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Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tuvalu and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: revised draft resolution

Protecting children from bullying

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [69/158](#) of 18 December 2014, [71/176](#) of 19 December 2016 and [73/154](#) of 17 December 2018 on protecting children from bullying, all its previous resolutions on the rights of the child and the resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council that are relevant to the protection of children from bullying,

Reaffirming the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹ and emphasizing that it constitutes the standard in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and that States parties to the Convention shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized therein,

Recalling the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training,² the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Declaration of Principles on Tolerance³ and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention against Discrimination in Education,⁴

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

² Resolution [66/137](#), annex.

³ See [A/51/201](#), annex, appendix I.

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 429, No. 6193.



Welcoming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its entirety,⁵ especially the Goals and targets aimed at ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, and at building and upgrading education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive, and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all children, and underscoring the importance of its implementation for ensuring the enjoyment of the rights of the child,

Recalling the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2019,

Recalling also the proclamation of the International Day against Violence and Bullying at School, including Cyberbullying, to be observed on the first Thursday of November every year, which took place for the first time in 2020, and noting in this regard the activities held on the occasion of the first observance of the International Day,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,⁶ as well as of the conclusions and recommendations contained therein,

Recognizing the importance of international, regional and bilateral multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives to advance the effective protection and promotion of the rights of the child and the elimination of violence against children, including all forms of bullying, and in this regard noting with appreciation the efforts of, inter alia, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and the WeProtect Global Alliance,

Noting national efforts on the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General, including the organization of expert consultations at the regional level, promoted by Member States, in order to raise awareness of the impact of bullying on the rights of the child and to share experiences and best practices, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General,

Welcoming the development of national and subnational action plans and awareness-raising campaigns and the enactment of legislation by several Member States to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying, including cyberbullying,

Recognizing that bullying, including cyberbullying, can take both direct and indirect forms, from acts of physical, verbal, sexual and relational violence or aggression to social exclusion, including from peer to peer, which can inflict physical, psychological and social harm, and that, although rates differ from country to country, bullying, online or in person, has a negative impact on the fulfilment of the rights of the child and is among children's main concerns, affecting a high percentage of children and compromising their health, emotional well-being and academic work, and acknowledging the need to prevent and eliminate bullying among children,

Recognizing also that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is one of the greatest global challenges in the history of the United Nations, and noting with deep concern its disproportionately heavy impact, inter alia on children, and its impact on health and the loss of life, mental health and well-being, as well as the negative impact on global humanitarian needs and the enjoyment of human rights and across all spheres of society, including on livelihoods, food security and nutrition, and education, the exacerbation of poverty and hunger, disruption to economies, trade, societies and environments, and the exacerbation of economic and social inequalities within and among countries, which is reversing hard-won development

⁵ Resolution 70/1.

⁶ A/73/265.

gains and hampering progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all its Goals and targets,

Recognizing further that the use of technology, specifically digital platforms, can mitigate the loss of education and learning opportunities caused by school closures, while expressing concern that the poorest and most vulnerable children are least likely to live in a suitable home-learning environment with an adequate Internet connection and learning support,

Deeply concerned that increased unsupervised use of the Internet, inter alia during the COVID-19 pandemic, has exacerbated children's exposure to the risk of all forms of violence, including in digital contexts, inter alia peer-to-peer sexual harassment and cyberbullying, child sexual exploitation and abuse, child grooming, trafficking in persons, hate speech, stigmatization, racism, xenophobia and discrimination,

Recognizing the importance of generating appropriate statistical information and data on bullying, including, whenever possible, cyberbullying, disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts,

Recognizing also that children exercising their right to education, including through digital technologies, should not have their safety affected and should be protected from any violation or abuse of their right to privacy, and in this regard emphasizing that efforts to expand connectivity and digital learning and bridging the digital divide should give special regard to the protection of children,

Concerned about the occurrence of bullying in all parts of the world and the fact that children who are victimized by such practices may be at heightened risk of compromising their health, emotional well-being and academic work and for a wide range of physical and/or mental health conditions, as well as potential long-term effects on the individual's ability to realize his or her own potential,

Concerned also that bullying, including cyberbullying, is associated with long-lasting consequences that continue on into adulthood,

Noting with concern that children who are marginalized or vulnerable, who face stigmatization, exclusion or discrimination of any kind, are disproportionately affected by bullying, both in person and online,

Recognizing that bullying often includes a gender dimension and is associated with gender-based violence and stereotyping that negatively affects both boys and girls,

Noting the risks associated with the use of new information and communications technologies and applications, including increased vulnerability to bullying, while stressing that they can create new ways to enhance education and, inter alia, foster learning and teaching on the rights of the child and can be useful tools to promote children's protection, including with appropriate guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration,

Noting also the role that information and communications technologies play in reducing the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, including by empowering children to report such abuses,

Recalling the obligations of States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to ensure that parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child as well as to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse,

neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child, and recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Acknowledging the distinct and important roles that parents, legal guardians, schools, civil society, sports associations, communities, State institutions and traditional and non-traditional media each play in securing children's protection from the risks associated with bullying, including cyberbullying, and in preventing all forms of violence, including by promoting children's online safety,

Recognizing that early childhood is a critical stage for cognitive, emotional and behavioural development and that the parent-child relationship is a significant factor in predicting bullying behaviour in adolescents, as well as the existing evidence of a link between domestic violence and bullying in schools and other educational settings,

