



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

11 April 2023

Dear partners, dear friends:

I would like to warmly thank you for your participation and support around my most recent engagement with children, during the lead up to my presentation to the Human Rights Council. Through these dialogues, I directly connected with over 500 children from all regions and different backgrounds. In each of them I had the privilege of interacting with children through a rich and fruitful conversation around violence against children and the digital environment.

Children's questions and interventions before and during these dialogues helped confirm some the key messages outlined in my report: Children everywhere want to see greater commitment and actions from technology companies when it comes to improving children's online protection beyond voluntary peer reviews. They also expect governments to have a leading role in strengthening the legislative and policy systems to make the Internet a safer place. And they understand the critical role they play in coming up with solutions and in addressing peer-to-peer violence, but they are asking for more guidance.

Cyber-bullying was the form of violence most addressed during the five dialogues by region: children are mindful of the impacts, on the connection between offline and online violence, and on the important role of bystanders. But they want to know how to act when witnessing cyber-bullying, how to support victims, how to strengthen reporting systems, how to raise awareness, and how to protect themselves.

Addressing the digital divide, allocating budget, putting a stop to child sexual exploitation online and cyber-crimes, and reaching the most vulnerable children are all important issues raised by children during these regional engagements. And they need to be addressed.

After the regional dialogues, I delivered my statement to the Human Rights Council, where I transmitted to Member States my considerations and the issues raised by children, their concerns and proposals. I also hosted a side event to launch an advocacy brief on the urgency to act now to protect children online, where [this video](#) was played transmitting some of children's key messages to decision-makers.

Soon, the child-friendly version of my report to the Human Rights Council will be expanded, to include the main outcomes from these dialogues and useful information for children to use as part of their actions.

Once again, thank you for your invaluable support.

Warmly,

Najat Maalla M'jid
Special Representative of the Secretary-General on
Violence against Children