

BACKGROUND GUIDE



UN INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND

*Protecting Children from
Online Exploitation in the Digital Age*

Table of Contents

1. Letter to the Delegates
2. Introduction to the Committee
3. Introduction to the Agenda
4. Definitions of Key Terms
5. Background Information
 - The Rise of Digital Risk for Children
 - Forms of Online Exploitation
6. Cross-Cutting Issues and Challenges
7. Major Stakeholders
8. Past International Actions
9. Infographic-Ready Statistics
10. Solutions Proposed by the Chair
11. Questions Resolutions Must Answer
12. Possible Moderated Caucus Topics
13. Citations

Letter to Delegates

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) at MUN4Schools 2025. You have the incredible responsibility of representing nations on an issue that affects millions of vulnerable children around the world — online exploitation and abuse in the digital age.

As the world grows more connected through technology, so do the risks faced by children online. From cyberbullying to illegal trafficking of child imagery, these dangers are very real and constantly evolving. The internet can be a place of education, empowerment, and fun — but it must also be safe.

This committee gives you the chance to be the protectors and problem-solvers children need. By researching your assigned countries, debating international frameworks, and writing meaningful resolutions, you will play a vital role in safeguarding the world's most precious population.

We encourage you to dive deep into your country's internet laws, child protection policies, and global collaborations. Let your voice be one that champions safety, rights, and dignity for every child, everywhere.

Warm regards,

Sruthi, Nila Singaravelu

UNICEF Executive Board

UN INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the world's leading organization focused on the rights and well-being of children. It was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 to help children affected by World War II.

Today, it works in over 190 countries and territories.

UNICEF focuses on ensuring children have access to:

- Education
- Nutrition and clean water
- Medical care
- Protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation

UNICEF works directly with governments, civil society, educators, and families to provide emergency support and long-term solutions to challenges facing children.

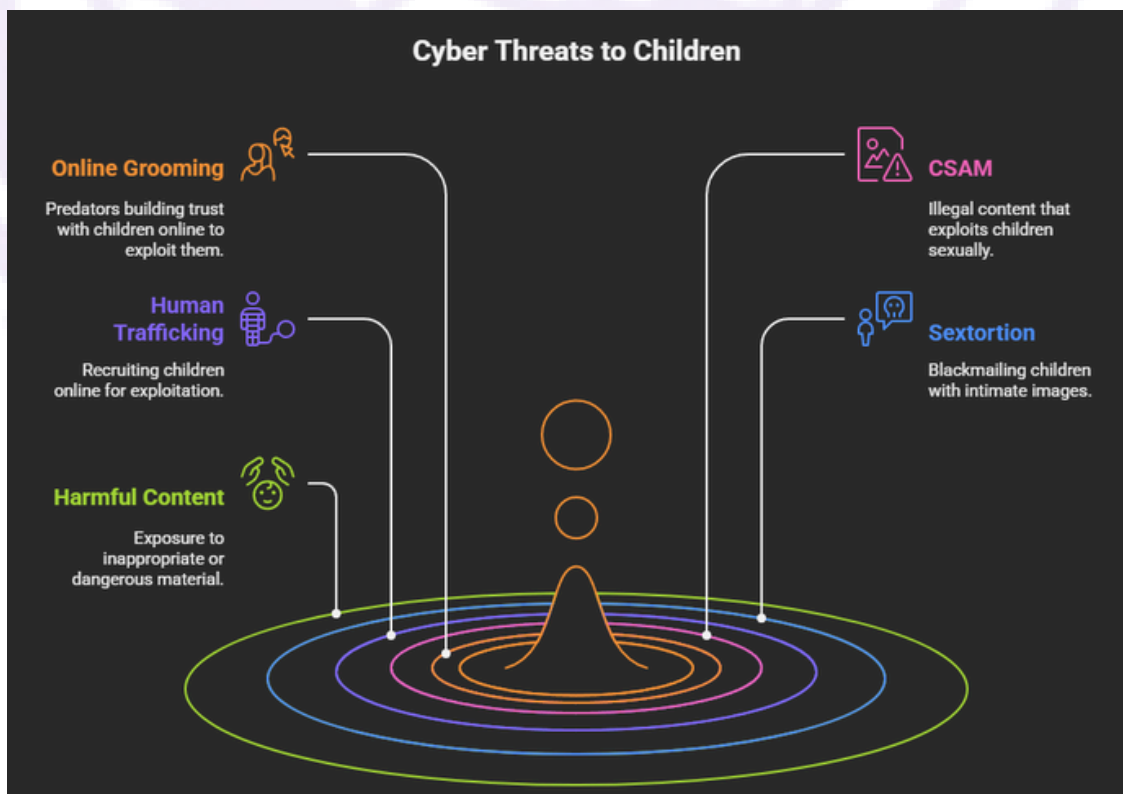
In this committee, delegates act as representatives of countries seeking to protect children from online harm while also balancing privacy, innovation, and internet access.

