



Turning the Tide on Child Sexual Abuse Online

2022 Global Summit Report



Global Summit

Bringing the networks and relationships underpinning the Alliance to life

WeProtect Global Alliance’s global summits are a unique opportunity for Alliance members from industry, governments, civil society and international organisations to come together to share learnings, agree collaborative solutions and reaffirm commitments.

During the 2022 Turning the Tide Global Summit, delegates heard from global leaders and experts about protecting children from sexual exploitation online.

WeProtect Global Alliance is proud to have had the European Commission as co-hosts for this summit. The Alliance brought together over **400 in-person delegates** at Palais d’Egmont in Brussels.

We also had nearly **500 more people** attending the summit **online**.

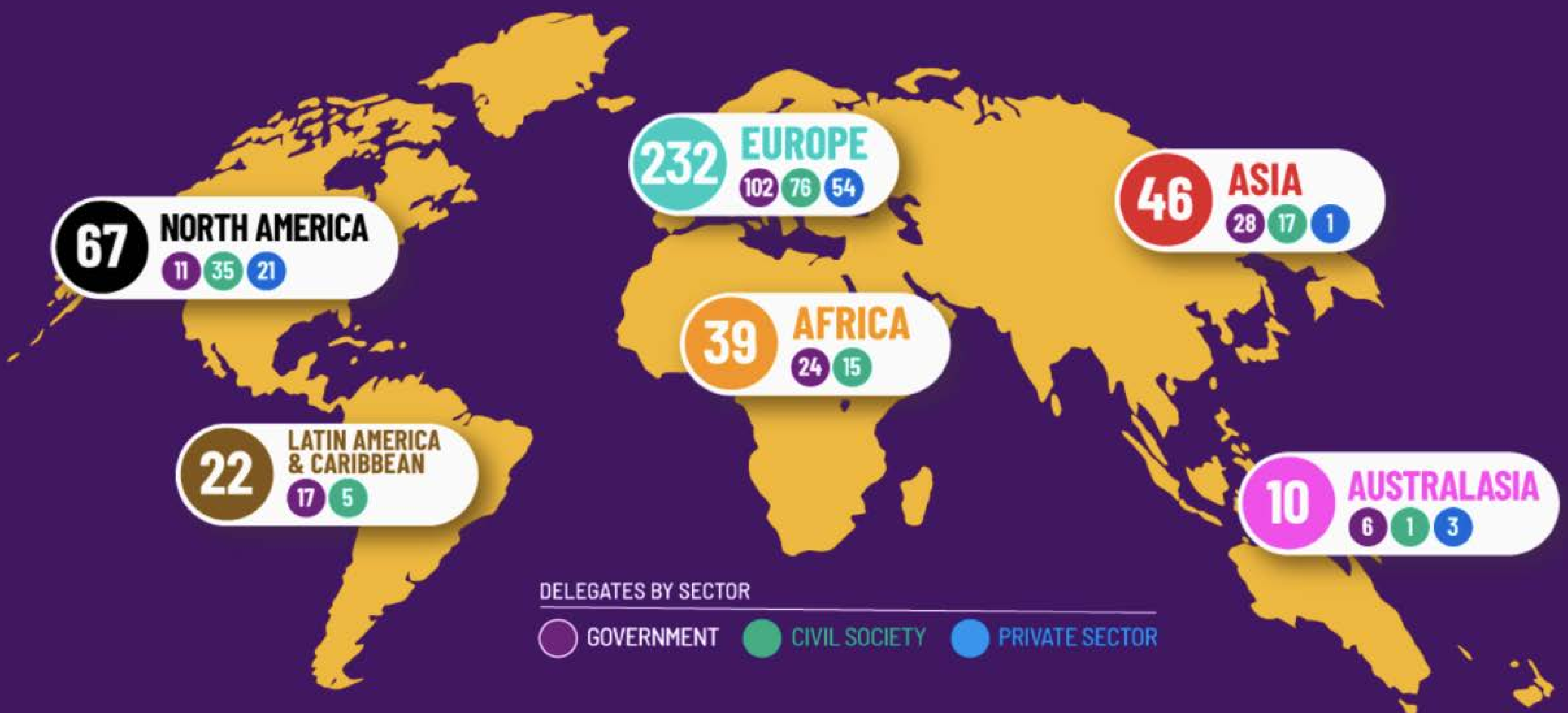


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Opening speeches - Day 1:

Turning the Tide on Child Sexual Abuse Online | Plenary session

Session information

Co-hosts of the Global Summit, WeProtect Global Alliance and the European Commission, opened the event by setting the vision for protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse online. The summit began with an overview of the scale and complexity of child sexual exploitation and abuse online, and some of the efforts being made around the world to address it.

Speakers

- **Ernie Allen**, Chair of Global Policy Board, WeProtect Global Alliance
- **Ylva Johansson**, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, European Union
- **Joanna Shields**, Founder of WePROTECT and CEO of BenevolentAIW



Ernie Allen, Chair of WeProtect Global Alliance

In his opening address, Ernie Allen highlighted the importance of multi-sector collaboration in the fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation. He emphasised that working together globally to protect children online should be a priority for world leaders, thanking the Alliance's 99 member governments for their commitment to safeguarding children, and noted that more work must be done to engage and mobilise stakeholders in the Global South. Mr Allen also noted that the Covid-19 pandemic brought many more children online for the first time – a key issue at the summit – and that many more crimes were occurring as a result of these changes.

1. The scale of child sexual exploitation online is increasing and outstripping global capacity to respond, and therefore it must be placed on the policy agendas of world leaders.
2. Prevention must become a priority. While law enforcement is important, arrest and prosecution is not enough.
3. However, there is hope. Reporting is increasing, law enforcement is responding more swiftly and effectively, and private industry is innovating. Civil society is doing more and more victims are being identified and rescued.

He outlined three key observations from the Alliance's latest Global Threat Assessment: (published in October 2021)

Mr Allen welcomed the engagement and awareness that international bodies have been creating, and called for advocacy and involvement from more organisations. He then introduced Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs,

Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, European Union

Commissioner Johansson began with a message to children who have been harmed by sexual abuse: “You are not alone. We are working hard to stop this”. She explained that, weeks before, the European Commission had presented ambitious [proposals for legislation](#) to prevent and fight child sexual abuse by making tech companies more accountable in these efforts. “I’m glad survivors are taking centre stage at this summit,” she said. “This law is your law”.

The importance of removing child sexual abuse material and other harmful content from the internet was urgently felt in Commissioner Johansson’s address. “Can you imagine the pain of the already traumatised children and their parents? **We must take the photos down, the videos down, take the abuse down. That is what my proposal is about,**” she said. She raised concern over the voluntary nature of detection, reporting, and removal by tech industry companies, stating that police need more cooperation in order to protect children. She noted that voluntary action could stop due to uncertainty over the legality of reporting in some of the EU’s member states, saying that this trend had caused a drop of nearly 50% in reporting in 2021. “If we do nothing, then detection in Europe will stop,” she said. “Reports will drop dramatically, blindfolding police – that must never happen.”

Finally, Commissioner Johansson urged the summit delegates to think of the courage of survivors and to follow their example:

“Show your support. Think of the survivors here today, who say: let no child suffer what we suffered. Think of their inspiring courage. And follow their example: and speak out!”

commending her recent proposed law to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse online as a “great example of European leadership in confronting this complex problem.”

The European Commission’s proposal at a glance

- On May 11, 2022, The European Commission [proposed regulations](#) to protect children by requiring tech companies to scan the content in their systems for child sexual abuse material. This would have broad implications beyond the European Union’s borders.
- The regulations would impose several obligations on tech companies that host content and provide communication services, including social media platforms, texting services and direct messaging apps, to detect certain categories of images and text.
- Under the proposal, these companies would be required to detect previously identified child sexual abuse material, new child sexual abuse material, and solicitations of children for sexual purposes. Companies would be required to report detected content to the EU Centre on Child Sexual Abuse (EU Centre), a centralised coordinating entity that the proposed regulations would establish.
- With the Commission’s proposals, there would be a move from broad voluntary frameworks to more targeted, mandatory ones. Companies would be obligated to make a risk assessment of child sexual abuse and grooming on their services, and reduce those risks with mitigating measures.
- The proposals are technology-neutral. They do not tell companies which tools they must use. But technology must be effective, reliable, the least intrusive available, and detect child sexual abuse only.

Baroness Joanna Shields, Founder of WePROTECT and CEO of BenevolentAI

In her address, Joanna Shields told the delegates that the summit was “both urgent and timely” following the rapid increase of online threats during the Covid-19 pandemic. “We’ve made great strides, but the threat of online child sexual abuse is constantly morphing and accelerating as new technologies emerge and become mainstream,” she said. She argued that the greatest challenge for governments and organisations involved in the fight to protect children will be keeping pace with emerging technologies: “we must open our eyes and our minds to what is looming on the horizon.”

Noting the ever-growing risks posed by new technologies, Baroness Shields outlined a few concerning trends: the increase in ‘self-generated’ child sexual abuse material, the threats related to the advent of the metaverse, the creation of virtual reality tools including haptic clothing, the ‘data-fication’ of children and a lack of concern for children’s rights in AI strategies, and a disregard for neuro-rights (a new framework for human rights that is aimed at protecting the brain as technology advances).

“It would be unrealistic to ask children to opt out of the digital world,” she said. “We therefore need to act collectively to make it a safer space for them”.

“It’s time to push ever further to ensure there’s more action and transparency,” said Baroness Shields, calling for more transparency from big tech about the products they are developing and the way that data is being used. She also called for greater efforts to enshrine the rights of children in law, with regulations that anticipate the future – and are flexible enough to counter threats when they emerge.

Finally, she called for more meaningful collaboration across countries and sectors: **“I know the challenge can feel overwhelming, and progress slow and frustrating. This requires all of us, united in our resolve and unwavering in our commitment to create a safer and better future for the children of tomorrow.”**

Key statistics from this session

- The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) reported that 2021 was the worst year on record for child sexual abuse online, with **85 million images** and videos being reported worldwide. They found that there was a 64% increase in 2020 in the URLs containing child sexual abuse imagery, links to this imagery, or advertisements for it. Further, 70% of the victims were aged 11 to 13.
- In Europe, there’s been a **6000% increase** in reports since 2010.
- It is estimated that **1 in 3 internet users** is a child under the age of 18 years, and more than 175,000 children are using the internet for the first time every day.
- In 2021, the IWF observed a **fourfold increase** in ‘self-generated’ child sexual abuse content.
- According to the Centre for Countering Digital Hate, users experience abusive behaviour including sexual harassment and racism in popular virtual reality environments like VRChat every **7 minutes**.

Setting the scene – The threats children face online | Plenary session

Session information

Bringing together expertise and evidence from across WeProtect Global Alliance, this panel discussion saw speakers from INTERPOL, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), Meta, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and the US Department of Justice give their perspectives on the risks children face online.



Speakers

- **Iain Drennan**, Executive Director of WeProtect Global Alliance (Moderator)
- **Stephen Kavanagh**, Executive Director Police Services, INTERPOL
- **Antigone Davis**, VP, Global Head of Safety, Meta
- **Susie Hargreaves**, CEO, Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
- **Michelle DeLaune**, President and CEO, National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
- **Steven Grocki**, Chief, Child Exploitation Section, US Department of Justice

Stephen Kavanagh, Executive Director Police Services, INTERPOL

Addressing the delegates remotely, Stephen Kavanagh stressed the importance of international collaboration for fighting child sexual abuse both offline and online. He argued that this work has shifted over the past few years from 'a local to a global perimeter', and that national law enforcement agencies can no longer work alone to protect victims of online abuse. "In this age of mass digital information, images take on a life of their own. Unspeakable cruelty, shared thousands or millions of times. An image or a video of a child's abuse captures the very worst moments in a victim's life," he said. "Who do they turn to?"

Kavanagh reminded delegates that national police units receive hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of cyber tips each year –

– many of them overwhelmed by these referrals due to a lack of resource and capacity.

He noted that two-thirds of INTERPOL's member countries have no specialised units at all. "Who do victims turn to?" he asked again. The goal, he argued, should "not be a lubricated reporting mechanism that will drown all the officers working to safeguard children". Rather, it should be an "ecosystem where reporting is accompanied by prevention and a deep and enduring commitment to enable the identification of these evil offenders". He described a system where motivation and dedication, such as that shown by investigators facing gruelling challenges and sleepless nights, is shared by government and industry alike.

Antigone Davis, VP, Global Head of Safety, Meta

Antigone Davis outlined four key challenges facing Meta and the wider tech industry: the online landscape; effective harm prevention; responding to abuse; and measuring progress. New online platforms, while filled with opportunity, are also being exploited by criminals seeking to harm children. Davis talked delegates through Meta's response to this first challenge, including their strict policies against child sexual abuse material, the sexualisation of minors, and other activities that can lead to exploitation.

Their second challenge is how to prevent harm from happening, and for Meta, this means combining strong default protections for young people and technologies like machine learning to identify and address malicious activity. "Criminals often reveal their intentions in advance, via certain public signals," Davis explained. "This can include using coded language in their bios, searching for egregious terms, repeatedly setting up new accounts to try and connect with young people, or joining highly questionable groups". Using machine learning, Meta analyses behavioural data across their platforms to identify suspicious signals and take action to address any threats. She also mentioned private default settings, barriers to contacting minors for unconnected adults, in-app safety notices, and streamlined reporting processes. "We see these new efforts are measurably reducing risky conversations between suspicious accounts and minors," Davis said.

On the third issue – responding to reports – Davis described a people-centred approach to encourage more reporting and to aid better support. According to a recent study from Thorn, she said, children who experience something negative online are more inclined to use in-app safety tools than to seek help offline. By simplifying the process and encouraging reporting among users, Meta saw a 70% increase in reports sent by minors in the first few months of 2022. An in-house team provides information to law enforcement and sends cyber tips to NCMEC regularly.

Measuring progress was the fourth and final challenge that Davis discussed. Pointing to the Technology Coalition's new Transparency Framework, she said that it's important to understand the way that content circulates in order to build effective interventions. Meta worked on understanding the intent behind re-shares, and found that 75% of those who shared child sexual abuse material did not exhibit a sexual interest in children.

Collaborating for change: Meta and NCMEC

In response to the rise of 'self-generated' images and the specific risk those images create, Meta and NCMEC initiated 'Report Remove' programs which aim to support the detection and removal of harmful images. Together, they are thinking of ways to reduce barriers that minors face to reaching out and seeking support when they are aware that an image of them is circulating on the internet. Powered by Meta funding, NCMEC has been building a global platform for minors who are concerned about 'self-generated' images being shared without their consent. They have been working with experts, academics, and other survivor advocates globally to develop the platform, and hope to see this platform launch towards the end of 2022.

How does it work? In the initial version of the platform, minors will privately generate a hash of their images or videos directly on their own devices without needing to upload their content onto the platform. NCMEC will securely house these hashes, at which point participating companies like Meta can use them to remove the material, and curb sharing, helping to return power to the affected minor.

“That certainly doesn’t diminish the harm to the victim,” Davis said, “but it takes different interventions to stop those with a sexual interest in children than it does to stop those who are thoughtless, careless, and callous in sharing those terrible images”. She explained how they tested in-app, educational messaging about the harm and consequences of sharing certain types of content, and mentioned a public awareness campaign called ‘Report it, don’t share it’ that they have run in 14 countries so far.

Finally, Davis expressed a need for regulatory frameworks that prioritise prevention, support detection, and encourage reporting – without sacrificing the industry’s ability to provide safe, private, and secure messaging.

Susie Hargreaves, CEO, Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

Susie Hargreaves gave delegates a sense of increasing numbers since the last summit in 2019, discussed the impact of Covid-19 on these statistics, and finished off by talking about how we all can and must respond to this growing challenge.

The IWF are the UK hotline for reporting and removing child sexual abuse. They identify images and videos of child sexual abuse wherever they’re hosted in the world, and then work internationally to get them removed.

In 25 years their human analysts have assessed **970,000 web pages** on child sexual abuse. They are independent of government and law enforcement, but work very closely with them both. In her presentation, Hargreaves reminded delegates that **“every image that stays live is a child being re-victimised. This content must be removed from the internet as fast as possible”**.

