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

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 9 October 2024

57/6. Countering cyberbullying

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and all other relevant human rights treaties and instruments,

Reaffirming also that the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, survival and development, provide the framework for all actions concerning children,

Recalling the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including non-discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion in society, respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, individual autonomy and independence of persons with disabilities, gender equality and respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities,

Recalling also the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on protecting children from bullying, as well as other relevant resolutions adopted by the Assembly and the Human Rights Council,

Recalling further Human Rights Council resolution 51/10 of 6 October 2022, and welcoming the holding of the panel discussion on cyberbullying against children at the fifty-fourth session of the Council,

Welcoming the relevant work of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular on awareness-raising and respect for diversity, and taking note of the Committee's general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, in which it stressed the importance of implementing awareness-raising initiatives to address stigma and discrimination, in particular bullying in educational settings,

Recalling the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural



Organization Convention against Discrimination in Education and resolution 88 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference of the International Telecommunication Union, in which it noted the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition Action Framework,

Recalling also the proclamation of the International Day against Violence and Bullying at School, including Cyberbullying, by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its fortieth session, which is to be observed on the first Thursday of November every year,

Acknowledging international, regional and local relevant initiatives taken and efforts made to prevent and address cyberbullying, and welcoming the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children on the issue of countering cyberbullying,

Recognizing the need to foster a policy of zero tolerance of all forms of violence against persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, in the digital environment, in a manner consistent with States' obligations under international human rights law,

Recognizing also that bullying, including cyberbullying, can take both direct and indirect forms, from acts of physical, verbal, sexual and relational violence or aggression to social exclusion, including from peer to peer, which can inflict physical, psychological and social harm, and that, although rates differ from country to country, bullying, online or in person, has a negative impact on the fulfilment of human rights, including the rights of the child, and is among children's main concerns, affecting a high percentage of children and compromising their health, emotional well-being and academic work, and acknowledging the need to prevent and eliminate bullying among and of children,

Recognizing further that cyberbullying may be understood as an intentional act carried out by an individual or a group using electronic forms of contact against victims, which is typically carried out repeatedly and over time and is often characterized by a power differential,

Acknowledging that, while cyberbullying finds parallels with bullying offline, countering it requires new approaches, since it presents novel challenges, such as occurrence across a range of mediums and platforms, the potential for more rapid dissemination, a wider audience reach and dynamics of abuse that would not be possible in person,

Recognizing that cyberbullying can cause profound harm to victims, who may experience anxiety, fear, distress, confusion, anger, insecurity, lowered self-esteem, a strong sense of shame and even suicidal thoughts and that cyberbullying can be perpetrated at a greater magnitude, speed and pervasiveness than bullying offline,

Recognizing also that persons with disabilities may be subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence, including discrimination related to race, age, gender, disability, health status, descent, national or ethnic origin, migration status, religion, economic and social background or other status,

Noting with concern that persons with disabilities who are in vulnerable or marginalized situations, who face stigmatization, discrimination or exclusion, are disproportionately affected by bullying, both in person and online,

Recognizing that persons with disabilities are significantly more likely to experience cyberbullying than those without disabilities and that they face a disproportionate risk of hate speech, violence and abuse in digital environments, contributing to their exclusion and mistreatment,

Recognizing also that cyberbullying often includes a gender dimension and is associated with sexual and gender-based violence and stereotyping that negatively affects persons with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities,

Reaffirming the human right to privacy, according to which no one is to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, and the right to the protection of the law against such interference, and recognizing that the

exercise of the right to privacy is important for the realization of other human rights, including the right to freedom of expression and to hold opinions without interference and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and is one of the foundations of a democratic society,

Recognizing that the promotion and protection of, and respect for, the right to privacy are important for the prevention of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and sexual harassment, in particular against women, children and persons with disabilities, as well as any form of discrimination, which can occur online and includes cyberbullying and cyberstalking,

Recognizing also that persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, may be particularly exposed to online risks, including cyberbullying, and that there is a need to take steps to ensure that the digital environment, including safety information, protective strategies and services and forums relating to it, are accessible and safe, bearing in mind the importance of countering prejudice that might lead to overprotection or exclusion,

Recognizing further that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance have a deep negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights and therefore require a comprehensive response, both online and offline, which can contribute to the prevention and elimination of all forms of exploitation, violence, abuse and harassment, including in digital contexts, such as cyberbullying,

Stressing that countering cyberbullying should be based upon existing international legal obligations, including international human rights law, as well as relevant commitments, and should not encourage undue interference with an individual's human rights,