Introduction to the Agenda

Protecting Children from Online Exploitation in the Digital Age

As more children go online for learning, socializing, and entertainment, they become increasingly exposed to new forms of cyber threats. These include:

- Online grooming
- Child sexual abuse material (CSAM)
- Human trafficking and recruitment
- Sextortion and blackmail
- Exposure to harmful content



The COVID-19 pandemic increased the time children spend online, and in many cases, children were left unsupervised. With limited awareness and weak laws in some countries, perpetrators take advantage of these gaps to target minors.

The international community must act together to create stronger online safety laws, push tech companies to monitor and report harmful activity, and educate families and schools about digital literacy and protection.



Key Terms of ECOSOC

- **Online Exploitation:** When someone uses the internet to abuse or take advantage of another person — in this case, a child — for personal, financial, or criminal gain.
- **CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material):** Any photo, video, or media showing the sexual abuse of children. It is illegal under international law.
- **Grooming:** When someone builds a relationship with a child online in order to manipulate or abuse them.
- **Digital Footprint:** The trail of data a person leaves online — what they post, like, or share.
- **Sextortion:** A form of blackmail where someone threatens to release intimate images unless they get money or more photos.

Background Information

The Rise of Digital Risk for Children

Children are among the most active users of the internet. According to UNICEF, **1 in 3 internet users worldwide is under 18 years old**. While digital platforms can help children learn and connect, they also open up the door to serious risks if safety measures are not in place.

Social media platforms, video games, chat apps, and anonymous messaging tools are often used by predators. Children may not understand the long-term consequences of sharing personal information or images.

Many developing countries lack strong cybersecurity infrastructure, making children even more vulnerable. Even in developed nations, online exploitation cases are rising rapidly.

Forms of Online Exploitation

- **Sexual Exploitation:** Trafficking, streaming abuse, or sharing of illegal images
- **Emotional Exploitation:** Blackmail, manipulation, and fake relationships
- **Economic Exploitation:** Forcing children to create content or engage in scams
- **Exposure to Harmful Content:** Violent, hateful, or adult material online

The agenda demands that delegates examine both national and global strategies to **safeguard children's rights in the digital world**.

Background Information

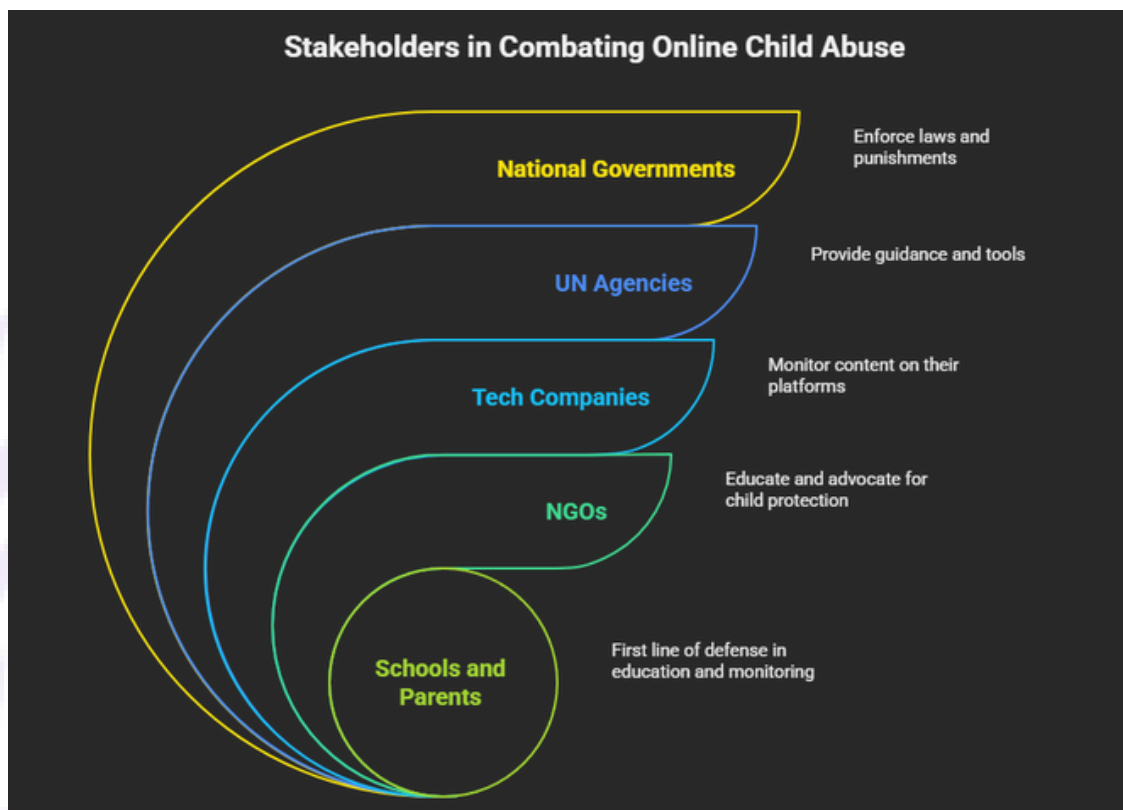
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **Lack of Awareness:** Many families and educators don't understand digital threats.
- **Weak Laws:** Some countries have no specific laws about cybercrime involving children.
- **Tech Company Responsibility:** Many platforms are slow to detect or remove harmful content.
- **Privacy vs. Protection:** How to keep children safe without invading their privacy?
- **International Jurisdiction:** Crimes often cross borders — which country is responsible?