The Covid-19 pandemic and child sexual abuse material: what the IWF saw

Rising use of the internet during Covid-19 “created a perfect storm for predators to seek and find children,” Hargreaves said. There was a 50% overall increase in public reports of child sexual exploitation and abuse online during the lockdown in March–July 2020 (in numbers, that’s 29,698 in 2019 compared with 44,809 in 2020). Over a period of 4 weeks over lockdown, 8.8 million attempts to access child sexual abuse material online were recorded in the UK alone.

In 2020 and 2021, the IWF saw a 70% increase in actioned reports from 2018/19. Since the last WeProtect Summit in 2019, IWF’s analysts assessed 660,000 web pages of child sexual abuse, and of those they confirmed 405,577 as containing child sexual abuse. Those web pages contain hundreds and even thousands of images, equating to the removal of millions of images during that time. The most affected group is girls aged 11-13. This is in part because of the increase in ‘self-generated’ content.

Hargreaves wanted to highlight a significant new challenge in the field of child sexual abuse and exploitation online: the rise of 'self-generated' content, especially among young girls. "In the 'self-generated' content we see, the abuser is remote. The victim is normally alone, occasionally with other children, and often is in a bedroom or another home setting when the image is captured and shared". Children as young as 3 are being implicated in this growing trend. Explaining the different ways that 'self-generated' content is solicited, Hargreaves noted that at one end of the spectrum there are children being groomed, blackmailed, or coerced, and at the other there are children who create this material for 'likes' on social media, and who appear to be participating more actively and happily in it. "At any point in the spectrum these children are victims who don't understand what is happening. Children are not mature physically or emotionally enough to understand."

To address these evolving problems, Hargreaves said she was proud to work with industry and to be funded by industry. "This is not a problem that will be solved without them," she said. Recently, the IWF ran a successful campaign on TikTok in order to educate young users about online risks and ways to be safe. "We need to work together," she told the delegates. The IWF provides a range of technical services to industry including an image hash list; a running list of keywords and terms that abusers use; and a URL blocklist. Finally, Hargreaves encouraged delegates to visit the IWF's website for more helpful data and resources.

A note on the term 'self-generated' content

The term 'self-generated' is not ideal because it implies that the child is in some way responsible, but a more suitable term has not yet been found to describe this kind of material.

For the purposes of this discussion (and for clarity throughout the conference), the term 'self-generated' will be used with the acknowledgment that it does not adequately reflect the coercive nature of these kinds of images and videos.

Terms explained:

- **Image hash list:** A list of 'digital fingerprints' of known child sexual abuse imagery allowing members to locate/block content on their networks, platforms and apps.
- **Keywords list:** a unique list of words, phrases, and codes offenders may use to conceal child sexual abuse imagery on legitimate networks and platforms.
- **URL list:** A list of webpages showing images and videos of children suffering sexual abuse so members can block access

Michelle DeLaune, CEO and President of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)

Next, Michelle DeLaune from NCMEC spoke to delegates about trends in reporting and what they say about child sexual abuse activity. NCMEC is the resource centre on all issues relating to missing and exploited children. Through data analytics they have learned a lot about what is circulating online and the many ways that content is being shared, and what new prevention strategies are needed to counter new trends. They have reviewed over 650 million images and videos of child sexual abuse.

Last year, NCMEC saw a huge increase in reports coming primarily from the tech industry. DeLaune reported that there were 29 million reports of child sexual abuse material last year alone, which is about 70,000-80,000 reports a day. She also noted that there was a sharp increase in video content, with a 42% increase in the number of videos in 2021. This is a worrying trend for people working to find, remove, and investigate content: "It makes it more complicated for analysts, and it takes more time to review material. It's harder psychologically to have to watch videos, and it takes more space to store them."

DeLaune reminded delegates that there are real children in each and every video that is reported to NCMEC. Of the children who have been identified by law enforcement globally, she said that: 64% of them are female and 36% are male. 59% of victims are prepubescent (10 or 11 years old), 33% are pubescent, and 8% of them are victims. These children are most likely to be abused by someone they know.

"We're really dependent on technology to be able to surface reports that have the highest indication that there is a child actively being abused so that law enforcement can intervene," DeLaune said. She described a recent case where a tech company in the US made a report to NCMEC on a Monday, and analysts were able to detect that the images in the report had been produced the previous Wednesday. They passed the information to law enforcement and the offender was arrested in Austria, and the child safeguarded, within two days.

“It’s easy to forget about humanity when we talk about big numbers.”

Michelle DeLaune, NCMEC

Steve Grocki, Chief, Child Exploitation and Obscenity, US Department of Justice

Bringing to light one of the more complicated aspects of child sexual abuse and exploitation online, Steve Grocki spoke to delegates about the dark web. "We've heard about the large volumes of images, videos, and different websites known to us, and the many resolutions and developments that are arising to try and report and remove this content," he said.

"But there is much of the online environment that we do not see. Websites and hidden services on the dark web can bring together hundreds of thousands of offenders who trade links to or actual images or videos numbering in the millions". It's concerning, he said, how much easier it is becoming for offenders to communicate with one another. It is also concerning that law enforcement's ability to detect those sites is 'almost impossible'.

We need to take a step back, he said, and think whether our collective understanding of the problem is complete. “Have we learned enough about the problem? Are the steps we’re taking actually targeting that problem?” he asked. Grocki and his colleagues think about threats in terms of scale, complexity, and dangerousness. “We only see a fraction of the scale [of child sexual abuse online], and it’s still enormous. This impacts the response by law enforcement and NGOs and our capacity to deal with it,” he said. Rapid technological changes make the problem a complex one, and they mean that the dangerousness of the crimes is evolving too.

Grocki said he was hopeful about industry transparency and called for more public debate and conversations about the innovations that companies are making to create a safer online space for children.

“ I am encouraged by the whisper of change and how that whisper is growing louder ... Voices in the survivor community are getting louder, and I hope this continues to influence us in speeding up that change. ”

Steve Grocki

National responses to child sexual abuse online | Breakout session

Session information

This session showcased how various countries have used the Model National Response (MNR) framework in their own national context, explored the opportunities and challenges they have encountered along the way, provided a forum for discussion around capacity building needs, and built the base to rally around a Call to Action.



Speakers

- **Gioia Scappucci**, Executive Secretary to the Lanzarote Committee, Council of Europe (Moderator)
- **Guillermo Galarza**, Vice President, ICMEC
- **Albert Antwi-Boasiako**, Director-General of the Cyber Security Authority, Government of Ghana
- **Afrooz Kaviani Johnson**, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF HG
- **Glenda Relova**, Exec Director of the National Authority for Child Care, Republic of the Philippines
- **Marija Manojlovic**, Safe Online Director, End Violence Global Partnership

WeProtect Global Alliance’s goal is to support its members in developing coordinated multi-stakeholder responses to tackle online child sexual exploitation and abuse. To do so, the Alliance launched its Model National Response (MNR) – a document providing guidance and support to countries and organisations to help them build their –

– response to child sexual exploitation online – at their 2015 Summit in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Gioia Scappucci opened the session with a question for Guillermo Galarza about his experience using the MNR framework in his work in Latin America, with specific reference to the Multisectoral Response Capacity (MRC) assessment that his team ran there.

Guillermo Galarza, Vice President, ICMEC

- The past year saw the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) move towards a more systematic approach to working with law enforcement and other stakeholders to address child sexual abuse and exploitation online. Mr Galarza explained to delegates that, as a response to the development of the MNR, his team came up with the Multisectorial Response Capacity (MRC) assessment: a strategic, systematic evaluation that works to identify gaps relating to prevention, investigation, and victim support in specific national contexts, and help them establish a plan of action.
 - Working in close reference to the MNR, the MRC assessment should help countries and consultants, NGOs, and researchers effectively find gaps through data collection and analysis: “We gather information by conducting interviews with public employees, prosecutors, law enforcement, and other stakeholders,” Galarza -
- explained. “We also use public information and do document reviews of legislation and case studies and so on”. At the end of this process, ICMEC provides an observation and helps the country they’re working with develop an action plan. An important part of this process is ensuring that the country drives the decisions about what actions to take, delegates were told.
- Galarza described the use of the MRC assessment in Latin America so far as a success, listing a grooming law that was passed in Guatemala, enhanced legislations in Colombia, and a rescued baby in Central America as some of its outcomes. Using the MRC, ICMEC has also trained over 120,000 specialists on issues relating to online child exploitation. He remarked that while progress had been significant, a more strategic approach to capacity building would be necessary to advance efforts more effectively.

Albert Antwi-Boasiako, Ag. Director-General of the Cyber Security Authority, Government of Ghana

- Talking about Ghana’s commitment to child online protection, Antwi-Boasiako explained to delegates that the country’s approach has been to establish an accountable national institution that drives the country’s efforts in the fight against online abuse and exploitation. “While this is a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder effort,” he said, “there must be a national institution that brings everyone on board”. The country’s answer to this is their [National Cyber Security Authority](#) (CSA), which has led important interventions and initiatives for promoting a safer digital world for children in Ghana.
 - In the past few years, the CSA has launched 292, a helpline for reporting that has led to arrests and prosecutions in the country. They have also strengthened the legislative environment in the area of child abuse online, and launched a public awareness campaign for children called -
- [Safer Digital Ghana](#). Ghana has developed a digital forensics lab for child protection (funded by UNICEF) and has worked to train judges, prosecutors, and investigators working within the criminal justice system to improve responses to child sexual abuse online.
- Reflecting on where he would like to see improvements, Antwi-Boasiako said that he wants to see all national systems working on the issue of child safety consolidated and strengthened. He said the key to success will be political commitment. **“We must intensify awareness creation and form more partnerships,”** he said. “The environment is right, so we need partners who can help drive the agenda to the next level”.

Glenda Relova, Exec Director of the National Authority for Child Care, Republic of the Philippines

- In her presentation to the delegates, Glenda Relova outlined key threats faced by the Philippines as well as steps the government has taken to counter child sexual exploitation and abuse online. Explaining the country's heavy reliance on internet and social media, Relova said that the Covid-19 pandemic had caused a sharp rise in internet use and, relatedly, in cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse online recorded by their cybercrime division (there were **279,166 cases** recorded in March 2020, which is triple the figure from March 2019. Over the course of 2020, NCMEC recorded **1,294,750 cyber tips** from the Philippines).
- Relova explained how the [Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography \(IACACP\)](#) – composed of 12 line agency members and 9 government organisations – coordinates, monitors and oversees the country's efforts to end child –
 - sexual abuse online. She said that the MNR has been instrumental in harnessing capacities across policy and governance, criminal justice, victim services, industry work and media communication.
- Outlining some of the country's initiatives, Relova told the delegates that in 2018, the country's president declared an annual 'Safer internet for children in the Philippines' day in order to raise awareness about safer internet use. She also described a victim reintegration program, new guidelines for the use of plea bargaining when prosecuting crimes related to child sexual exploitation and abuse, a collaboration with Meta for their 'Report it, don't share it' campaign, and the creation of the National Authority for Child Care (NACC) which penalises those who expose children to abuse through negligent adoption and fostering practices.

Marija Manojlovic, Safe Online Director, End Violence Global Partnership

- Marija Manojlovic from the End Violence Against Children Global Partnership (EVAC) said that the organisation's mission was to end all forms of violence against children – online, offline, in communities, and at home – and that an essential part of this work is understanding the ways that digital technologies facilitate harms and abuse. The EVAC, she explained, works by: investing in capacities, research and tech tools; generating evidence on trends to improve policy and services; and sharing knowledge through networks.
- Manojlovic told the delegates about EVAC's [Disrupting Harm](#) research project, a comprehensive data collection effort in 13 countries across Eastern and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia that began in 2019. "Data collection is crucial to know where to invest funds," she said.
 - "Data is needed for impactful investments". She explained that the project makes significant use of qualitative primary data from children, caregivers, and frontline workers in order to form a comprehensive picture, and that evidence is drawn from across sectors.
- Knowledge and robust evidence can support countries in implementing the MNR, Manojlovic said. Disrupting Harm's focus on assessing national responses and protection mechanisms means it is a helpful way to identify gaps and then take action. "We will not stop here": EVAC hopes to promote the project at a higher level and in new places like South America, North Africa, and the Middle East.

Afrooz Kaviani Johnson, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF HG

Finally, **Afrooz Kaviani Johnson**, a Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF HQ, gave the delegates a snapshot of lessons learned from a recent review of the MNR, as shown below.

Model National Response review: a snapshot

Over six years since its introduction, the Alliance has partnered with UNICEF to undertake a review across 42 Alliance countries to document diverse national responses, identify examples of good practices, highlight challenges and practical solutions, and set out future directions for the refinement of the MNR. This process led to the publication of the MNR review, which is called the **'Framing the Future' report**.

The review's main objectives were:

1. Document the diverse responses
2. Find examples of good practice
3. Find common challenges
4. Help inform or start a discussion on how the MNR framework may need to be adapted in light of new lessons and changing landscape

The report looks at the experiences of 42 countries. The primary data gathering method was an electronic survey.

Findings:

- The framework is useful because it is comprehensive, multi-layered and multisectoral. It recognises that in order to address this issue, there have to be different initiatives at different levels with different stakeholders.
- Countries have used it for different reasons. Some use it as a reference for good practice, some for informing policy frameworks or strategic responses, and others use it for measuring progress.
- Despite being only 7 years old, the MNR has already proven its utility. There have been particular advancements in the policy and government, as well as the criminal justice domains. Other domains are lagging behind.

Calls to action:

- Governments and partners must invest in comprehensive responses. Law enforcement units around the world are under-resourced, and victim services are lacking. The MNR can help guide investments.
- Global cooperation is needed. While the MNR focuses on national capabilities, you can't look at those in isolation. This crime is borderless, which means that international cooperation and cross-industry alignment is key.
- The use and collection of data and evidence must be strengthened. Data can be used more to inform responses, track progress, and measure change.
- Best practices and lessons learned must be openly shared. There needs to be more sharing in areas like legislative reform, improving reporting, and designing offender management systems.
- The MNR should be implemented globally. It should also be regularly reviewed and updated based on lessons learned.

Learnings:

- It will be important to ensure that the international dimensions of the MNR are considered and integrated into national efforts.
- There is work to be done on making safety, wellbeing and health for officers at the frontline a priority. This applies to police and to the social service workforce.
- Governments need better guidance for working with industry.

Protecting children in the age of AI

| Breakout session

Session information

This session looked at how we can use AI for detection and reporting, and how we can work with government, civil society and industry to invest in and implement this technology. It offered an opportunity to reflect on the potential opportunities and biggest threats that children face in the age of AI, and how we can address them.

Speakers

- **John-Orr Hanna**, Chief Intelligence Officer at Crisp (Moderator)



- **Irakli Beridze**, Head of the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics at UNICRI, United Nations
- **Yalda Aoukar**, Co-Founder & Managing Partner, Bracket Capital; presides over Bracket Foundation
- **Susanne Drakborg**, Program Manager for the World Childhood Foundation
- **Nicolas Mialhe**, Founder & President of The Future Society (TFS)
- **Neil Desai**, Vice-President of Magnet Forensics
- **Arnold Guerin**, Director of Child Protection at Hubstream, Inc.
- **Valentina Dotto**, Policy and Trust Framework researcher for Yoti

John-Orr Hanna started each breakout session with a discussion about finding child sexual abuse material through proactive intelligence. He explained that Crisp, where he works, was set up more than 16 years ago with the mission of using AI and machine learning (ML) to keep people safe online. Crisp provides companies with intelligence to best protect their users, with a focus on: accurate reporting; fast detection; and timely solutions that keep pace with changes on the internet.

To kick off, he offered some key learnings and considerations around the use of AI in ending child sexual abuse online. First, he said, there is a need for common frameworks and agreed standards: without cohesion, it's difficult to be efficient.

Second, the way that offenders work is always evolving, and therefore the solution must, too.

Third, AI is not a silver bullet, but rather should be viewed as another tool in a broad set of capabilities. Fourth, AI is only as good as the data it's trained with – and good data is required to make AI more efficient. One challenge is making data available and doing this ethically. Finally, he said, “there is no single challenge ... The threat is getting bigger and more complex”.

With this, Hanna turned to the speakers to find out about the opportunities and threats to protecting children in the age of AI, and the ways these can be addressed.