Mindful of the current lack of awareness of cyberbullying through the lens of disability and the importance of having relevant information in accessible formats, and reaffirming that efforts to counter cyberbullying against persons with disabilities must be focused on thoughtful, inclusive design and development and centred in the autonomy, choice and agency of persons with disabilities, including by implementing tailored, accessible resources and support services for them,

Recognizing that persons with certain forms of disability, in particular those with psychosocial or cognitive disabilities, may face further challenges in understanding appropriate online behaviour and interpreting the nuances of online communication and that, coupled with social stigma and taboos, this may reinforce broader trends of underreporting of cyberbullying among persons with and without disabilities,

Recognizing also the State's responsibility to protect persons with disabilities from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse, including the gender-based aspects thereof, and cyberbullying, and, to this end, to take all appropriate legislative administrative, social, educational and other measures,

Recalling that all business enterprises have a responsibility to respect human rights, both online and offline, including by implementing human rights due diligence, and that the obligation and the primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms lie with the State,

Acknowledging the distinct and important roles that family members, legal guardians, caregivers, support staff, schools, civil society, sports associations, communities, State institutions and traditional and non-traditional media can play in contributing to securing the protection of persons with disabilities from the risks associated with bullying, including cyberbullying, by promoting the online safety of persons with disabilities,

Recognizing the need to empower children, including children with disabilities, with knowledge and skills in the digital environment through the development of their digital literacy and skills, as well as those of their parents or legal guardians, including by empowering children to report and seek help in responding to online threats in adequate ways, as well as raising their awareness of the risks of the misuse of information and communications technology,

Underlining the need for digital, media and information literacy, as well as the need to address prevailing challenges to bridge digital divides, including through partnerships,

international cooperation and education, while striving to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to connect to and access the Internet in a safe, secure and meaningful way so as to enable their full cultural, economic, political and social participation in an inclusive information society,

Acknowledging that persons with disabilities are uniquely placed to offer effective solutions and responses to cyberbullying, and underlining that their participation and contributions, including their views and recommendations, therefore need to be at the centre of efforts to prevent and address cyberbullying and that their full, equal and meaningful participation is critical to a clear understanding of cyberbullying and its impact in order to address it effectively,

Recognizing the importance of prevention in ensuring safe online and information and communications technology environments for persons with disabilities, while protecting them against arbitrary or unlawful interference with their rights to privacy and freedom to seek, receive or impart information, their right to education, their right to take part in the conduct of public affairs and the freedoms of expression and of association, and recognizing also that prevention measures and approaches should include information and education on how to avoid, recognize and report instances of cyberbullying, taking into account the nuances of online communication, in forms that are responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities,

Recognizing also that preventive measures should involve key actors, including Governments, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, families, civil society, industry, especially technology enterprises and those related to social media, schools, academia, the competent authorities, including national independent monitoring mechanisms, relevant actors, community-based organizations and the general public,

Recognizing further that persons with disabilities exercising their right to education, including through the use of digital technologies, should not have their safety affected and should be protected from any violation or abuse of their right to privacy, and in this regard emphasizing that efforts to expand connectivity and digital learning and bridge the digital divides should give special regard to inclusion, the promotion of disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities, as well as the facilitation of peer support and mentoring and the provision of reasonable accommodation,

1. *Affirms* that human rights and fundamental freedoms must be protected, online and offline, with special regard for the rights of persons with disabilities;

2. *Acknowledges* the importance of ensuring appropriate safeguards and human oversight in the application of new and emerging digital technologies and of respecting and promoting human rights, including those of persons with disabilities, to guide relevant regulatory frameworks and legislation, and safeguards on the conception, design, use, development, further deployment and impact assessments of new and emerging digital technologies, while ensuring the meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including States, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and families, the private sector, in particular digital technology companies, academia and civil society organizations;

3. *Welcomes* the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on countering cyberbullying against persons with disabilities,¹ and invites all stakeholders to consider the findings and recommendations contained in the report and their implementation;

4. *Calls upon* States:

(a) To continue to take all appropriate measures to prevent and protect persons with disabilities from all forms of discrimination, exploitation, violence and abuse, including in digital contexts, in particular cyberbullying, by promptly responding to it in a manner that complies with international human rights law, including the rights to freedom of opinion and

¹ A/HRC/56/31.

expression, and to provide appropriate support to victims affected by and involved in cyberbullying;

(b) To establish well-trained and well-resourced bodies in charge of preventing, countering and addressing the adverse effects of cyberbullying, or strengthen such units if they already exist, and to provide them with adequate financial support and capacity-building and specialist training opportunities;

(c) To promote inclusive, comprehensive and quality education and education opportunities for persons with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities, without discrimination of any kind, to foster, inter alia, digital literacy and the technical skills required to protect their privacy effectively;

