developing corporate policies and procedures to prevent and respond to online child sexual exploitation and abuse and other child online protection issues and the standardizing processes to handle CSAM
3. Providing education and awareness-raising on child protection issues especially the online safety risks
4. Developing and implementing feedback mechanisms to continually improve practices and procedures.
The session discussed how global and regional efforts have helped in mitigating the risks faced by children online and preventing harm. The guest speakers shared some of the good practices from around the world and discussed their implications for the Thai context. The session was moderated by Muhammad Rafiq Khan from UNICEF Thailand.

Mr. Iain Drennan, the Executive Director of WeProtect Global Alliance, introduced the WeProtect Model National Response, which is focused on ending child sexual abuse online. He discussed the importance of integrating child online protection into wider action plans and strategies and emphasised the need for social acceptance of preventing child abuse online. He also explained the model national response, which is a set of capabilities aimed at governments to develop a holistic response, not just focused on law enforcement but also looking at society and culture, industry requirements, legislation, prevention, and support for victims and survivors. A report called Framing the Future (jointly done by WPGA and UNICEF) was also mentioned, which includes information and data from 42 countries and a set of recommendations.

Ms. Afroz Kaviani Johnson, Child Protection Specialist and COP Global Lead at UNICEF NYHQ, discussed the role of UNICEF in legislating for child protection in the digital age. She emphasised that legislation should be "fit for purpose" in the digital age, and outlined several key areas for legislative reform, including criminalisation of specific online crimes, removal of statute of limitations, and ensuring minimum penalties for adult perpetrators. Ms. Johnson also provided examples of recent legislative developments in countries such as New Zealand and Canada, as well as evolving international and regional standards. Finally, she discussed the potential for an international cybercrime treaty to strengthen children's protection, highlighting the importance of considering children's rights and interests throughout the process.

Ms. Ashley Katz, Director of Child Protection Internal Partnership at the Attorney General's Department of Australia, presented a case study on the Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The Voluntary Principles consist of six principles that aim to prevent child sexual abuse material, target online grooming and preparatory behaviour, target live streaming, prevent search results from surfacing child sexual exploitation and abuse, consider victim/survivor, and collaborate and respond to evolving threats. Ms. Katz highlighted the benefits of adopting the Voluntary Principles, including international recognition and adoption, flexibility, and industry endorsement. She also discussed how Thailand could take a leading role in championing the Voluntary Principles for ASEAN, utilising platforms provided by WeProtect, collaborating with international networks, and engaging domestic industry. Finally, Ms. Katz emphasised the importance of aligning messaging, pooling resources, and collaborating on information and law enforcement solutions to combat the growing threat of online child sexual exploitation.

Dr. Mark Charoenwong, Provincial Public Prosecutor, presented the need for legislative amendments to address online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) in Thailand. He highlighted the negative impact of OCSEA on victims' rights, international cooperation in criminal matters, and the proliferation of OCSEA globally. He shared the proposed amendments to the Thai Criminal Code to align with international legal instruments. However, there were
challenges, including the lengthy legislative process, disagreements on criminalizing certain activities, and the need for cooperation among law enforcement authorities. The current situation involved a draft law that had undergone public hearings, and the Cabinet had agreed on the concept of the draft law, which would be proposed by the Ministry of Justice. Dr. Mark suggested alternative solutions, including the educational system, providing internet literacy to vulnerable groups, and practitioner guidelines on criminal offenses and penalties related to child online protection.

The Q&A session covered various topics related to online child safety. One question was about the incentives for countries to adopt modern national response mechanisms for protecting children, with the response being that consistency and the opportunity to learn from others were important factors. Another question focused on how to engage with private companies to agree on voluntary principles, with the answer emphasizing the need for collaboration and finding commonalities between companies of different sizes and services. The importance of digital literacy and engagement was also highlighted. Finally, the speakers referred to the General Comment 25 from the Committee on the Rights of the Child as a blueprint for protecting children’s rights in the digital space.