Threats and opportunities in the age of AI

Susanne Drakborg,
Program Manager for the
World Childhood Foundation

told the delegates that there have been important developments in the field of AI that can help make work to protect children online more efficient. She pointed out that while many important tools have been developed in terms of detection, they are not being used as widely as they should be, and that it will be important to look into and understand why this is. “We need to find out why the bottlenecks exist,” Drakborg said. “It could be funding, resources, hardware, bureaucracy, psychological challenges ... perhaps technology hasn’t been adapted to fit the culture,” she said. “There are experts out there who could help us to figure out how to use the tools that already exist to protect children”.

Irakli Beridze,
Head of the Centre for
Artificial Intelligence and
Robotics at UNICRI

told the delegates about efforts to support UN member states in using AI to solve complex problems. For him, the greatest challenge right now is sharing knowledge and technology across sectors and varying national contexts. He explained that [UNICRI’s ‘AI for Safer Children’](#) initiative is a global hub with access to law enforcement agencies that provides access to AI tools (like face recognition and hashing) to support daily work. Echoing Drakborg, Beridze agreed that AI is not a silver bullet, but also that it could be incorporated more into our daily work to make it more efficient.

Yalda Aoukar,
Co-Founder & Managing
Partner at Bracket Capital

told the delegates about the risks and opportunities that exist around AI in the metaverse. She said that gaming today is very different than it was 20-30 years ago – where before they started and ended, now they are ‘just for hanging out’. “When we published the Bracket Foundation White Paper in 2019, we sounded the alarm that these platforms – where kids and adults interact in a largely unmoderated setting – were a breeding ground for predators,” she said. For Aoukar, reforms must be implemented on technological platforms that shape how they are designed and moderated and how they are held accountable, and this is where AI can play a leading role.

Nicolas Mialhe
from The Future Society

told the delegates that one of the challenges—and opportunities—that exists around AI is striking a balance between individual privacy and child protection. For Mialhe, it is possible to uphold values around both and to reconcile these at the level of practice: “We should not pit one value against another, but seek to deliver on both”. In order to adopt AI responsibly in the fight against CSAM, he said, companies need standards and frameworks for self-regulation.

“ *There is no single challenge ... The threat is getting bigger and more complex* ”

John-Orr Hanna, Chief Intelligence Officer at Crisp

What needs to be done?

Generate more research

Drakborg said that AI specialists and tech companies who have been invited to work on child safety online have shown great interest in helping to tackle it, and further that “social workers and child rights experts and professors and law enforcement and prosecutors” in Sweden are invested in incorporating AI and other technologies into their work to improve it. “What is taking time is getting more research done in the field,” she said. “We can’t find researchers working on AI and child protection. There is funding available but little long-term research is being done”.

Legal and policy incentives

For Aoukar, AI could be better harnessed by tech platforms to make them safer for children who are using them. Talking about research conducted by Bracket on a popular gaming platform, she said there was no age verification at sign-in, no email verification, and no parental consent features. “All parental controls on that platform were turned off by default. We realised that the burden is on the parent, and not on the company, to protect children,” she said. Aoukar noted that some basic AI tools could easily be incorporated to solve safety concerns on these platforms, but that incentives must come from legal and policy frameworks. “There needs to be legal and financial punishment for companies who do not comply,” she said, applauding the European Commission’s latest proposal to penalise companies who don’t prioritise child safety.

Reduce the digital divide

From Beridze’s perspective, countries need “a lot of data, sophisticated algorithms, and computational power,” for AI to work. He noted that there is a growing digital divide which means that some countries are benefiting more from developments in AI than others (among the UN member states, he said, there are 60 countries who have adopted AI strategies). “We’re quite far away from a universal standard,” he said, calling for more accessible knowledge and information across countries.

Clear a path forward

Mialhe would like to see a roadmap for companies that “lays down a framework around which all interested parties and organisations can arrange and organise action, and which can be referred to in order to put pressure”. He would also like to see incentives for cooperating in practice.



Case study: Working smarter with data

Neil Desai, Vice-President of Magnet Forensics

Problem:

Digital forensics is highly technical and therefore global capacity in the field is low. Further, recruitment, retention and engagement of these kinds of officers is a challenge: the work requires a largely manual process, meaning that investigators have to review distressing content regularly (as a result, high levels of PTSD have been recorded among people working on these cases). AI solutions for law enforcement are lacking: technology is out of date, and forensics is often carried out offline. Most jurisdictions have frontline officers who are collecting information and getting cyber tips, but once information has been collected there is less technical resource for investigating it. Digital forensics personnel cannot get to these high volumes of evidence, and time is lost as a result.

Opportunity:

"The technologies are out there – this is more a governance challenge." There is room for growth in digital forensics labs that support child sexual abuse investigations. This could include basic automation for sifting through evidence, and leveraging lawfully acquired intelligence as evidence. Data governance is important: we could all work smarter. Data must be centrally stored in order to run successful machine learning, and data standards must be established across agencies and jurisdictions (for safe data storage, usage, and sharing).

How will we get there?

"The key to this is partnership. This includes big technology platform companies whose technologies are evolving, and who have great responsibility. Law enforcement agencies and their governing bodies also have to step up and make people aware of the challenges in the field". Because AI is largely not available realistically, there needs to be public advocacy on behalf of law enforcement: "If you're in government, speak to law enforcement about this issue because it's only going to grow".



Case study: Innovating around automation

Arnold Guerin, Director of Child Protection at Hubstream, Inc

Opportunity:

When he worked for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canada’s national police service, Guerin and his colleagues saw that the work that police do in assessing cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation online needed more automation. “Back in 2015, we started to standardise the data formats that we were creating in order to better work with companies like Magnet Forensics. We wanted to build a machine learning classifier that could grade child sexual exploitation files, but we were told it wouldn’t work”. For Guerin, finding a solution was important for protecting the psychological wellbeing of officers and getting through cases more quickly and successfully.

What they did:

In 2017, they worked at a hackathon in Vancouver supported by Microsoft and Magnet Forensics. At the end of the 3-day event, they had created several child sexual exploitation classifiers (for images, sextortion, CGI/anime content), demonstrating to partners that this could be done. At this workshop, they created the first annotation standard that police could use to label or mark up child sexual exploitation content to get better machine learning for this content, shaving 10% off of their workload as a result. “We learned at the first hackathon that what was needed was strongly annotated content (markers for machine learning to become more accurate). Annotation is a big blocker when it comes to getting child sexual exploitation classification that works well. Better annotated content is what is needed”. From here, RCMP’s National Child Exploitation Crime Centre (NCECC) recruited machine learning specialists within government, and started procuring and building into their budget expensive Graphical Processing Units (GPUs). He saw that they had a responsibility to grow their capacity in order to collaborate with industry effectively: “Law enforcement has an ethical responsibility to work with industry because we’re really the only ones who can possess child sexual exploitation content lawfully”.

Learnings:

“There’s a global need to develop and endorse a standard around labelling and annotating child sexual exploitation content. There’s a need for having a central location to store all that well-annotated child sexual exploitation content. There’s also a need for law enforcement to be engaged with private industry partners and civil society so we can start advancing classifiers and making them available to police, in order to automate more cases. We must focus our time on other things, like finding more dangerous offenders and finding kids who need help”.



Case study: Making spaces safer using AI

Valentina Dotto, Policy and Trust Framework researcher for Yoti

Yoti, a digital identity verification app, uses a tool to assess people's age online to support age-appropriate services. This tool was built by feeding a neural network hundreds of thousands of diverse facial images. The device refined a set of processing formulae that enables it to produce an age when a new is shown.

How does it work?

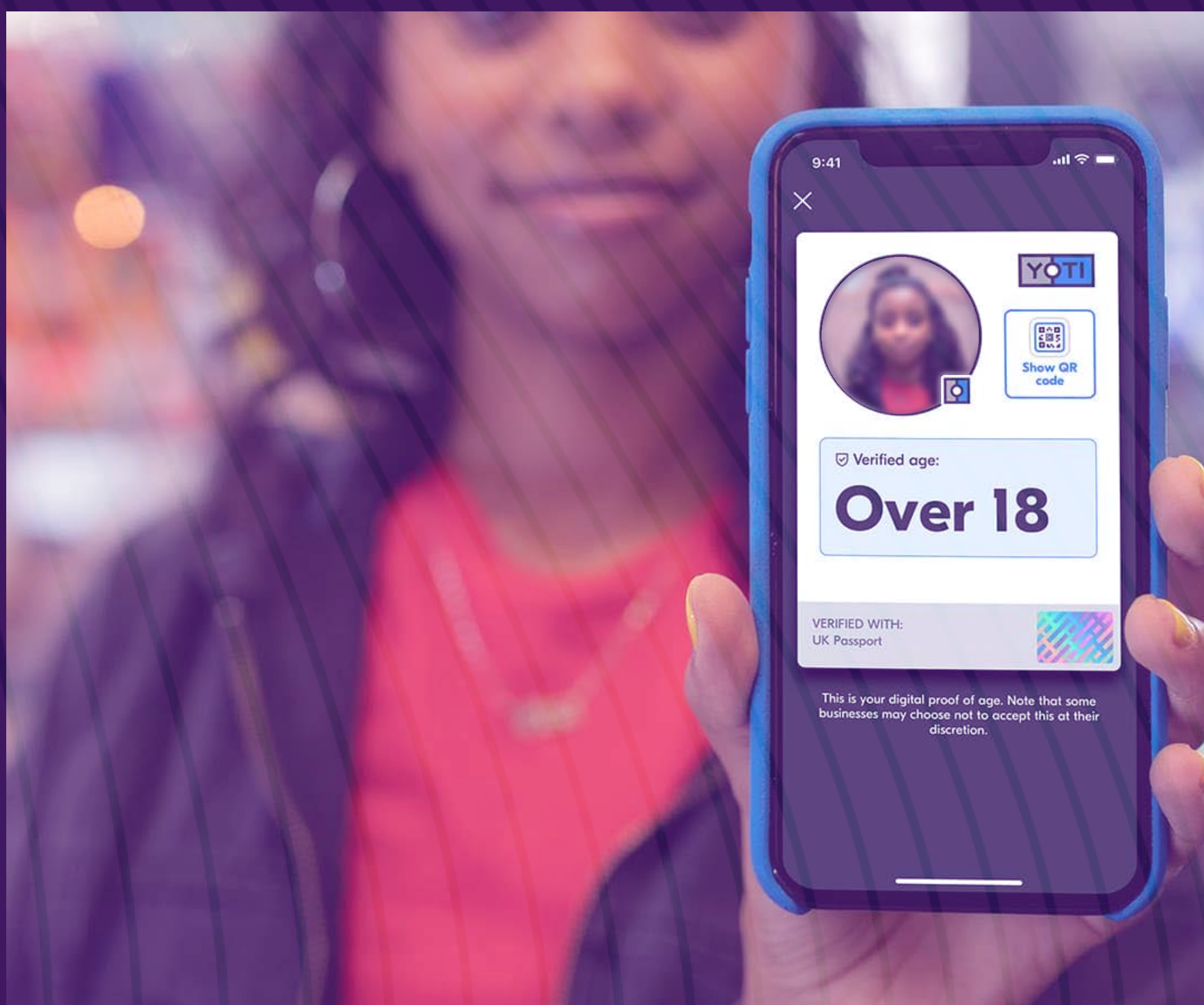
Yoti trains the system with lots of faces: the system runs a pixel-level analysis and then the image is deleted. This technology does not process any category of data and there is no unique recognition of an individual. Currently, the system achieves a mean absolute error of 1.28 years for 6-12 year olds, and 1.55 for 13-19 year olds, and age estimation takes under a second.

Scalability and success:

The system runs many thousands of checks per second. To scale it, Yoti only requires more processing units.

Where can it be deployed?

Law enforcement could harness this technology for assessing child sexual abuse material. It could also be deployed to assess parental consent across Europe.



Prevention and deterrence of offending behaviour | Breakout session

Session information

We know that prevention and deterrence remain the best way of preventing harm from happening in the first place, yet this remains one of the most challenging aspects of tackling child sexual abuse. Whilst efforts to remove child sexual abuse material from the internet are indisputably important, doing so without working with potential offenders to tackle the demand side means the risk of individuals finding new ways to access imagery and evade detection will persist.



Speakers

- **Mauricio Cunha**, National Secretary, Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, Federal Government of Brazil
- **Almudena Lara**, Senior manager – child safety, Google
- **Uri Sadeh**, Head of Unit, INTERPOL
- **Stuart Allardyce**, Director, Lucy Faithfull Foundation
- **Dr. Michael Seto**, Director of the Forensic Mental Health Research Unit, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group

This session explored existing knowledge, current trends, and innovative approaches to best understand how we can prevent offending and reoffending to keep children safe.

Dr Michael Seto, Director of the Forensic Mental Health Research Unit, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group

- Michael Seto kicked off the session with a discussion about the latest evidence on what works around deterrence, and whether rehabilitation is an effective technique for prevention. “There are so many vital ways that we can respond to the problem of child sexual exploitation and abuse, such as disclosure to trusted adults, law enforcement and child protection services, victim treatment, perpetrator treatment, inquiries, new policies and laws,” he said.

“These responses are vital but they’re incomplete – they represent ways that we react when child sexual exploitation and abuse CSEA happens”. There are ways to be more proactive in order to intervene before harm occurs, he said, including through: awareness campaigns, technological interventions on platforms, education and advocacy among adults, and, importantly, through perpetration prevention efforts.

- Seto, whose research is geared towards understanding perpetrators, said that knowing the risk factors associated with offending is a critical part of prevention. “Risk factors give us something to work with,” he told the delegates. “We can engage potential offenders to build protective factors that help them resist offending”. While there is unfortunately little evidence that an attraction or interest toward children can be changed, he said, there is evidence that skills and strategies can be helpful in managing that interest. Two key risk factors for engaging with harmful child sexual exploitation and abuse CSEA content are: problematic internet use (such as watching extreme adult pornography and seeking commercial sex services) and social isolation, or associating with negative peers. Protective factors against these risks could be mental health resilience and positive social support.
- Outlining some recent perpetration prevention efforts that he’s been studying, Seto mentioned the anonymous helplines ‘Stop It Now!’ (UK and Ireland), who saw a stark rise in self-help calls during the Covid-19 pandemic, and ‘Talking for Change’ (Canada) who offer an in-person therapy option for concerned callers. ‘Prevent It’ in Sweden is a therapist-involved program investigating the effectiveness of different treatment approaches with undetected child sexual abuse material CSAM perpetrators (it is currently being revised and updated with funding from the Oak Foundation). Seto also pointed delegates to the newly funded ‘Priority Project’ which seeks to translate and adapt preventative programs into German, Portuguese, and Swedish to assess their impact for specific populations and nations.

Stuart Allardyce, Director, Lucy Faithfull Foundation

- Stuart Allardyce from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF) told the delegates about different pathways to offending, the role of the internet in accelerating these pathways, and how prevention efforts can target these processes. “No one is born a sex offender, and even the most dangerous of offenders had a time before they started offending,” Allardyce said. “Our work with offenders tells us that many of those who commit offences have a sense of ambivalence and anxiety when they take their first steps into criminality”. This is why it’s important to understand pathways into offending, and to establish interventions that interrupt them.
- “We can’t arrest our way out of this,” said Allardyce. “We must pivot towards prevention.” Echoing Michael Seto’s view, he said that child sexual abuse online is a preventable public health issue and that more effort must be made to understand and respond to the journey to criminality itself. There is a clear link between the advent of the internet and the production and consumption of child sexual abuse material, he said: “Growth has been driven by opportunity, rather than an increase in paedophilia. This opportunity is linked to three A’s: anonymity, affordability, and accessibility”.
- Prevention becomes more possible when crime is thought about as a process rather than an event: understanding the trajectory toward watching child sexual abuse material, then, is a vital part of designing interventions that work.
- For Allardyce, deterrence messaging could be an effective way to address those at the cusp of offending, or at the start of the criminal career: “Every offender had a moment when they hadn’t offended yet: we need to get the right messages and nudges to them”. He told the delegates about an online treatment resource from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation called [‘Get Help’](#) which has been used by 100,000 people around the world, and about work they’ve done with Google on messaging for popups. His key takeaway for the audience was a hopeful one: “If we build prevention resources for people, they will come”.