(d) To continue to promote and invest in education and training, including human rights education, as a long-term and lifelong process through which everyone learns equality, non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance, inclusion and respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring such respect in all societies, including in digital contexts;

(e) To expand, as appropriate, comprehensive training across social sectors on countering cyberbullying against persons with disabilities, including in workplaces, healthcare and law enforcement, as well as in schools and in care settings for children with disabilities;

(f) To generate and analyse statistical information and data disaggregated, where available at the national level, by gender, age, disability, race, socioeconomic status, national or ethnic origin and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, with regard to the problem of cyberbullying, as a basis upon which to elaborate and promote effective evidence-based public policies;

(g) To encourage and incentivize research on the impact of cyberbullying on persons with disabilities, the efficacy of interventions aimed at countering cyberbullying, the risks and impacts of cyberbullying faced by persons with disabilities and the intersectional risks and impacts;

(h) To integrate online protection into national policies to combat exploitation, violence and abuse and to adopt and strengthen, as appropriate, clear and comprehensive measures, including where relevant legislation, that are aimed at preventing and protecting persons with disabilities from cyberbullying;

(i) To support the provision of safe, child-, gender- and disability-sensitive counselling and reporting procedures and safeguards for the rights of affected persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, by considering, among other actions, the empowerment of a public authority to receive complaints regarding cases of cyberbullying and, where appropriate, to intercede with content hosts to request that the relevant material be promptly removed;

(j) To take specific actions to encourage and expand reporting of cyberbullying, including through effective education and training, and to ensure that reporting platforms and channels are accessible to all persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities;

(k) To encourage a clear and predictable legal and regulatory environment, which requires information and communications technology and other relevant industries to respect human rights, including those of persons with disabilities, by, among other actions, strengthening regulatory agencies' responsibility for the development of standards for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and, in partnership with relevant civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, providing guidance, as appropriate, to digital technology companies on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, including the specific challenges that they face in mitigating and as a result of cyberbullying;

(l) To involve and provide persons with disabilities with the opportunity to inclusively and meaningfully participate in the development of initiatives to prevent and address cyberbullying, including available support services and safe, accessible, age- and child-sensitive, confidential and independent counselling and reporting mechanisms;

(m) To assist persons with disabilities in promoting inclusive and responsible digital behaviour and to inform them of available mental and physical health-care services and procedures in place to support them, where they exist, while encouraging the making of such support services available and accessible, including by providing reasonable accommodation, as appropriate;

(n) To adopt and implement sustained, inclusive and accessible non-formal and formal education programmes, including by expanding inclusive digital literacy initiatives to support the responsible use of digital spaces and self-protection of personal data, to raise public awareness of strategies to prevent and respond to cyberbullying against persons with disabilities and to expand awareness of the tools and resources available to support those who experience or witness cyberbullying;

(o) To continue to share national experiences and best practices for preventing and tackling cyberbullying and addressing its adverse effects;

5. *Recognizes* that the responsibility to respect the rights of persons with disabilities also applies to private actors and business enterprises, in particular private actors in the Internet sector that provide or operate services across domestic jurisdictions, and encourages them:

(a) To adhere to the highest available international standards for safety-, privacy- and security-by-design;

(b) To promote accessibility and inclusivity, in particular for persons with disabilities;

(c) To put in place mechanisms and channels available for the reporting of cyberbullying that are accessible to all persons with disabilities, as well as appropriate operational grievance mechanisms;

(d) To meaningfully engage with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, including in the conduct of human rights due diligence, to understand their concerns around cyberbullying and the related barriers to their safe participation in digital spaces;

(e) To continue to take part in international multi-stakeholder efforts to raise awareness of and empower all persons with disabilities with regard to online risks, and to prevent and counter cyberbullying;

6. *Decides* to include the topic of countering cyberbullying against persons with disabilities in the context of its next annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities, to be held at its fifty-eighth session;

7. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a report, and make it available in an accessible and Easy Read format, on countering cyberbullying against older persons, identifying recent trends and challenges, as well as applicable human rights principles, safeguards and best practices, and to present the report to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-second session;

8. *Also requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, when preparing the above-mentioned report, to closely cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, including States, international and regional organizations, relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council, the treaty bodies, other relevant United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes, within their respective mandates, national human rights institutions, civil society, in particular older persons and their representative organizations, the private sector and academia;

9. *Requests* that the contributions to the report be submitted in an accessible format and that such stakeholder contributions and the report itself and an Easy Read of them be made available on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner, in an accessible format, prior to the presentation to the Human Rights Council;

10. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

46th meeting

9 October 2024

[Adopted without a vote.]