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

- **National Governments:** Create laws and enforce punishments for online child abuse
- **UN Agencies (UNICEF, UNODC, ITU):** Provide guidance, reports, and tools
- **Tech Companies:** Platforms like Meta, TikTok, and YouTube must monitor content
- **NGOs:** Like ECPAT and Save the Children, which educate and advocate
- **Schools and Parents:** The first line of defense in digital education and monitoring

Background Information



PAST INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

- **WePROTECT Global Alliance (2014):** A coalition of governments and tech companies fighting online child abuse
- **Optional Protocol to the CRC on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000):** Strengthens protection against exploitation
- **UNICEF's Child Online Protection Guidelines (2020):** Promotes safe digital environments
- **ITU Child Online Protection Initiative:** Provides resources to countries to protect children digitally

Background Information

INFOGRAPHIC-READY STATISTICS

- **1 in 3** internet users worldwide is a child (UNICEF)
- **80%** of children **aged 12–17** report seeing something upsetting online (EU Kids Online)
- Over **85 million** CSAM files were flagged by tech companies in 2021 alone (NCMEC)
- **70%** of child trafficking cases start with online contact (INTERPOL)
- Only **38%** of countries have legislation specifically protecting children online (UNODC)

SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE CHAIR

1. **National Digital Safety Curricula:** Introduce school programs that teach online safety and awareness from primary levels.
2. **Global Reporting Framework:** A UN-backed tool for quick reporting of CSAM and grooming incidents.
3. **Child Safety Compliance for Tech Platforms:** Require mandatory reporting, detection tools, and age verification by companies.
4. **Cross-Border Cyber Crime Treaty:** Strengthen cooperation between countries for investigation and punishment.
5. **Parental Digital Literacy Campaigns:** Equip caregivers with skills to protect children online at home..

Background Information

QUESTIONS RESOLUTIONS MUST ANSWER

- **How** can countries with limited digital infrastructure protect children online?
- **Should** tech companies be legally responsible for harmful content?
- **How** can we balance children's privacy with safety monitoring?
- **What** support can be given to children who have already experienced online abuse?
- **How** can schools and communities be trained to detect and prevent exploitation?

POSSIBLE MODERATED CAUCUS TOPICS

- Legal Reforms on Online Child Protection
- Role of Tech Platforms in Digital Accountability
- Education vs. Surveillance in Online Safety
- International Cyber Policing Partnerships
- Rehabilitating Child Victims of Online Abuse

Citations

- **UNICEF.** "State of the World's Children 2023: For Every Child, Every Right."
- **UNODC Global Report** on Trafficking in Persons, 2022
- **WePROTECT** Global Alliance Reports
- **EU Kids** Online Survey 2022
- NCMEC: <https://www.missingkids.org/>