



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY STATE DEPARTMENT
FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SENIOR CITIZEN AFFAIRS DURING THE
NATIONAL SAFER INTERNET DAY CELEBRATIONS HELD ON 6TH
FEBRUARY 2024 AT ASK SHOW GROUNDS- NAKURU COUNTY**

The Governor

The County Executive Committee Member

The County Commissioner

Heads of Departments

The Country Director/ Manager of the Civil Society Organization

Child Guest

All children present

Partners

Distinguished Guests,

It gives me great pleasure to join you here today on this auspicious occasion when we come together to celebrate the Safer Internet Day. This day is celebrated globally each year to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology for children and young people and inspire a national conversation. The theme for this year is **“Together for a better internet”**.

It calls upon children, parents, caregivers, child protection workforce, social workers, teachers, law enforcement, policymakers and the

wider public to join together in helping to create a better and safe internet.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya's commitment to protecting children from online exploitation is evident through its membership in the WeProtect Global Alliance. Upholding Article 53 of the Constitution and the Children Act 2022, the government prioritizes safeguarding children both online and offline. In line with this, my Department has developed a comprehensive multi-sectoral 5-year National Plan of Action to Tackle Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2022 – 2026). This plan focuses on crucial areas such as laws, policies, prevention, capacity

strengthening, response, support services, and monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, the Directorate of Children Services has crafted a Training Manual for Social Service on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse to enhance the capacity of the social workforce in combating this issue.

Distinguished Guests,

Recognizing the transformative impact of the fourth industrial revolution that has fundamentally changed the way we live, work and relate to one another. The government pledged to revolutionize the digital

infrastructure as one of its key pillars towards the optimizing on the creative economy. This commitment focuses on increase of the universal broadband availability within five years through the construction of 100,000km of national fibre optic connectivity. Further enhance government service delivery through digitization and automation of government services and implementation of the digital master plan.

This fast pace change in information and communication technologies particularly in schools is facilitating unparalleled opportunities for many children to achieve their rights to learn, express themselves and participate meaningfully in their communities.

It is important to acknowledge the vast benefits the internet brings and further remain cognizant of the perils of the same. Globally, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received an average of 21,745 cyber tips in 2022 in comparison to 14,434 cyber tips in 2020 as per the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), the cyber tips are reports concerned with apparent cases of the possession, manufacture and distribution of Child Sexual Abuse Materials (child pornography) in Kenya.

The mass use of the internet and new technologies has amplified the production and circulation of illegal child sexual abuse materials and increased the incidences of online grooming for sexual abuse,

sexting, sextortion and the conduct of other forms of exploitation, including live streaming of child sexual abuse and cyberbullying among other cybercrimes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With more children and adolescents spending more time online particularly due to the shift in online learning following the COVID-19 pandemic, comes the rising increase in cases of online child exploitation and internet addiction. It is therefore imperative to invest in children's online safety and protection, acknowledging that the use of internet cannot be wished away.

According to the Disrupting Harm Study which was undertaken in 2021, six percent (6%) of Kenyan children have already shared images or videos of their bodies with other internet users. Fourteen percent (14%) have gone on to meet in person someone they first encountered online. The risk of abuse is obvious; and whatever we post, share or do online we should always remember that

The internet does not forget...

Therefore, we must work together to help children benefit from the opportunities that the internet brings, while rigorously safeguarding children from its risks and threats of harm. It is also important to note

that, everyone has a role to play in creating and maintaining a better online world for children.

Ladies Gentlemen,

In streamlining our efforts in responding to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, my department with the support of partners have developed the Standard Operating Procedures on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Kenya which we launch today. These SOPs detail the minimum standards guiding all stakeholders on steps to take when addressing the complex and evolving nature of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. I urge all stakeholders in

this field to utilize the SOPs for effective and efficient service delivery to our children.

As I conclude, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all our partners, both at the national and county level, for making this celebration a success. I assure you that my Department will support in this noble task.

Finally, I urge you all to join hands and make every day a safer and better internet day for our children

Thank You and God Bless You All