



## Economic and Social Council

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**Social and human rights questions: social development**

### **Statement submitted by International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## Statement

### **Addressing the growing problem of violence committed against children**

The current Millennium Development Goals successfully address the most basic needs of children: health, hunger, education and equality. The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children notes that it is critical for the new development goals to advance child protection even further, by specifically addressing the growing problem of violence committed against children. Despite gradually emerging efforts to reduce this type of violence, the development goals have thus far been noticeably silent on this issue.

Technological innovations, like the Internet and mobile phones, have created a world of opportunities for children and adults to learn and engage, but they also serve as a means for child exploitation and abuse. This is most apparent in the growing prevalence and distribution of child sexual abuse materials online, the grooming of children for sexual purposes through the Internet, including social media and peer-to-peer platforms, and child sex trafficking via online classifieds and other forums. Technology now expedites the creation and possession of these harmful materials, decreases the cost of their production and distribution, all while facilitating the victimization of children for these purposes.

The alarming nexus between advanced technology networks and child victimization demands a coordinated response at the local, national, regional and international levels. The post-2015 Millennium Development Goals will provide an ideal platform for facilitating a harmonized approach. Thus, the organization strongly urges the United Nations to consider the inclusion of combating violence against children in the new Millennium Development Goals, by addressing the following:

- Understanding the connection between technology and the potential risk of exploitation to children including but not limited to trafficking, child pornography, online grooming, and other forms of victimization
- Understanding the importance of technology as a tool for the identification, investigation and prosecution of cases of exploitation of children along with victim recovery and rehabilitation
- Teaching children, parents/guardians, teachers and other caretakers how to use technology responsibly in addition to understanding potential risks
- Raising public awareness through far-reaching campaigns in the communities, schools, business places and beyond
- Encouraging the active participation of industry stakeholders through corporate social responsibility programmes focused on protecting children from violence
- Training law enforcement, prosecutors, judges and others to equip them with the skills and tools needed to effectively identify, investigate, prosecute cases of computer-facilitated crimes against children and to recover missing and victimized children
- Developing technology solutions, such as PhotoDNA, to prevent and proactively respond to cases of child victimization as well as to facilitate the recovery of

children, including but not limited to cases that necessitate rapid response, with tools such as the AMBER Alert notification system

- Building coalitions and networks of public and private stakeholders, such as the organization's financial coalition against child pornography in the United States of America and Asia Pacific region, and its technology coalition, to combine the resources of the public and private sectors and to ensure an extensive and comprehensive approach to combating violence against children.
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