Based on the lessons learnt and the good practices shared, countries including Thailand could use of the opportunities and adopt some recommendations from the session that include:

1. Royal Thai Government should integrate child online protection into wider action plans and strategies, and develop a holistic response that includes not only law enforcement but also society and culture, industry requirements, legislation, prevention, and support for victims and survivors.

2. Legislation should be "fit for purpose" in the digital age, with key areas for legislative reform including criminalization of specific online crimes, removal of statute of limitations, and ensuring minimum penalties for adult perpetrators.

3. Thailand could adopt the Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which consist of six principles aimed at preventing child sexual abuse material, targeting online grooming and preparatory behavior, targeting livestreaming, preventing search results from surfacing child sexual exploitation and abuse, considering victim/survivor, and collaborating and responding to evolving threats.

4. Private companies should be engaged in agreeing on voluntary principles through collaboration and finding commonalities between companies of different sizes and services.
In November 2022, the Royal Thai Government joined forces with internet service providers to form the Thailand Safe Internet Coalition, a public-private partnership aimed at tackling the disturbing rise in online child sexual exploitation and abuse in the country. Since its inception, the coalition has expanded to include additional government agencies, CSOs, and young people. The partnership is focused on improving reporting mechanisms for online abuse, enhancing coordination between different sectors, providing better services for victims, and building resilience among children, young people, and parents. The coalition was formed based on the findings of the Thailand Disrupting Harm Research.

During the second day of the conference, the Thailand Safe Internet Coalition was publicly launched by Kyungsun Kim from UNICEF Thailand Country Office, Ms. Orapin Sak-eiam, Children Specialist, Department of Children and Youth, MSDHS, Dr. Srida Tanta-Athipanich from the Internet Foundation for the Development of Thailand, and Ms. Worrawantra Nuam-in, Youth Representative. The coalition is a consolidated effort by government agencies, private sector companies, NGOs, and telecommunication operators to create a safe and empowering online environment for children and young people in Thailand. The Department of Children and Youth serves as the core coordinator. The coalition members have been advocating for the government to take up the Safe Internet Day for Thailand. On 7th February, the coalition members celebrated the Safe Internet Day with the Prime Minister at the government house. After the conference, the Thailand Cabinet passed a resolution on February 28 to establish a Thailand Safe Internet Day. The MSDHS proposed the resolution, which designates the second week of February every year as National Internet Safety Day, coinciding with International Safe Internet Day.
Ms. Worrawantra Nuam-in, representing UNICEF's Young People Advisory Board (YPAB), spoke on behalf of Thai young people and called for action to create a safe digital environment. The call for action included treating children as equal digital citizens with the right to non-discrimination, protecting child privacy, placing the child at the center, having a reporting system that is confidential and anonymous, increasing knowledge of cybersecurity, and ensuring internet providers protect personal data and children from being exploited or abused. The goal is to provide a safe and protected internet world for every child.

Call to action by children and young people to create a safe digital environment

Closing Statement

Mr. Ekapong Rimcharone, Deputy Secretary-General of the Office of the National Digital Economy and Society Commission, expressed his gratitude to UNICEF Thailand and all the partners for organising the national conference. The conference was a great success and provided a platform for international organisations, Thai government authorities, NGOs, and private sector companies to share and exchange experiences and information on child protection. Mr. Ekapong hopes that a second National Conference on Children in the Digital Age will be held in the future to continue raising awareness of the threats and risks facing children and youth in the digital world.

Vote of Thanks

Ms. Severine Leonardi, Deputy Representative of UNICEF Thailand, expressed gratitude to partners, including ITU, the MSDHS, the MDES, ECPAT International, and the private sector, for their collaboration. She emphasised the importance of the collaboration of all stakeholders in ensuring that the internet is safe for children. She also expressed appreciation for the Attorney General's Department, the eSafety Commissioner of Australia, and the WeProtect Global Alliance for their support and expertise in addressing OCSEA. She thanked the children and young people for participating in the conference and emphasised their role in addressing the issue of online safety for children. Finally, she expressed gratitude to the UNICEF team for organising the event and called for continued efforts to make the internet a safer place for children.