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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Beijing Children's Legal Aid and Research Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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

[31 January 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Protect Children from Cyber Violence

The protection of child rights online is encountering unprecedented challenges and is entering the stage of global governance. The transition of human society into a digital era, particularly for children, is evident. According to ITU's Facts and Figures 2022, an estimated 5.3 billion out of the earth's 8 billion population were using the internet in 2022, which accounts for roughly 66 per cent of the world's population. Notably, teenagers aged 15-24 years are the primary force behind connectivity, with 75 per cent of young people worldwide now able to use the Internet. In high and upper-middle-income economies, the percentage of young internet users has already reached 95 per cent. While the internet has provided new opportunities for children and young people to exercise their rights to communicate, connect, learn, access information, and express their opinions, mechanisms for the protection of child rights have significantly lagged behind. Children are exposed to violence, hatred, pornography and other harmful information online while facing risks such as cyberbullying, privacy and personal information leakage, sexual abuse and exploitation, and overuse of the internet. It is evident that the entire international community is facing these challenges, and it's imperative to address them and find a collective resolution.

With the advancement of Internet accessibility and global activities, child protection issues have transcended national borders, necessitating collaborative actions from the international community. Effective child protection requires not only governmental support but also the involvement of professional social organizations in addressing conflicts and issues. Moreover, legal professionals specializing in child protection play a crucial role in directly assisting violated children and advocating for broader legislative and policy reforms to uphold children's rights. However, resource constraints and other factors have led to a lack of necessary legal expertise in child protection,

particularly in developing countries. Addressing this shortage is crucial for the continuous improvement of child protection legislation and the expansion of initiatives benefiting children. Therefore, it is imperative for the international community, governments, and all sectors of society to prioritize and support child protection organizations, as well as to allocate resources and attention to the training of legal professionals in this field.

It is also critical to develop an international platform for the exchange of children's online protection in the digital era. The international community has long recognized the significant impact of large corporations on human rights protections, especially in relation to child rights. In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council approved the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, paving the way for multinational corporations and other business enterprises to engage in the work of human rights protection. However, there is a growing concern about new problems facing child rights protection in the digital age. In March 2021, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child issued the general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, emphasizing the fundamental principles and key strategic measures for safeguarding child rights in the digital age. It is increasingly evident that digital platforms have a significant impact on the rights of citizens, highlighting the need for collective action. All countries, digital platforms, child protection organizations, and professionals need to acknowledge that the international community and many countries have not taken sufficient actions to protect child rights in the digital era and many digital platforms are also inexperienced in becoming a pivotal force in protecting child rights online.

The cases of children suffering from cyber - violence are heart - wrenching. Young and vulnerable souls are being tormented by malicious comments, threats, and rumors spread online. These acts of cyber - violence can leave indelible psychological scars on children, affecting their self - esteem, mental health, and even their future development. The international community must not turn a blind eye to this grave situation. We call on all countries to strengthen legislation and law enforcement to combat cyber - violence against children. Digital platforms should also take more responsibility, implementing strict content - review mechanisms and providing prompt support to victims. Let us all work together to create a safe and harmonious digital environment for every child, where they can grow up without the fear of being attacked and bullied online."