“Growth has been driven by opportunity, rather than an increase in paedophilia. This opportunity is linked to three A’s: anonymity, affordability, and accessibility.”

Stuart Allardyce

Almudena Lara, Senior manager, Child safety, Google

- For Google, Lara explained, prevention and deterrence do not happen in a vacuum: this is why they think about four key principles for safety alongside each other: detection, reporting, deterrence, and collaboration. Explaining the company's approach to child sexual exploitation and abuse online, Lara told delegates about hash matching technology and Artificial Intelligence classifiers that they use for detection, their work with NCMEC on reporting individuals, and their collaborative work with technology platforms.
- On the prevention side, Lara said, "we talk a lot about children. It's important to also focus on deterring behaviour by individuals who have an interest in child sexual abuse material". This is why Google has been thinking both about creating safer experiences for children, and minimising opportunities for offenders to interact with them in risky ways. Explaining some of Google's efforts to aid deterrence, she told delegates that they identify keywords and terms used by people seeking child sexual abuse material, and work hard to evolve and adapt their methods as language among offenders evolves.
 - When users are found to be using known keywords, Google offers: clean results first, and no images of children (to break the connection between a query seeking child sexual abuse material and children); useful content and self-help resources; and popup warning messages. Lara noted that it's important not to assume the reason for child sexual abuse material being searched, and therefore to include information for possible victims, too.
- Lara said that there has been a decline in people coming to Google for child sexual abuse material, thanks to the strategies she outlined, and that these approaches could be adapted to different contexts for greater effectiveness. She noted, however, that the goal was not to displace these search activities to other spaces – and that there is much work to be done to help those who might be on the brink of offending.

Uri Sadeh, Head of Unit, INTERPOL

- Uri Sadeh spoke next, sharing what INTERPOL is doing to support prevention efforts and discussing some of the challenges they face, as well as the ways that organisations can help support law enforcement. Sadeh told the delegates about a resolution that INTERPOL adopted a decade ago to create a mechanism for blocking and removing child sexual abuse material on the open web, and how it monitors and documents sites containing illegal material in order to curb the spread of harmful material. But, as other speakers in this session also said, prevention must be prioritised in order to tackle the problem of child sexual exploitation and abuse at its root.
- "New legislation shows a new direction [toward] placing more responsibility on industry," Sadeh said. "There is much talk about increasing reporting, but we must not get trapped in talking about that alone – it's far from enough."
 - Sadeh told the delegates that handing over the problem to law enforcement is not the solution, and rather that "regulation on the platforms, by the platforms" would be the most effective measure for preventing crimes from happening on them.
- Sadeh warned delegates that the internet has become a lawless domain, and that the virtual world will be hard to police and regulate. "There is nothing virtual about the harm, and nothing virtual about our obligation to protect children," he said. For INTERPOL, working collaboratively with industry and government across nations will be vital for addressing new trends in child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

Survivors' Perspectives | Plenary session

Session information

A discussion centering survivor advocates, showing that finding solutions to the problem of child sexual exploitation and abuse online starts with listening to those most affected.



Please note that the testimonies below have been lightly edited for length and clarity, but have largely been left unchanged.

Speakers

- **Maud De Boer Buquicchio**, Management Member of the Board, WeProtect Global Alliance (Moderator)
- **Dr. Paul Zeitz**, Movement Executive Coordinator, Brave Movement
- **Sarah Cooper**, SAGE manager, Brave Movement
- **Robert Shilling**, Survivor Leader, Brave Movement
- **Wibke Müller**, Co-Chair G7 Task Force, Brave Movement
- **Daniela Ligiero**, CEO of Together For Girls and Chair of the Brave Movement

“ We must listen with our ears and with our hearts. All [child sexual abuse] stories are different, but what they have in common is a sheer and total denial of human dignity. Survivors' stories remind us of the urgency of the matter. Their calls to action are crucial and will help to shape discussions and provide clarity on investment for prevention and responses. ”

Maud De Boer Buquicchio

Paul Zeitz shared his story with the summit delegates first.

I'm Dr. Paul Zeitz, and I'm speaking out for the first time about sexual abuse at the hands of my father at a summit of this nature. It's an emotional experience, being someone with lived experience and being in this room with all of you today. Thank you. We are not alone – we know that all of you are in solidarity with us in the quest to end childhood sexual violence, and we appreciate you.

The Brave Movement is a newly-forming movement building on decades of experience of survivors, like all of us up here, and many others around the world who have been yearning for an advocacy and campaigning platform to demand bold and transformational action.

And that's what the Brave Movement is becoming. We started the movement with a group of 15 adult survivors of childhood sexual violence. All of us have experienced sexual violence in different ways: for some of us that was intra-familial sexual violence, some of us experienced it at school, some of us in sports, some in religious institutions, and some of us online and through digital technology. We think it's really important for everyone to understand and think about solutions, knowing that it's a false dichotomy to separate out online from all the other zones of abuse. We know that 90% of the child sexual abuse materials originate from intra-familial or people that are known to the abuser.

So the solutions that we're proposing require us to deal with the online, the technical, but we also need to deal with the political and the societal solutions. There's no short way through this – you have to deal with it all.

The Brave Movement has been advancing an approach to bring forward prevention, healing, and justice. You've heard these words in different ways during this summit so far. We think it's really important to link these three words so that you advocate together for prevention, for healing and for justice. We want to reduce the incidence of abuse through prevention. We want to ensure that victims and survivors (who are on a lifelong journey of healing) are receiving the best possible support to heal from trauma, and that their families are too.

We are also in solidarity with law enforcement and security service officials, as well as content moderators at technology companies, who are being exposed to this content and this perpetration, and the traumatic effect that occurs for them. We want healing for all of you as well. And then justice for perpetrators, for sure, but also for complicit institutions, and societal actors.

We are turning the tide. It's no longer acceptable for anyone to tolerate this anymore. We welcome solidarity with all of you to bring forward the transformation that we all know is required. It's hard to speak out and speak up, and act up and act out. But we're here today to do that. And we appreciate the time and space, and we're having breakthrough conversations all day. We look forward to more of those as the time goes on.

Sarah Cooper explained how she, with her advocacy work, has addressed this issue in her capacity as a member of the Brave Movement.

I am looking around this room and I am in awe, because every single person here has the ability to be an ally of The Brave Movement. My name is Sarah Cooper. I am one of the founding members of the Brave Movement. I am a survivor of human trafficking and systemic child abuse starting at birth. There's one distinction I would really like to make: no single person's trauma defines them. My story doesn't encapsulate who I am, but shows how I was able to channel my energy and use my voice for change. It took me years to be in a position where I could speak publicly while being healthy in both mind and body. I'm the first person in my biological family to graduate college. It was during my college years when I came out as a survivor of human trafficking. I was groomed, I was exploited. And child sexual abuse images of me were exchanged online.

I have spoken at Facebook (now Meta's) annual shareholder engagement meetings since 2019. After this call where I shared my story, I dropped to my knees. My mom was there with me. It was the first time that I had ever publicly shared what I had been through. We cried tears of joy, grief and anger. We cried for the kids being harmed and abused with no way to safety. Children are losing their lives because of fear, shame, and the stigma that still surrounds systemic abuse. In the past couple of weeks there was one particular story that stood out to me. There was a young boy who had been groomed online for years.

He did not feel safe enough to report it or to go to authorities. He ended up taking his own life.

The issue of child abuse is one that has vastly grown into a global crisis. I have since spoken at other shareholder engagement meetings, and what I see is that we are still lacking cooperation from technology companies to engage with survivor voices. This is a start – being here is a start. But we need to keep the momentum and energy flowing for justice, prevention and healing. I believe it is vital that we are investing in empathy and creating ongoing continuous collaboration.

Speaking about the issue is not enough. Sharing our stories is not enough. We need our allies. Predators live among us in society. They have children and jobs, and their victims may come in contact with their predators. The man who trafficked me is still out there. It is our responsibility to keep kids safe, whether it be in-person monitoring, or child safety on the internet. We need to be preventing harm to children, and implementing safeguards like human monitoring and age verification across all technology platforms. As a child, I didn't have a choice. I was a victim. But today, I choose to be a thriver. I am brave. And everyone sitting here in this room can join us. So I ask you, will you be brave with us?

Next, **Bob Schilling** shared his story.

My name is Bob Schilling. I am a 42-year veteran of law enforcement, with more than 36 years in the Seattle Police Department, and more than 26 of those years in the sexual assault and child abuse unit. I spent the final three years of my career as the Head of Crimes Against Children for Interpol in Lyon, France, from April of 2013 to May of 2016.

55 years ago, in April, I sat on the edge of my bed contemplating suicide because of the horrible sexual abuse I suffered at the hands of my maternal grandfather over a period of four years. All I wanted was for someone to come and rescue me. The basic assumptions, beliefs and expectations that I had about myself, attachment, safety, and the capacity to feel that my life was meaningful, were shattered. I felt like I was in a downward spiral. I also lost the ability to trust others – and to trust my own judgement. I thought I should have seen it coming, or I should have known better. The fact that my life had become a painfully unbearable endurance event led my 16-year-old mind to conclude that nobody cared about me, and I was better off dead. I felt that suicide was the only answer.

Fortunately, that didn't happen. I later pursued a career in law enforcement, and after working for 10 years in patrol, I decided to take the detectives exam. I passed with flying colours. The chief of police told me he was putting me in 'sex crimes', as it was called back in the early 1980s, and my heart felt like it dropped into my stomach. I told the chief of police I didn't want to go to sex crimes, and that I'd rather go to robbery or homicide. Of course, he had no way of knowing the dark secret that tormented me every day of my life. I was terrified that somebody would find out and my career would be ended. I had given myself a life sentence for something that wasn't my fault. My childhood hero, Walt Disney (whose father physically abused him) once said, "Life is a hard sentence to lay down for yourself." And he's absolutely right. After the chief of police made his decision, I went to my favourite place in the world: Horseshoe Bay, British Columbia, Canada. I sat in a park overlooking the water for five full days, sleeping in a motel at night. I just sat there and contemplated my life. On day five, I came to the conclusion that I needed to forgive my grandfather. When I did, I felt immense relief, like a huge boulder was lifted off my shoulders. I also took the courageous step of forgiving myself.

I felt it was important that people knew that I am so much more than the bad things that happened to me. It was time to do what was right, not what was easy. I went back to Seattle invigorated and determined that if I was going to be a detective in sex crimes, then I was going to be the best detective I could be. In three years I was the head of the unit and we became famous for our compassionate and empathetic work with victims, and with the management of high-risk sex offenders.

In March of 2000, the Secretary General of INTERPOL wrote to the chief of police and asked that I be made a permanent member of the INTERPOL Specialists Group on Crimes Against Children. In 2012, I was asked to apply for the job as Head of Crimes Against Children for INTERPOL and I ended up getting the job. One of the responsibilities I had was to oversee the International Child Sexual Exploitation, or ICSE. Prior to 2013, there were a little over 4,000 victims of sexual abuse identified and rescued through ICSE. By the time I left in May of 2016, my team and our network of international investigators had identified and physically rescued 5,420 additional victims from images or videos. At that time, only 47 countries participated in ICSE. I sought funding for our unit and was able to get nearly 10 million US dollars from the Human Dignity Foundation, and 2 million dollars from the Dutch National Police, which allowed us to hire 17 additional law enforcement officers and analysts. As of January 2022, there are 67 countries connected to ICSE, and 27,000 victims have been identified and rescued. The courageous donations of those funders allowed us to do that. But there is so much more to do.

As one of the leaders of the Brave Movement, I have put together a three-pillar concept paper funded by the Oak Foundation with an agenda for accelerating action to end childhood sexual violence online.

- Pillar one is for a new generation of ICSE that incorporates the latest technology such as AI, and that increases funding for training countries to use ICSE. INTERPOL has 195 member countries, and only 67 are connected.

- Pillar two deals with victim support. Psychological and support services may or may not be accessible for victims depending on their location. All victims deserve psychological support and services.
- Pillar three deals with mental health services for law enforcement officers, analysts and private sector moderators. These services would include mandatory psychological assessments, access to private independent psychologists, and pre-employment screenings. This work affects those that do the job. You can't unsee what you've seen, or unhear what you've heard. It affects us in many, many ways.

We are seeking funding for a mapping study of the 195 INTERPOL member countries for pillars two and three, and the results will be presented to the G7 next year with a request for G7 funding.

As someone who sat on the edge of the bed contemplating suicide while waiting for a rescue that never came, it is my fervent hope that we can find the way to help identify, rescue and support more victims of sexual abuse, while helping the officers and analysts who have to do arguably one of the hardest and most traumatic jobs in the world. **I ask our leaders to do what's right, not what's easy. Public service comes at a cost, especially if you're doing what's right. And for us survivors, we have the power to shape our future. We have the power to write a different ending to our story and break the cycle of abuse; for our greatest trial to become our greatest triumph.** Thank you very much.

Wibke Müller shared her story next.

My name is Wibke Müller, from Germany, and I'm a survivor of childhood sexual violence. I'm a member of the German Survivors' Council. Germany is the only country in the world that has a formally established advisory board linked to government to inform policy and practice. I'm a trained political scientist and I work as a researcher at a German university, specialising in policy analysis. Why am I saying this? I'm saying this to highlight that **being a survivor of childhood sexual violence is not my job. It's not my job to be a survivor. Being a survivor means having shared experiences, but it's not our job. My job is being a researcher at a university and doing policy analysis.** I want to remind everyone that there are survivors everywhere. It's not happening in another universe: we are your colleagues, your friends, your neighbours. I'm very sure we're not the only survivors here in this room. **Everyone knows survivors, and sadly, everyone knows child victims. And everyone knows perpetrators, because it's not happening in another universe. It doesn't have to be this way; humanity can do better. We can be the generation ends childhood sexual violence.**

I am a co-founder of the Brave Movement, and I'd like to talk to you about our G7 advocacy. Since Germany has the G7 presidency this year, we decided to do some survivor-centred advocacy, so we started a G7 survivor's Task Force chaired by two German survivors. Our goal is to convince decision makers and policymakers that a good childhood is an important public policy outcome. There's a responsibility for state actors to act and protect, and we want G7 heads of state to understand this. We started the 'G7 Brave Movement' petition that you can find on change.org – over 66,000 people have signed it already – and have created a G7 call to action that your organisation can endorse, which you can see on our website.

We know what we want from the G7: we want them to help create a safe internet that is based on children's rights. We want them to invest billions to scale up prevention, healing and justice in low and middle-income countries. And we want them to establish a G7 survivor's council to ensure that expertise and knowledge from survivors informs policy and practice. At the end of June 2022, G7 heads of state will meet in Bavaria. We hope that they will be brave with us and commit to bold and transformative action.

Next, **Daniella Ligiero** spoke.

It is such an honour and a privilege to be with you here today. I want to start by thanking my brave brothers and sisters on the stage with me today: thank you for your leadership and your courage. **It is not easy for people to be up here and to say to a room of strangers that you're a survivor. It takes a toll. And I know we do it not for ourselves, but for those who cannot be here today, who cannot speak for whatever reason – because of fear, or because there's stigma and discrimination. We are their voice. We are also doing it because we want to make sure that this violence stops with us. That is why we do it.** I want to take a moment to also thank my friend Iain, and WeProtect Global Alliance and everyone on the team, and all of you who are part of this. You have centred the voices of survivors in this meeting in a way that I have never seen happen before. Your commitment is real. And it shows, and we appreciate it.

I'm going to try to summarise what we've said here today. I'm going to summarise who we are, what we want, and why we need each and every one of you. To start with who we are: we are the newly-formed Brave Movement. We're two-and-a-half months old. Clearly, we're just getting started, and we have a long way to go. I am the CEO of [Together for Girls](#), which is a global partnership focused on ending violence against children with special attention to sexual violence against girls. We're very proud to be the host organisation for the Brave Movement. I have been working in international development now for 25 years. **I've been to a lot of meetings like this, and I know that unless we elevate and support the voices of survivors, and really centre them, that we will not have the impact that we want to have. As was said before, this isn't just a technical issue. It's a political issue. It's a societal issue. And the silence, stigma and shame that still exists is one of our key barriers for progress.** About 12 years ago I was working at the US Department of State under the Obama administration where I was leading the development of a Global Gender-Based Violence Policy. I decided to say publicly that I am a survivor of sexual abuse. As a child I was abused for several years, starting at the age of six, by someone very close to my family. I am one of the few fortunate ones: eventually I was able to access support and help, and I went on a 30-year healing journey. I'm going to be 47 in a few days. I did this because I knew in my bones that if powerful, educated women let stigma, shame and fear keep them from saying "I'm a survivor" out loud, then how can we expect children, adolescents and the most vulnerable

- ones to come forward and to tell their stories?