Emphasizing that evidence-based initiatives to strengthen children's life skills and respect for human rights, tolerance, concern for others and the responsibility to foster safety, as well as whole-school and whole-community programmes that fully respect all human rights and help to prevent and address bullying, constitute best practices that should be developed, strengthened and shared through international cooperation,

Acknowledging that children are uniquely placed to inform effective solutions and responses to bullying, including cyberbullying, and underlining that children's participation and their contributions, including their views and recommendations, therefore need to be at the centre of efforts to prevent and address bullying and that their effective and meaningful participation is critical to a clear understanding of bullying and its impacts in order to effectively address it,

1. *Takes note* of the annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children;⁷

2. *Also takes note* of the policy brief of the Secretary-General on the impact of COVID-19 on children, in which States are encouraged to invest in digital literacy and regulations that ensure children's privacy, data protection and safety online while also taking more energetic steps to protect children from online child sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as other online harms;

3. *Calls upon* Member States:

(a) To continue to take all appropriate measures to prevent and protect children, including in and out of school, both in person and in digital contexts, from any form of violence, such as bullying, including cyberbullying, by promptly responding to such acts, and to provide appropriate support to children affected by and involved in bullying;

(b) To continue to promote and invest in education, including as a long-term and lifelong process by which everyone learns tolerance and respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring such respect in all societies;

(c) To address, through necessary measures, the wider economic and social inequalities that may contribute to bullying, including cyberbullying, including poverty, gender norms and stereotypes, taking into account that risk factors are mixed and vary depending on country and context;

⁷ A/75/149.

(d) To develop and implement, as appropriate, measures and restorative practices to repair harm, restore relationships, avoid recidivism, promote the accountability of perpetrators and change aggressive behaviour;

(e) To generate and analyse statistical information and data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, and to provide information on disability, with regard to the problem of bullying, including cyberbullying, as a basis on which to elaborate effective public policies;

(f) To adopt and strengthen, as appropriate, clear and comprehensive measures, including, where relevant, legislation, that seek to prevent and protect children from bullying, including cyberbullying, and provide for safe and child-sensitive counselling and reporting procedures and safeguards for the rights of affected children;

(g) To ensure that child protection, including social protection and mental health services, is recognized as essential and that it continues to be provided and be accessible and available to all children at all times, including during lockdowns, quarantines and other types of confinement and public health measures;

(h) To strengthen the capacities of schools and the skills of professionals working with children in early detection and response to prevent and respond to bullying, including cyberbullying, in particular initiatives to mobilize support to prevent and address this phenomenon, and to ensure that children are informed of any existing public policies to secure their protection;

(i) To continue to raise public awareness, involving family members, legal guardians, caregivers, young people, schools, formal and non-formal and in-person and digital education settings, communities, community leaders, the media, sports organizations, athletes, parents and coaches, as well as civil society organizations, with the participation of children, regarding the protection of children from bullying;

(j) To develop accessible parenting and other skills programmes for parents, legal guardians and family members, together with social protection interventions that help to tackle negative social norms that contribute to violence against children and bullying, and that help to promote a nurturing family environment, reduce the risk of social exclusion and deprivation and reduce children's potential exposure to violence at home that might be caused by, inter alia, school closures, confinement, movement restrictions, disruption of the provision of child protection services, or added family stress related to job loss and isolation;

(k) To involve and provide children with the opportunity to participate effectively in the development of initiatives to prevent and address bullying, including available support services and safe, accessible, age- and child-sensitive, confidential and independent counselling and reporting mechanisms, to guide them in promoting inclusive and responsible digital behaviour and to inform them of available mental and physical health-care services and procedures in place to support them, where they exist, and encourages Member States to make such support services available, as much as possible;

(l) To pay particular attention to children in vulnerable situations, including through efforts to promote mutual respect and tolerance for diversity in order to combat stigmatization, racism, xenophobia, hate speech, discrimination or exclusion;

(m) To continue to share national experiences and best practices for preventing and tackling bullying, including cyberbullying;

4. *Encourages* Member States to continue to share with the Secretary-General, through existing processes and mechanisms, information about any initiatives undertaken at the national or subnational level to prevent and address

bullying, including cyberbullying, to promote peaceful social interaction with a view to assessing progress, and to make use of the results achieved;

5. *Encourages* Member States that have not yet done so to adopt appropriate measures, such as plans of action on the prevention of and response to bullying, including cyberbullying, to implement them effectively and to assess progress in children's protection, drawing on the experience of Member States, the United Nations, regional organizations, academia and civil society actors;

6. *Urges* Member States to ensure that all schools are free from violence, such as bullying, including cyberbullying, and peer-to-peer sexual harassment in digital contexts, and that they address all forms of violence against children, with particular attention to girls;

7. *Calls upon* Member States, with assistance from relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to support victims of bullying with access to evidence-based, quality programmes, care and counselling for their physical, psychological and social recovery, as well as psychological care and trauma counselling, rehabilitation and social reintegration;

8. *Welcomes* the continued collaboration of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children with human rights bodies and mechanisms, within their respective mandates, including the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, in order to support efforts to prevent and address all forms of violence against children in all settings, such as bullying, including cyberbullying;

9. *Invites* the Secretary-General to facilitate further international efforts, in collaboration with Member States, to continue to raise awareness of the impact of bullying, including cyberbullying, on the basis of evidence, including through existing initiatives of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes;

10. *Invites* the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children to include information relevant to her mandate on the progress achieved in the protection of children from bullying, including cyberbullying, in her report to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth and seventy-seventh sessions;

11. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the question at its seventy-seventh session under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of the rights of children".