What do we want? I think it's pretty clear just from the panel that **we're not here just to tell our stories.** We could probably make you cry very quickly if we really get into details and tell you all about ourselves. But that's not why we're here: **we're here because we know the change we want to see. And we demand it, and we want urgency. We want to step up the action on this issue, because it is woefully inadequate today.** So, as Wibke said, we have a G7 call to action. We want leaders to step up and make this the global priority that it needs to be. We have a petition. If everyone signs we're going to have 400 additional people. We're clear on the change we want to see: that includes a safer internet for children; abolishing archaic statutes of limitation that protect creditors; ensuring survivor voices through survivor councils like Germany's. Every country should have one. And it also includes mobilising billions (with a b!) for prevention, healing and justice – domestically, and also globally, and multilaterally.

The final question I mentioned is why we need each and every one of you. **That is because this is an issue that cannot be solved by a single actor or sector alone. We have to work together as survivors and allies to create that push. One of my heroes, the American civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr., used to say that a movement that simply moves people is merely a revolt, but a movement that changes people and institutions is a revolution.** That is what we are looking for: to change people and institutions at a global level, at a national level and in families and communities. The name of our movement is both a conviction – we must be brave so that children can be safe – but it is also a call to action and an invitation. **Let's be brave. We need you to be brave.** We need government leaders to be brave. We need to make sure this gets to the G7, and make sure that the transformative legislation that Commissioner Johansson presented today gets passed. We need tech companies to be brave and to step up and listen to survivors; to work with us and with governments to make sure the internet is safe for children. And we need international development leaders to work on cooperation, and to step up resources for low and middle-income countries where there is very little funding to do the kind of work that needs to happen. We are inviting you to be brave with us to create the change we want to see.

Commitments panel | Plenary session

Session information

Ministers from across WeProtect Global Alliance shared learnings from their national experience of addressing child sexual abuse online and highlighted progress being made globally in recognising, stopping and preventing this crime. This was the final session of day one of the summit.

Speakers

- **Ylva Johansson**, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, European Union (Moderator)
- **Vít Rakušan**, Minister of the Interior, Government of Czech Republic
- **Vincent van Quickenbourne**, Minister of Justice, Government of Belgium
- **Christiane Rodrigues Britto**, Minister of Women, Family, and Human Rights, Government of Brazil
- **Davor Božinović**, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Government of the Republic of Croatia
- **Anna-Maja Henriksson**, Minister of Justice, Government of Finland
- **Helen McEntee**, Minister for Justice and Equality, Government of Ireland
- **Daniella Misail-Nichitin**, State Secretary at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Republic of Moldova
- **Adebiyi Oluesan Olufunsho FNSE**, Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Government of Nigeria
- **Sim Ann**, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of National Development, Government of Singapore
- **Fernando Grande-Marlaska Gómez**, Minister of Home Affairs, Government of Spain
- **Dr. Dorothy Onesphoro Gwajima**, Minister for Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, Government of Tanzania



To start, **Commissioner Johansson** thanked all of the delegates for their participation in the summit so far, noting the collective strength that had been pooled during the day's discussions. She welcomed perspectives and experiences from 11 countries working on prevention, victim support and offender prosecution.

Vít Rakušan, Minister of the Interior and deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, government's prevention activities bring together stakeholders from different sectors with a focus on the school environment. They work with schools and private providers to educate children and their parents, and to help victims. They welcome the European Commission's new proposals for regulation for child protection online: "The proposal of new regulation is a key priority. Negotiations won't be easy ... In the Czech Republic we seek to make progress on negotiations for new proposals, and ensure obligations resulting from discussions are clear and realistic."

Christiane Rodrigues Britto, Minister of Women, Family, and Human Rights, Government of Brazil

In Brazil, the government's priority is to protect children against psychological and institutional violence. The government has implemented new systems for speeding up victim services and prioritised training and capacity-building for professionals. It has also invested in national strategies for policy implementation, stakeholder alignment, and raising awareness. "In 2021, we declared that the month of May would be "Orange May," a month to educate society about the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation of children".

Anna-Maja Henriksson, Minister of Justice, Finland

Finland has recently carried out a comprehensive reform of legislation covering sexual offences that addresses online offences more comprehensively, and has committed to shortening processing times in criminal proceedings in order to protect child victims from further trauma. [The government has recently adopted their first National Implementation Plan for the Lanzarote Convention](#) with ambitious actions for

- protecting children, and has allocated funding to crime prevention projects that include rehabilitation programs for offenders. "We have to speed up at every level. We need more cooperation, and we have to keep the child at the centre of it".

Vincent van Quickenborne, Minister of Justice, Government of Belgium

Belgium has recently adopted a new criminal law on sexual violence, containing strict and comprehensive definitions of all types of sexual offences and a strong focus on consent, which will help to clarify and advance national debates about child safety online. Belgium is proud to be the home of [Child Focus](#), an organisation aimed at finding missing children and battling sexual exploitation, and 24/7 care centres for victims of child sexual abuse around the country. Belgium has worked with [Project Arachnid](#), an automated tool for flagging child sexual abuse material in large numbers, and hopes to collaborate with large companies such as Meta and Google in the future. "You can count on this small country to be a strong partner in this".

Davor Božinović, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Government of the Republic of Croatia

Last year, Croatia recorded an 80% increase in reports of child sexual abuse material online than in 2020 due to increased cooperation from internet service providers, and they welcome new proposals for regulations that oblige private sector companies to more actively report online crimes. Croatia's government is preparing a plan to tackle sexual violence and harassment aimed at enhancing national prevention measures, improving training for experts, and strengthening treatment for perpetrators on the local level. "We believe in international and national cooperation, and implementation at the local level, too. The local level is the most important".

 **Helen McEntee**, Minister for Justice and Equality, Ireland

[Ireland's new Justice Plan](#) contains 52 actions for improving processes for victims, including faster wait times and capacity building in the judicial system. The government is finalising their Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence which contains a greater focus on children. They are bringing forward legislation to allow for greater use of technology to identify perpetrators, and have been exploring ways to reduce reoffending rates and have a number of pilot rehabilitation programs underway. They plan to establish a Multimedia Commission with an Online Safety Commissioner, and therefore welcome the European Commission's new proposals for regulation. "You will have Ireland's full support – we commend your approach to using technology to deal with this issue".

 **Dr. Dorothy Onesphoro Gwajima**, Minister for Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, Government of the United Republic of Tanzania

"Working together is the only way". Tanzania's government has established the National Child Online Safety Task Force, consisting of social welfare, criminal justice, community groups, industry and the media, who are all responsible for facilitating coordination in their efforts to tackle child safety. The task force operates under Tanzania's National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children. Working with research collected through [Disrupting Harm](#), the government has developed advocacy messaging and programming across different sectors.

 **Sim Ann**, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of National Development, Government of Singapore

Singapore has adopted a multi-pronged approach to protect children from online harms which includes a strong legal framework that was updated in 2019 and a police unit to manage online child sexual abuse cases. In 2021, Singapore formed the [Sunlight Alliance for Action](#) which is a partnership among private and public organisations, and which focuses on public education, research, victim support, youth engagement and volunteerism. The government has also introduced cyber wellness and sex education into schools to help children navigate the internet safely: "We must empower children to protect themselves online".

 **Fernando Grande-Marlaska Gómez**, Minister of Home Affairs, Government of Spain

In Spain, law enforcement is an important part of fighting child sexual abuse and exploitation, and it has been a priority to increase specialisation within the police in order to keep up with technological changes and cyber crime. The government is innovating to educate children about online dangers, and is currently developing a game about cyber bullying and human trafficking that can be used in teaching. Spain welcomes the European Commission's proposals and supports the establishment of clearer legal mandates for collaboration across sectors.



 **Daniella Misail-Nichtin**,
State Secretary at the
Ministry of Internal Affairs,
Republic of Moldova

“Our main concern as a country is to ensure that our national police have digital abilities and can collaborate across borders”. Moldova’s government is developing initiatives across its organisations to accelerate progress in child online safety efforts. The Ministry of Education is implementing awareness-raising campaigns for children, parents and teachers. They have put forward national legislation which emphasises the responsibility that internet service providers have in preventing child sexual abuse, and which seeks to increase the digital prosecution capacity within law enforcement.

 **Olufunsho Adebisi Oluesan**,
Permanent Secretary of the
Federal Ministry of Women
Affairs, Nigeria

Nigeria has seen the establishment of the Technical Working Group to End Child Violence, a coordinating body for planning and implementing actions for tackling child abuse and exploitation in the country. Nigerian law enforcement and their judicial system have continually worked to enact Section 23 of the [Cybercrime Act](#) of 2015, which comprehensively covers crimes relating to child grooming and child sexual abuse material and which imposes harsh penalties on child abuse and exploitation. “Children form the basis of any nation’s future, so we must act now to protect them”.

Opening speeches - Day 2: | Plenary session

Session information

Representatives from the governments of Germany and Ukraine, the European Parliament, and the actor and philanthropist Ashton Kutcher, introduced the sessions happening on the second day of the summit. They all highlighted the need to work together globally and across sectors to tackle child sexual abuse online.



Speakers

- **Markus Richter**, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Government of Germany
- **Gulsanna Mamediieva**, Director General of Directorate for Eurointegration at Ministry of Digital Transformation, Government of Ukraine
- **Ashton Kutcher**, Actor, investor, entrepreneur, producer and philanthropist, Thorn
- **David Lega**, MEP, European Parliament

Markus Richter, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Government of Germany

Markus Richter began his address by expressing support for the European Commission's new regulations on child sexual abuse: "This will be a huge step, not only for Europe, but for the world," he said. "The instruments, network, and cooperation level will really be pushed forward by these measures".

He welcomed the idea of a new centre for exchanging expertise between countries in Europe and around the world, and which could act as a contact point for all nations engaged in fighting child sexual abuse and exploitation, noting that it sits at the top of the list of priorities for Germany's G7 presidency.

Gulsanna Mamediieva, Director General of Directorate for Eurointegration at Ministry of Digital Transformation, Government of Ukraine

Talking to the delegates about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Gulsanna Mamediieva highlighted the significantly heightened risks to children that occur in the context of a crisis such as this one: displacement, violence, loss, sexual abuse, and death among them. "It has never been easier to take advantage of children online than during this war," she said, describing increased cyber attacks, threats, phishing, harmful content, and intimidation aimed at vulnerable children in Ukraine.

"Even during war time, we are working to make online safety for children a priority," Mamediieva said. Since 2019, when Ukraine joined the Alliance, the government has prioritised victim-focused training for prosecutors, legal reforms, the introduction of a hotline, and national information campaigns. Their key objective has been to educate citizens about online safety and empower children and families with the help of digital tools such as chatbots.

“ *Protecting children is everyone's business. We call on international partners [...] to come to our aid. Today, we cannot ensure the safety of our children on our own.* ”

Gulsanna Mamediieva, Government of Ukraine

Ashton Kutcher, Actor, investor, entrepreneur, producer and philanthropist, Thorn

In his address, Ashton Kutcher, the co-founder of Thorn, called for collective action among delegates to improve preventative work and victim support. "We need the industry to put its best and brightest minds and hearts forward for finding a solution," he said. "We also need policymakers who understand the urgency to act". He thanked Commissioner Johansson for her leadership in the battle to keep children safe online, and commended her 'timely and historic' recent proposals for new regulation to protect children from online harm.

Addressing recent debates over privacy, he said: "We recognise that there are those in the privacy community who argue that the use of tools to detect, report and remove child sexual abuse material and stop online grooming of children is illegal and violates the privacy rights of users". Individual privacy and child protection are not mutually exclusive, he argued, calling for meaningful dialogue between advocates on different ends of the debate. Finally, he said that the crisis of child sexual abuse online must be placed on the global policy agenda, and commended Europe's leadership in this regard.

“ Our coordinated global response against this threat is the only way to turn the tide on child sexual exploitation, and abuse online. And we will not stop until every child is safe, curious and happy – until every child can just be a kid. ”

Ashton Kutcher

"Thank you for coming together," he said to the delegates. "Thank you for helping to protect millions of children who need us."

David Lega, MEP, European Parliament

Echoing the other speakers, David Lega celebrated the European Commission's proposed new regulations as historical and unprecedented, calling its introduction of clear obligations for digital platforms a 'game changer in this ecosystem'. "Let me get the record straight," Lega said. "There is no such difference between the online and offline world.

What happens online leaves scars in real life for victims and threatens their wellbeing for years to come". Lega also said that child protection and data protection can work hand in hand – and that victims must be placed at the forefront of this debate: "One victim of child sexual abuse is one too many". Like the previous speakers, Lega believes in cooperation and collaboration for fighting child sexual abuse online.

“ We are all confronted with the same multifaceted challenges, and we will have to work together to ensure that what is illegal offline is illegal online. ”

David Lega, European Parliament

Launch of the Model National Response Review report | Plenary session

Session information

In this panel, speakers discussed the launch of the Model National Response (MNR) review report, called 'Framing the Future'. The report is a joint WeProtect Global Alliance and UNICEF project that assesses the MNR – a simple framework for countries to reflect on their response systems and identify areas for improvement.



Speakers

- **Cornelius Williams**, Director, Child Protection Programme, UNICEF
- **I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati**, Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Government of Indonesia
- **Dana Almarzouqi**, Director General of the International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Interior, United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- **Julie Inman Grant**, eSafety Commissioner, Government of Australia
- **Howard Taylor**, Executive Director, Global Partnership to End Violence against Children
- **Jacqueline Beauchere**, Global Head of Platform Safety, Snap Inc

This session saw the launch of '**Framing the Future**', a review of how the Model National Response (MNR) framework has supported 42 countries in tackling child sexual abuse and exploitation online. Five speakers, representing social services, law enforcement, industry and the donor community, had a conversation about how the MNR framework has supported efforts in their countries, and shared good practices and lessons learned.

I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Government of Indonesia

Indonesia's government is currently in the process of drafting the National Roadmap for the Protection of Children Online with reference to the six key areas of the Model National Response. The roadmap aims to provide policy and strategy direction to key stakeholders to undertake action and promote the importance of child protection online, through:

improving the quality of governance and national policies in protecting children online; strengthening law enforcement processes in the online setting; and building capacity for community empowerment, among other actions. The drafting process has been led by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, and will soon be reviewed across relevant sectors before being implemented.

Dana Almarzouqi, Director General of the International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Interior, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

For the UAE, the MNR has been a pathway for support from the international community. Since adopting the framework in 2015, the UAE has collaborated with media and technology companies, set new national strategies, reformed legislation and established a new body called the [Council for Digital Wellbeing](#).

Leadership and governance have been critical parts of effectively using the MNR framework: strong leadership has created space for open and honest discussions, accountability in both government and the private sector, and bold, victim-centred procedures and processes.

Julie Inman Grant, eSafety Commissioner, Government of Australia

Australia's government recognises the need for a coordinated and global response to hosting, distributing and viewing harmful content, and supports efforts to lift standards and legislation across countries: "MNR is an important tool for closing the net on the ability for predators to distribute and host content internationally. It's a really good blueprint".

In Australia, a combination of regulation, law enforcement, and prevention efforts has helped them keep children safe online. All of this is underpinned by partnerships. **"No one agency, country, sector, or organisation can do this alone. WeProtect Global Alliance provides us with a tremendous multiplier effect, and we need to multiply that further. We believe the Model National Response will help lift our standards overall"**.

Howard Taylor, Executive Director, Global Partnership to End Violence against Children

For the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the MNR has helped to refine efforts in strengthening the system, generating evidence, advocacy, and integration within countries that they work with. Building off of the MNR, they have developed processes for targeted research to better understand drivers of child sexual exploitation in specific contexts and -

- regions, such as their [Disrupting Harm](#) project in Eastern and Southern Africa and South East Asia, and have worked with experts globally to facilitate advocacy and awareness. The MNR has been useful in aiding investments and making decisions when it comes to building the global system they envision for ending violence against children.

Jacqueline Beauchere, Global Head of Platform Safety, Snap Inc

Speaking from an industry perspective, Beauchere said about 'Framing the Future' that: "The survey findings underscore that we need to be having conversations about raising awareness of child sexual exploitation and abuse in legislative and judicial contexts, boardroom tables, and at kitchen tables.

Child Sexual Abuse can no longer be deemed too delicate, sensitive or taboo that we can't discuss it in polite company. I often say we need to get comfortable being uncomfortable – because our children's very future depends on it ... The opportunity lies in continued collective action, cooperation, honest brokering, and mobilisation of all aspects of the MNR."

Centring the voices of survivors of child sexual abuse | Breakout session

Session information

In this session, Rhiannon-Faye McDonald from the Marie Collins Foundation led an important discussion about hearing, elevating, and incorporating survivors' voices in discussions and decisions relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation and the work that is done to prevent it.

Speakers

- **Rhiannon-Faye McDonald**, Victim and Survivor Advocate, Marie Collins Foundation (Moderator)
- **Guillaume Landry**, Executive Director, ECPAT International

The discussion has been edited for length and clarity.

- **Elena Botezatu**, Executive Director, International Centre La Strada Moldova
- **Kerstin Claus**, Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues (ICCSAI), Government of Germany
- **Jenette Carredo**, Senior Lead, Aftercare - Survivor Leadership & Advocacy, International Justice Mission (IJM)
- **Jennifer Wortham**, Secretariate, Global Collaborative



Welcoming the delegates, Rhiannon Faye-McDonald said: "Online child sexual exploitation and abuse has received increasing attention, especially as we've all been spending more time online during the Covid-19 pandemic, but it's unfortunately still rare that survivors of online grooming and child sexual abuse have the opportunity to contribute directly to the discussion in this area.

I'm grateful to have a platform, but I know that many of my fellow victims and survivors don't and are desperate for their voices to be heard, for practitioners and professionals to listen to them, and to have an impact and to be able to effect change". With that, she introduced the session's first speaker, Elena Botezatu, who played an important role in WeProtect Global Alliance's Survivors' Perspectives Project.

RM: Elena, you played a significant role in the Voices of Survivors project, a flagship WeProtect Alliance project. Can you tell us more about it and why a project with survivor participation was introduced?

EB: It's crucial to take into account survivors' recommendations. Two practices were important for us: conversations with young women who experienced online sexual abuse, and a survey for frontline support workers who provided assistance to these women.

We wanted to collect evidence about the availability and effectiveness of services, and where things can be improved, to incorporate into policy recommendations. In Moldova, this approach exceeded expectations.

Survivor recommendations helped us make changes at the policy level. One of the most impactful conversations we had was with a young woman of 14 years. She was sexually exploited online and desperate, and found out about our helpline at school from a teacher. She accessed the helpline looking for psychological and legal support, and they provided this and facilitated first contact with the police. She was suicidal before this. This highlights the need for more and more widely available support services for children, and the important role of the school in making this critical information available to them.

Through the project, we learned about the importance of raising awareness: we have a lot of norms in society, such as blaming children who experience abuse, and this is a barrier to disclosure.

Survivors we worked with taught us the importance of family support, and so we became interested in parent education programs. We also learned that online reporting mechanisms are important for helping victims know that their abuse can and will be removed, and we learned ways to make online resources and helplines more visible and accessible. One of the biggest lessons for us was that specific training must be undertaken before working with survivors, and great care needs to be taken during the victim identification process. Victims need a recovery process – there is no ethical and safe participation without recovery first. **Psychological support services must be available, and the privacy and confidentiality of victims must be protected so that our intervention is not damaging to them [the survivors of child sexual abuse online].**

RM: Guillaume, would you like to say anything about the significance for this project for ECPAT globally?

GL: This has been a really challenging and interesting project. By and large, we are used to approaching things from the top down: that means we focus on policies, legislations, and reactive approaches like detecting images and removing them. If we approach things from the bottom up, then we're looking at the accountability we must have towards children. We're not up to speed in that regard, and that's why this research is so important. As an example, most of the time we're all thinking about raising awareness, but when we speak to victims we hear that 'it's not so much that we don't know the services exist, we don't trust them'. That is a different picture. We tend to ignore that point, but trust building is a complex, long-term phenomenon. We need to build ties that create trust, and what can help to do this is sharing positive experiences that other victims have had with our services.

Something else we've learned is that we must address the self-blaming that comes with online abuse and recently with 'self-generated' images. The discussion we have globally about consent is absolutely critical, but we often fail to nuance the debate by considering the guilt and shame that children may feel when they are in these situations. If consent leads to exploitation then that consent is not relevant. **With challenges like these, we must hear the voices of those who are affected by them to enrich our responses. They can help us to shake the tree a bit, rather than just stay at the abstract policy level and let it trickle down.**

RM: The information we get from survivors is so valuable in how we shape our practice. Jenette, you are centralising survivor participation and survivor leadership to shape your work and the approaches you take – please tell us more about that.

JC: Survivors we work with are more than their stories of abuse. They have experience and expertise that they can bring to the table where decisions are made and programs are created, and we need those inputs. At International Justice Mission (IJM) we've created a set of global standards for strengthening the justice system, and one of those standards is survivor leadership.

We have a community of practice for survivor leadership, which I am part of, where field workers gather to discuss what happens in the field, and what it's like to work with survivors. We've collected some of our insights into a 'Survivor Leadership Toolkit' which helps other IJM programs to collaborate with survivors as partners.

This is important: **we're changing our approach from 'working for' to 'working with' survivors. If survivors are given opportunities to lead the movement, they can make a lot of difference.**

Beyond the community of practice and the toolkit, we're also working to support the creation of a global survivor network, wherein survivors are gathered and given help forming a group. We operate on a global and a local level: the wider global group helps to create local survivor groups wherever IJM operates.

RM: It's so important to have connections and share experiences with people who know what you've gone through. It's crucial to create those opportunities, and then to empower people to take them. Could you give people here some practical advice about empowering survivors?

JC: If you want to include survivor leadership in programs and services, you must look to the 'top' of the organisation. Leaders must commit to ensure that survivors are involved in the process of what you're doing. Start by setting standards, then gather your people and ask for what is working in the field, and how they see survivors being empowered.

Our toolkit informs how to practically work with survivors (in focus groups and roundtables, for example). A crucial practical approach is to empower them to create a group where they can learn from one another and support each other. We then consult with these local survivor groups.

RM: Commissioner Kerstin Claus, can you talk about how survivors play a role in the discussion in Germany?

KC: In 2010, there was a big outcry in Germany and many survivors spoke publicly about child abuse in churches and schools. Back then, these important voices weren't heard. Germany's [Survivors Board](#) was implemented in 2015, and it changed policymaking in this field by giving a voice to those most affected by political decisions. In it were 15 people with different backgrounds, and importantly, with experience. Since it was implemented, perspectives have become wider and survivors have begun to be taken more seriously. We've seen different ways to combat the problem, and have adopted a lifelong approach to prevent, intervene, and build an environment that focuses on the needs of children and on adult survivors [...]

There is still a big gap between survivors and society, and in that gap a big taboo. When there's a taboo, we don't achieve anything. When seeking people for the Board of Survivors, we looked for competence, professional experience, and advocacy. We have to get rid of hesitation with selecting survivors for certain kinds of advocacy work. [...] It should be possible to say 'I am a survivor'. Why don't people in parliament, or professors at university feel they can say that they are survivors? We need visibility of survivors – in a way that doesn't victimise them, but makes them partners in an exchange. We need to bridge that gap.

RM: Thinking about participation more broadly, can you explain why this is so important?

KC: We do a lot of work for children, but not necessarily with them. There are a lot of barriers – financial, ethical, methodological – but these barriers are things to work with, rather than against, in bringing children into our work. We hear from children that they don't recognise themselves in the prevention strategies that we are devising for them. There's a big gap in how we approach prevention and how children actually receive it and process it. We need to engage with children more.

This doesn't mean we're transferring responsibility to children to prevent this from happening – that's our job – but they should be seen more as agents in this dynamic, and we need to reach out. Data from the [Disrupting Harm](#) studies in Asia and Africa show that a third of children don't tell anyone when abuse happens, and when they do, the first circle of people they trust is other children, so let's look more at what happens at the child's level in terms of prevention and services.

We tend to either think of participation with children as ‘tell us what happened’ or, at the other end of the spectrum, as transferring knowledge to them.

In between, we could be engaging children in analysis and strategy development. Good intentions are just not good enough anymore.

RM: Jennifer, please tell us about the Global Collaborative and how you’re bringing survivor voices to the table.

JW: Two years ago, I reached out to a group of survivors. My family was deeply affected by the clergy abuse scandal in the US. My two brothers are clergy abuse survivors and have had really challenging lives, and there was never time in all of that struggle for me to deal with my own issues. I was also a survivor of child abuse by my stepfather. I really felt compelled, after spending many years away from the Catholic church, to try to find a way to build bridges with the church because of the deep suffering that my family experienced. I really felt that coming to terms with our spiritual injuries, and finding ways to work collaboratively, was the only thing that was going to help my family. I was fortunate to work with a number of other survivors and families who, like me, were trying to build those bridges. We launched the [Global Collaborative](#) and are now linked with about 50 global organisations. Our aim is to establish a World Day to promote awareness and a platform for survivors’ voices to be heard. We’ve been working closely with several missions at the UN, we now have a mission that is sponsoring our resolution, and we hope to bring it forward in November.

We were turned down by a number of missions. We have a tremendous crisis that is blooming and there are so many children who have been injured. So, I need help in getting this past the finish line. We’re recognising the Europe Day, November 18, as our World Day. The day is now called the ‘International Day for the Protection and Healing of Child Dignity’. That name evolved because it’s difficult to have public discourse around sexual abuse and exploitation; and also, as we heard this morning, many people who are engaged in ‘self-generated’ images do not associate themselves with abuse. We need to have a way to get to them and to help them know that when they do realise they’ve been exploited, that there’s a space for them. It’s about opening the dialogue around ‘dignity’ and helping them understand what is the way forward.

RM: How can everybody here/professionals/organisations support this movement?

JW: It’s really helpful to write letters to members of state and UN representatives to support this day. We’ve gained tremendous support but we need the member states to support this.

It has to be a unanimous topic on the UN agenda: if it’s not unanimous it goes up for discussion, and that can be a challenge. Please reach out to representatives from your country to support this resolution.

Session takeaways

1. Specific evidence about the availability, quality, and effectiveness of support services would enable targeted responses by governments, NGOs, and the private sector – and survivor experiences can provide this.
2. Incorporating survivor perspectives can help to bridge the gaps that often exist in this kind of work, such as those between policy and practice or among sectors.
3. It is important to use ethical, safe, and considered methods for identifying and incorporating victims, so as not to create more harm for them. Collaboration should be an empowering, rather than an extractive, experience for survivors.

Immersive technology, risks and remedies | Breakout session

Session information

This breakout session explored new technological trends in terms of child sexual exploitation and abuse, assessing potential risks as well as mitigation approaches to help reduce the threat, and ensure the collective preparedness of the Alliance to deal with the implications of immersive environments.



Speakers

- **Fraser Nicol**, Partner, PA Consulting (Moderator)
- **Patrick Cronin**, Online Safety Lead, PA Consulting
- **Amy Jordan**, Director of Technology Policy, Ofcom
- **Anne Hobson**, Policy Manager, Meta, Inc.
- **Anton Toni Klancnik**, Specialist in Child Protection, EUROPOL

Terms explained:

Immersive technology allows users to blur the boundaries between virtual and real life in different ways, including in gaming and social interactions. As with many forms of new technology, children and young people are often early adopters who seek to explore the new frontiers of imagination and technology, through what is commonly referred to as 'XR'.

XR stands for 'extended reality' and is an umbrella term that covers virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR). All XR tech takes the human-to-PC screen interface and modifies it, either by 1) immersing a user in the virtual environment (VR), 2) adding to, or augmenting, the user's surroundings (AR), or 3) both of those (MR).



Insights from the 2021 WeProtect Global Alliance Global Threat Assessment

Patrick Cronin, PA Consulting

- The threat is evolving quickly. In 2018, reports showed how technology, especially the dark web, was providing opportunities for offenders to gather and communicate with impunity, with on-demand access to victims. In 2019, reports showed that offenders were using highly sophisticated services on the surface web, too. Last year, worrying trends began to emerge regarding children's interactions with online platforms during Covid-19.
- In the Global Threat Assessment from 2021, it was reported that a rise in immersive technologies is beginning to shape the way we interact in society through work, education, and socialising. These opportunities carry risks and we need laws and structures in place to protect children.
- Technology offers no 'silver bullet' so it is not productive to demand solutions from tech platforms alone: we need to come together as an alliance to solve this.
- Experiences in virtual reality can have very real physical and psychological effects, making this a concerning new context for online abuse.
- VR is different from other technology because it is immersive and personal: no one else can see what users are viewing or experiencing unless deliberately cast or recorded. This will have implications for safety.

Risks and challenges to child safety

The discussion began with a note from each speaker on the risks that immersive technologies pose to children online. **Amy Jordan from Ofcom** spoke first. "I think we need to get to grips with what constitutes harm in immersive technologies, and how the impact of harm can differ and be more profound, especially on younger people, in these contexts". From a regulatory perspective, it will be important to have clear definitions and a shared understanding of the various technologies, tools, and experiences available now, she said. "We're also really interested in accountability. If immersive technologies are linked to greater decentralisation, then where does control sit? Who will be accountable for dealing with harm?"

Speaking from an industry perspective, **Anne Hobson from Meta** told the delegates that while virtual reality worlds online will provide opportunities for powerful social connections, they could also be spaces where more intense negative experiences can happen. "Presence and embodiment – the sense of actually being there – is going to make experiences feel more intense," she said.

Another interesting challenge will be 'conduct' based harm, rather than the 'content' based harm that is more prevalent on social media platforms. "I think it makes detection more difficult," she said, "because we're talking about avatars moving in real time, making potentially lewd gestures". Hobson told delegates that there will be a need for policies that attend to more complex conduct-based harms in virtual reality.

Anton Toni Klančnik from EUROPOL shared his thoughts as a law enforcement officer. "We already have challenges in collecting evidence online and presenting it to judicial authorities," he said. "I don't know what the future will bring. How will we gather evidence?" He told delegates that there wasn't yet clarity around the legality or status of virtual crimes, and that consensus on this issue would be an important step forward for law enforcement.

Preventing harm in virtual space

Ofcom has been working closely with government in the UK to shape legislation and ensure that it makes sense from a regulatory perspective, Jordan said. The key to these frameworks moving forward, she said, will be providing clarity so that industries know what to expect, while also being flexible enough to apply to a broad range of evolving services. “These guidelines need to stand the test of time and be futureproof,” she said, “so we’re making sure we understand what is happening by building our evidence base across harms and mitigations. We’re looking ahead at trends and what could happen in the future”. Key to future success will also be holding platforms to account for driving transparency in the industry, and importantly, stimulating competition and innovation. **“That’s something we really mustn’t forget: we want to keep promoting innovation in services, safety tools, and other mitigations”.**

Hobson told delegates about what Meta is thinking about in terms of preventing harm on their VR products using one of their US-based products, **‘Horizon Worlds’**, as an example. Describing how moderation works on the platform, she said that trained, paid staff act as guides who monitor activity on the platforms in real time. “They welcome people and set and enforce norms, and also have the ability to remove, warn, and mute people who are behaving disruptively on the platform”. She explained that other social VR apps also make use of invisible moderation, which enables trained staff to mute, block, report or take other actions against harm on the platform, what she calls ‘integrity signals’. She described **‘Safe Zone’**, a new tool for social VR that grants users a break from real-time conduct and enables reporting; new parental controls that Meta are soon introducing; and efforts to leverage existing machine learning models to prevent unconnected adults from interacting with minors online.



Cross-sector collaboration

Klancnik called for training for law enforcement officials to be able to cope with the wave of new challenges that virtual space will bring, saying that different sectors will need to come together to prepare police and investigators. “We have to establish a triangle between the tech industry and law enforcement and regulators, and really start to talk about it,” he said. He told delegates that law enforcement struggles with accessing data from industry stakeholders, and that this is a large barrier in their investigations. “Finding ways to share information that would help us protect children would be a wonderful way forward for this triangular relationship”. There are difficulties with working collaboratively that need to be overcome in the cybersecurity field, Jordan said. In the context of regulation, “We are building relationships across the world and working to align our approaches and make sure we’re being as consistent as we can,” she told the delegates. “We’re not only part of a regulatory environment,” she said, “but also a new player in a collective approach to tackling child abuse online”.

Echoing Klancnik and Jordan, Hobbs said it was important for industry stakeholders to know how to work with law enforcement and other relevant sectors. “We have internal escalation processes, so we train reviewers to trigger processes that result in us working directly with law enforcement to solve some of these issues”. Emphasising the importance of collaboration, she said that “to really embrace an ecosystem level approach, where we have a multi-pronged degree of solutions, we’re going to need vast cooperation between the people in this room and others”. Hobbs encouraged delegates to read [‘Building the metaverse responsibly’](#) – an article outlining Meta’s investment in addressing four key areas: safety and integrity; privacy; equity and inclusion; and economic opportunity. She said that Meta has been working with UN Women, the World Economic Forum, and Seoul University, among others, to research ethics, design, and safety in immersive spaces.

Session Takeaways / Action points

1. Immersive technologies pose risks for regulators and law enforcement in areas including accountability and detection. The decentralisation of virtual reality will create unique challenges for regulating the space and holding companies accountable, while the real-time nature of virtual reality will create difficulties for detecting and reporting misconduct.
2. Safety tools including moderation and enhanced parental controls are being continually revised and adapted to make virtual reality experiences safer for users.
3. There will need to be greater international and cross-sector collaboration in order to keep pace with industry developments in immersive technology: regulators must coordinate their efforts globally, industry must be transparent about evolving technologies, and police must adapt their approaches to law enforcement in this new frontier.

Advocating for child rights in the context of online regulation

| Breakout session

Session information

In this breakout session, panellists discussed how the Alliance can help shift the dial in public understanding around child sexual abuse online and online regulation to ensure that children's safety and privacy are balanced. The session explored how to develop communication and advocacy strategies to align around the common goal of building a safer internet for children, and was moderated by Vicky Rateau from the Oak Foundation.



Speakers

- **Vicky Rateau**, Program Officer, Oak Foundation (Moderator)
- **Sarah Gardner**, Vice President External Affairs, Thorn
- **Moira O'Neil**, Senior Vice President, FrameWorks Institute
- **Ian Stevenson**, CEO & Founder, Cyacomb
- **Thomas Farrell**, Chief Impact Officer, SafeToNet
- **Simon Burt**, Associate Strategy Director, Purpose
- **Chris Cooper**, Senior Campaign Director & Head of Office, Australia, Purpose

Shifting the narrative from from threat to opportunity

Kicking off these sessions, Vicky Rateau invited the speakers and delegates to shift their focus from the nightmare of child sexual abuse and exploitation to the dream that they all share for the future.

"Let's focus on what world needs to be created," she said. "How do we reframe the debate? How do we amplify the narrative we want to hear?". Four advocates from across sectors offered their perspectives on these questions.

Sarah Gardner, Vice President External Affairs, Thorn

- There are still significant gaps around advocacy and communication in the field of ending child sexual abuse online. The stalling of the EU's interim derogation, which led some companies to stop detection for a period in 2020-2021, is an indicator of the need for more advocacy in this area. Another sign that public messaging needs to improve was the general negative response to Apple's child safety improvements in 2021.
- Thorn, along with 14 other groups, have been working with the social campaigning and advocacy agency Purpose to improve -
 - communications around the EU legislation in particular to find ways to advocate for it collectively and as individual organisations.
- Targeting and communicating to the right audience has been a significant challenge. Different audiences require different information and communication strategies. "Which audience when?" has been an important question in their work.
- One important learning has been to focus on the 'why' instead of dwelling on the 'how'.

Ian Stevenson, CEO & Founder, Cyacomb

- There are no silver bullets in the safety tech field, but that does not mean that we should be overwhelmed by the impossibility of solving the problem. This can prevent people from talking about what we can do.
- Safety tech companies can provide a voice of hope in the debate - by talking about what can be done.
- We need to be able to have more sophisticated conversations about detection technologies and their relationship to privacy.
- Technologies available now can be minimally invasive to privacy, AI technologies for detection are like magnets or airport metal detectors.
 - They do not compromise people's privacy, and this is an important message to communicate to the public.
- For different responses, different detectors are appropriate. Protecting privacy is an important priority, but that has to be proportionate to the threats posed to children.
- Technologies are improving all the time, and there is a lot of accurate detection technology in the pipeline. Better informed conversations and the right policy need to be used to enable the use of this technology more widely.

Moira O'Neil, Senior Vice President, FrameWorks Institute

- An important part of getting child protection on the policy agenda across national contexts is how the issue is framed and how the movement frames itself.
- 'Framing' refers to every decision that is made as a communicator - from the values that are expressed to the data that is included. Those decisions have measurable impacts on how people think about issues.
 - When we produced an [evidence-based briefing on how to talk about child sexual abuse in the digital world](#) in partnership with the Alliance, we found people tend to understand the issue of child sexual abuse online as incomprehensible and inevitable. There is a high degree of fatalism that people bring to this challenge.
- An important way to mobilise more optimism and interest in the issue could be to emphasise solutions over problems, i.e. presenting a way forward before offering prevalence rates.

- There is also a lack of understanding about the issue across national contexts, making people vulnerable to misinformation. Communication about child sexual abuse should focus on clear, accurate facts.
- Some messaging around the issue can inadvertently other and stigmatise survivors. There is a collective responsibility to meet the needs of survivors and elevate them in public messaging.

Thomas Farrell, Chief Impact Officer, SafeToNet

- Safety tech refers to work being done in the technology sector to create solutions for online safety.
- There are companies who work on 'reactive' safety tech, meaning that they search for child sexual abuse material and remove (using technologies like hash sets, for example).
- There is also a 'technical prevention' aspect, which aims to create solutions to prevent things from happening in the first place.
- Phenomena such as coerced 'self-generated' content can be stopped using preventative technology.
- For those in the tech safety industry, the priority for the work that they do is restoring safety and dignity to children who have been harmed, or who may be harmed. Children are at the centre of the work that they do, and this needs to be communicated more to sceptics.

Interactive session run by Purpose

At the end of the session, delegates took part in an interactive session where they were asked to design a newspaper headline that depicted regulatory success in relation to tackling child sexual abuse material online.

The exercise included drafting a headline and a subline, drawing an accompanying front cover, and selecting a media publication. The aim was to help participants visualise goals in order to help them reframe how they strategise and communicate about child sexual abuse and exploitation online.

Below are some headlines that participants came up with during the session:

Publication: Washington Street Journal

Headline: **Child Sexual abuse prevented globally before it happens**

Sub Head: Every Government in the world pledges to preventative solutions

Publication: Facebook

Headline: **Platforms commit to using technology to prevent the distribution of CSAM online**

Sub Head: Platforms are now using technology to identify and block CSAM.

Publication: BBC News

Headline: **Governments worldwide sign a landmark agreement making the online world safe for children**

Sub Head: Gaps in regulation closed to rid the internet of CSAM

Publication: Daily Express

Headline: **Finally! Laws tighten for protecting children online**

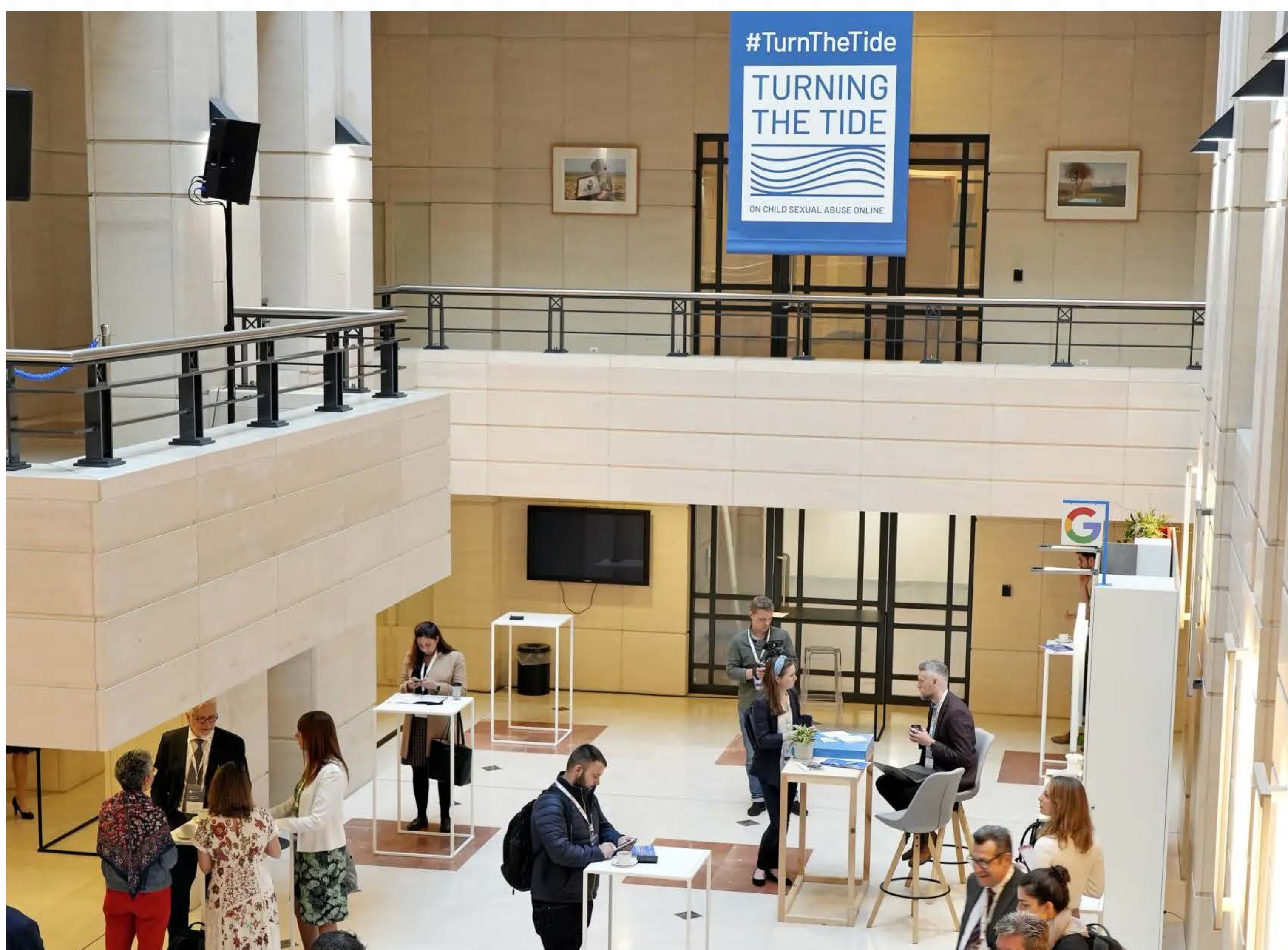
Sub Head: Online predators get a minimum 20 years

Session takeaways

1. An important aspect of successful social movements is having a common strategic frame. The Alliance would benefit from shaping a common narrative that they can tell together.
2. Clearly communicating the reason for the use of detection technology, and the way that it functions, can be a way towards challenging concerns over digital privacy.
3. It will be important to break the false binary between child protection online and privacy in order to gain more support for the cause.

Questions and reflections:

1. How do we get child sexual abuse and exploitation to the level that the climate crisis is on now, where politicians have to talk about it publicly? And how can more young people join in on advocacy on this issue? – **Sarah Gardner**
2. How can messaging about tech safety be improved to create confidence around privacy? – **Thomas Farrell**



Industry transparency | Plenary session

Session information

In a welcome step towards greater industry accountability, this session saw the Tech Coalition launch and discuss [its voluntary Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Transparency Reporting Framework](#).

Participants heard from the tech leaders who developed this initiative, alongside experts from civil society and government, about why transparency is so critical in the fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation online.



Speakers

- **Sean Litton**, Executive Director, Tech Coalition
- **Liz Thomas**, Director, Public Policy, Microsoft
- **John Lange**, Associate General Counsel, Amazon
- **Christian Papaleontiou**, Deputy Director of Tackling Child, Sexual Abuse Unit, Home Office, UK Government
- **John Starr**, VP, Thorn

Because of their unique position, tech companies have access to data that can help us all understand what is needed to more effectively combat child sexual exploitation and abuse online. The Tech Coalition's new guide, called Trust: Voluntary Framework for Industry Transparency (the Framework), helps companies:

- Develop reporting that can clearly explain the specific actions they have taken to address violations of its policies prohibiting child sexual -

- sexual exploitation and abuse

- Share critical insights on specific trends and threats of child sexual exploitation and abuse online
- Create a reliable cadence of opportunities for them to identify possible improvements that will further reduce the prevalence of child sexual exploitation and abuse on their services and others

The Tech Coalition worked closely with WeProtect Global Alliance to ensure that input and feedback from their members across governments, civil society and the private sector were integrated into the development of the Framework. The Tech Coalition anticipates that this Framework will sit alongside emerging and existing regulatory reporting requirements in many jurisdictions.

The framework was developed to provide principles-based guidance to tech companies seeking to build trust around their efforts to address risks on their services. By being principles-based rather than over-

- prescriptive in terms of approach, the framework is flexible enough to be adapted to a variety of contexts, and to the shifting landscape of child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

Please note that due to a technical error this panel was not recorded entirely. The report from this session reflects only a part of the conversation.

Comments from the panel

I'm proud of the step our industry members have taken in creating TRUST. It is not the end of our journey, but it represents an important step forward for industry collaboration [...] Our greatest obstacle to protecting people from violence and oppression is our desire to protect ourselves. Today we have seen a great deal of vulnerability and courage on this stage, and we invite even greater courage, vulnerability, and transparency from industry working on this. The Tech Coalition will work hard with our members and with any other company that wants to work with us to help them fully implement the framework. – **Sean Litton**

The framework is us acknowledging the conversation and the challenges, and taking some steps forward to ensure greater transparency [...] A part of this is making information accessible – in both senses of the word – including finding ways to present data in a friendly, understandable way that's easy to read for different audiences (including parents). – **Liz Thomas**

I've seen companies give evidence with humility, being open about how far it had gone, and how it realised it had much more to do, and where it wasn't doing a good enough job. It didn't impact on its commercial bottom line, and it didn't impact adversely in terms of the media reaction. It's about how the story is told, and the spirit and trust you build in telling the story. There is a way to be honourable that doesn't impact on commercial interests, and I'm sure there are companies who could share how they've done that in order to support other companies. – **Christian Papaleontiou**

Transparency reports should clearly capture both a company's policies and its practices. As a parent [reading a report] I'd be looking out for a company's policies around child safety, and how they practise those: are there child safe features? Are there parental controls? And so on. – **John Lange**

Companies need to push the envelope on sharing more of what they do – the framework creates a sharing area for tech companies to do this more [...] We need more context and more details. We need to hear the journeys that companies go through, what they learned along the way, and how they plan to do things differently next time. For industry, it's tough to say 'We didn't get it right'. It's one of those environments where there's some trust to build together. If we can do more of that, then we become a collective force against it. – **John Starr**

The Tech Coalition is an alliance of global tech companies who are working together to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse online. Made up of 27 leading technology companies of varying sizes and service sectors, the Tech Coalition is where industry comes together to pool their collective knowledge, experience, and advances in technology to keep children safe online.

‘Turning the Tide on Child Sexual Abuse Online’ keynote speeches

| Plenary session

Session information

To close the summit, speakers from across sectors addressed delegates about the opportunities for change that exist for advancing child safety online.

Speakers

- **Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- **Courtney Gregoire**, Chief Digital Safety Officer, Microsoft
- **Mama Fatima Singateh**, Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children, United Nations
- **Kate Hampton**, CEO, The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation
- **H.E. Cessouma Minata Samaté**, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian, Affairs and Social Development, African Union

Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, Sheik Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan highlighted that the health and safety of any child are two key aspects for the development and upbringing of a normal family and society. We need to work together to provide a healthy and safe environment for children so that they become positive and active individuals in the community, he said. With the increased challenges of modern technologies, it is important to act decisively to eliminate online child sexual exploitation and ensure that children everywhere have a bright future.

Protecting and supporting them must be a top priority for all policymakers and decision makers. He said that, “Protecting the rights of children and ensuring a proper upbringing will always rank high among the UAE’s priorities.

We are therefore required to secure a supportive and child-friendly digital environment.”

He concluded by saying, “The future of this world relies on the future of our children. I call on you to take advantage of this momentous gathering to come up with clear recommendations and commitments for the good of our children and children of the world”.



Courtney Gregoire, Chief Digital Safety Officer, Microsoft

Gregoire said that there is an incredible community committed to turning the tide on child sexual abuse and exploitation online: “We have learned that we go farther in addressing this problem together, through collective action.”

She highlighted the importance of principled global regulation to address the problem of child sexual abuse online, and said that Microsoft embraces the role that regulation can play in this space. Gregoire said that a risk-based approach ensures that technology companies can appropriately deploy resources to address the highest risk areas and make meaningful safety improvements. She also said that Microsoft wants to see global regulation that preserves flexibility for technology companies to innovate and combat new and emerging threats. She told delegates that “we have to acknowledge that many of those engaged in the possession and distribution of child sexual abuse imagery are committed to hiding their tactics and evolving to continue their crime. We need to take a cybercrime approach to this and continue to innovate and address the evolving threat.” She added that there is a need for regulation that preserves precisely this flexibility, and regulatory measures that create space for access to data and for innovation, and the development of new tools.

Gregoire noted that there’s a critical need for this community to inform the public about the horrific problem of child sexual abuse, and communicate why we must take actions through legal frameworks, policy and regulation, and voluntary actions. “We know that this debate sometimes turns into a ‘privacy versus safety’ one, which is a nuanced discussion. I was heartened by Commissioner Johansson leaning in to how we start moving this conversation in the right direction. We have to ensure that we think about the comprehensive rights of a child and bring that to the forefront, explaining it easily and transparently so that the public holds the same commitments we have in this room”.

She concluded by sharing her team’s ethos: **“Remember the human, because there was a victim in every single image that we talked about today, who deserves for their rights to be protected. We want to remember them; we want to make sure we’re building technology tools to protect their health and wellbeing.”**



Cisse Mariama Mohamed, Director of Social Development, Culture and Sport, African Union

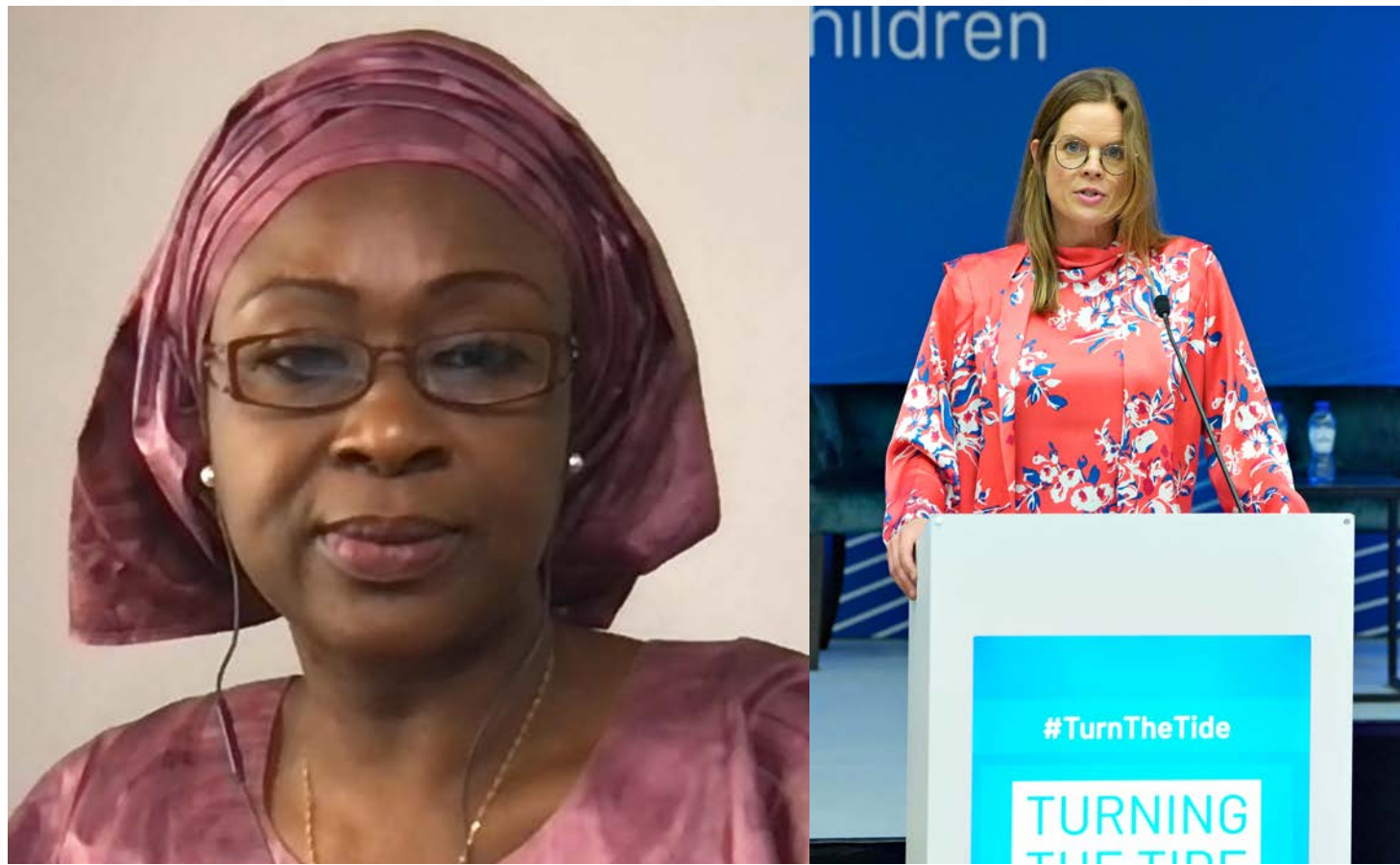
Cisse Mariama Mohamed told delegates that the African Union Commission is guided by Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2040, as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which protects children against all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and requires states to protect children by putting in place national policy programmes, laws, and other measures. The African Union has put in place a continental strategy and plan of action for 2020-2025 to combat online sexual exploitation and abuse in Africa that strives to establish a comprehensive and coordinated effort to galvanise member states and partners and to accelerate prevention and protection efforts.

She explained that the African Union Commission will continue to encourage the ratification of the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personnel Data Protection (also known as the Malabo Convention), which imposes obligations on member states to establish legal, policy, and regulatory measures to promote cybersecurity, governance, and control cybercrime. She also said that the African Union Commission will continue to work with WeProtect Global Alliance to increase engagement and cooperation through strong and committed strategic leadership.

Mama Fatima Singateh, Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children, United Nations

Mama Fatima Singateh explained that in order to prevent child sexual abuse effectively, it is essential to take a multidisciplinary approach at all levels of society. She argued that a strong legal and policy framework with a clear coordination mechanism should guide this approach and help to set broad objectives. To reach those objectives in practice, she said, they must trickle down to local community and family levels.

She highlighted to delegates that we must enhance digital education, raise awareness, and provide information and guidance on online behaviour to build resilience for children.



The more they have opportunities to speak up and discuss uncomfortable or taboo issues in safe places, the more they will be able to participate in their own protection and develop resilience to the risks of exploitation. She said that children need to be aware of issues surrounding sexual exploitation and must be empowered with the social skills to claim them:

“We need meaningful child participation to ensure that measures put in place for them will respond to their needs. In order to be effective, these measures need to reach all children across all sections of our society.”

International cooperation through sharing best practices and experiences (by specialists from different countries with experience in supporting victims and survivors of online abuse) can improve our overall effectiveness in supporting survivors in their recovery and social integration. Addressing the sexual abuse and exploitation of children online requires a holistic approach and a commitment from all stakeholders to keep children safe, Mama Fatima said. We therefore each have a role to play in addressing this scourge – and we can only succeed if we all work together.

Kate Hampton, CEO, The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation

Kate Hampton told delegates how these two days of deliberation have provided an important space for us to share our anxiety, but also to think about great solutions in the face of this epidemic. She said that, going forward, “We’re going to need not just transparency, but also standards and accountability. And where regulation does not exist, these standards will have to be a force enforced by public opinion, led by survivors, to set us on the pathway to regulation.”

She then highlighted how the key problem – rather than being a lack of collective knowledge – is the uneven and unfair distribution of capacities and resources. She said that the fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation is pitifully funded, and called for a strong investment case that –

– shows ‘a deep causal relationship between this kind of abuse and other harms, as well as the lost potential’ that will get ministries of finance to stand up and take action.

She highlighted how inspiring the interventions and stories of survivors from the Brave Movement were during the two-day summit. She said that while their advocacy is part of their healing, it's also our best hope for systemic change. She concluded by saying: **“I want to thank all of the survivors for speaking out. And I acknowledge that I owe them a personal debt of gratitude, because I realise that their voice is a shield that protects my own children, as well as millions of others. This is clear as day to me now. So to the survivors: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.”**



Closing speech: address by Iain Drennan | Plenary session

“There’s a moment when the tide turns, and you’ve got to seize it – or you’ll be left behind. This is the moment of the turning of the tide,” Drennan told delegates in his closing address. “This summit is the Alliance in action ... We’ve heard from tech, from the private sector, from civil society, from survivors. We’re hearing from the Global South and the Global North, from international organisations.

Every body or constituency that has a stake and has the ability to take action against the heinous crime of child sexual abuse and exploitation is in this room”.

Drennan read the Alliance’s new Summit communique to the delegates:

WE, the delegates of the Global Summit to Turn the Tide on Child Sexual Abuse Online, held at the Egmont Palace in Brussels, Belgium on 1-2 June 2022:

Recognise that child sexual abuse and exploitation online remains a growing global threat, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;

Note that progress continues to be made, with new legislation to regulate the digital space, improved online safety technologies and justice sector responses and increased advocacy and influence by survivors of abuse; and are

Convinced that there is a gross mismatch between the magnitude and severity of the problem and the resources invested to tackle child sexual abuse online both from industry and governments.

We must fix the resource mismatch and build capacity to prevent and respond to this threat across the globe.

Ending child sexual abuse and exploitation online will require greater collaboration and investment across all the constituencies represented in WeProtect Global Alliance, drawing on the Model National Response and Global Strategic Response frameworks, as evidenced in the UNICEF and WeProtect Global Alliance Framing the Future report.

We therefore COMMIT ourselves to:

Accelerating global cooperation and innovation to prevent and address child sexual abuse online, focusing on:

1. Increasing collaboration to address jurisdictional challenges in investigating and prosecuting online child sexual exploitation and abuse as countries pursue global alignment on legislation, classifying child sexual abuse materials, and data and intelligence sharing standards.
2. Working to fill gaps in evidence and understanding of what works to prevent and respond to child sexual exploitation and abuse in line with the Model National Response, including continued monitoring and research to support continuous improvement and better use of technology across all capabilities.
3. Promotion and global implementation of the Model National Response and Global Strategic Response frameworks by all constituencies represented in the Alliance, and their continuous refinement based on lessons learned and feedback from our membership.

Stepping up national prevention and response to child sexual abuse and exploitation online, focusing on:

1. Investment in law enforcement and prosecutorial services to ensure those responsible for crimes against children are sufficiently resourced to deal with sexual offences, including those facilitated by technology, and receive systematic training and capacity building to stay ahead of new and emerging harms and prosecute sexual offences involving digital evidence in a survivor-centred and child-sensitive manner that secures justice while minimising re-traumatisation.
2. Expanding the reach of quality case management and multidisciplinary models to ensure they are available and accessible for all victims and survivors that require them.
3. Continued systematic training and capacity building for the child protection workforce so they have the expertise to identify and support children at risk or children that have experienced abuse, accessible support and guidance for parents, families, carers, professionals that work with children and the wider community on how to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse, including forms facilitated by technology, and capacity development and public funding for child helplines.

4. Improving cooperation between hotlines, law enforcement, and the technology industry to ensure optimal efficiency and better outcomes for children and survivors.
5. Investment and implementation of tools and policies to enable timely and proactive detection, prevention, and disruption of child sexual abuse
 - and exploitation on private sector online platforms and services.
6. Developing effective measures to ensure media reporting is supportive of children and survivors' dignity, privacy, and protection.



All members of WeProtect Global Alliance also commit to:

- Use their resources, networks and influence to drive forward the collective global response to child sexual exploitation and abuse online.
- Identify and progress their role in implementing the Model National Response and Global Strategic Response frameworks as part of their strategies and action plans to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse online.
- Contribute to Global Threat Assessments and other knowledge gathering exercises to share their progress at least once every two years.
- Provide information to the Alliance on progress and activities on implementing the commitments on a biennial basis.
- Ensure genuine participation of victims/survivors and children during the development of policy, programme, tools and/or legislation.
- Sign and ratify the Council of Europe Lanzarote Convention [for government members] or implement similar legislation.

Drennan told delegates about new ways for the Alliance to drive action and strengthen their response, announcing the creation of a [new Global Task Force](#) focusing on government members, designed to promote deeper collaboration. The task force will drive a global coordinated response to child sexual abuse online; secure engagement at national and global levels; showcase progress and champion best and emerging practices.

He thanked the chair of the task force, the European Union, as well as its vice chair, the African Union, and the seventeen countries who have stepped forward as founding members of the task force. Drennan invited any Alliance government members to join the initiative which will hold its first meeting in October.

Global Taskforce of governments

The European Union, African Union and seventeen governments from around the world have joined forces with WeProtect Global Alliance to establish a [new Global Taskforce on Child Sexual Abuse Online](#).

The Global Taskforce, which is the first of its kind, will:

- Develop and drive a global coordinated response to child sexual abuse online;
- Secure engagement at national, regional and global levels;
- Showcase progress and champion best / emerging practice;
- Influence and contribute to key WeProtect Global Alliance products and membership commitments.

Governments around the world continue to draft new legislation to child sexual exploitation and abuse online and other forms of online abuse. The different laws and proposals include varying approaches to regulation and reflect different regional contexts. This new Global Taskforce of governments could help to identify gaps and opportunities in legislative frameworks and facilitate the collaboration needed to close loopholes and ensure there are no safe havens for the facilitation or hosting of child sexual abuse online.

The Taskforce will work alongside the Alliance's other reference groups for private sector, civil society and law enforcement members to develop a transnational, cross-sector coordinated response -

- to child sexual abuse online. It will also create a mechanism for existing international government initiatives working on this issue, such as the Five Country Ministerial, European Union, African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the G7, to feed into the strategic direction of WeProtect Global Alliance.

Taskforce membership

The founding members of the Global Taskforce are:

- The European Commission (Chair)
- African Union (Vice Chair)
- Australia
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Cambodia
- Canada
- England and Wales
- Finland
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- Republic of Moldova
- The Netherlands
- New Zealand
- North Macedonia
- The Philippines
- Sweden
- The United Arab Emirates
- The United States of America

Membership of the Global Taskforce will be open to any WeProtect Global Alliance government member, of which there are currently 99. Meetings will take place at least twice per year; the inaugural meeting is expected to take place in October 2022.

In closing, **Drennan** had this to say to the delegates:



“The tide is turning, thanks to huge efforts by people in this room. Child sexual abuse online is now on the global agenda as it has never been before. It is in the statute books. It's in the boardroom. Powerful survivors' voices are now being heard. But it is still not enough: we all have a role to play in protecting children. For too long, there has been denial that this is even a real problem. The response remains under-resourced. We need to pivot much more towards prevention, stopping the harm before it happens. We have the tools, we have the will – this is the moment when we as a global alliance innovate. When we share, when we collaborate, when we protect.”

Iain Drennan