



**Release of ChildFund Alliance Strategic Plan 2022-2025:  
*Working Together to Address Emerging Threats to Children's Safety***  
*Transcript of Safer Internet Day Program / 8 February 2022*  
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***Remarks by Simon Whyte, Chairman of the Board of Directors***

Greetings everyone and good day from New Zealand. As most of you know I am Simon Whyte, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ChildFund Alliance.

I am delighted to be joined by many of our Board members, CEOs, and colleagues from our member and field offices. Some of you are just starting your morning, while others have graciously stayed up late to be here, and for that I thank you.

It brings me great pleasure to speak with you on this Safer Internet Day to release ChildFund Alliance's new Strategic Plan: *Working Together to Address Emerging Threats to Children's Safety*. As many of you know, ChildFund Alliance members operate in 70 countries, reaching more than 23 million children and their families.

In fulfillment of our last strategic plan for years 2016-2021, our members worked tirelessly to end violence against children; provide expertise in emergencies and disasters; and elevate the voices of children and youth to create lasting change.

Today, as we release our new four-year strategic plan for years 2022-2025, we reaffirm our commitment to leverage our collective strength to ensure children are guaranteed their rights and that they can live a life free from violence and poverty.

During today's program, we are going to hear how we intend to drive measurable change for children, and specifically, how we envision addressing emerging threats to children's safety. We'll hear from our ChildFund Secretariat colleagues, and also from two special guest speakers—Ernie Allen and Philip Jaffé—who will share their insights and concerns with us today.

As you'll hear momentarily, new and emerging threats to children are alarmingly on the rise and there is much work to be done if we are to minimize the negative impacts of these threats to children's safety.

It is why I encourage each and every one of us to stay true to our mission and do our part to ensure that the important work we are doing continues.

We should all be proud of our efforts to make the world safer for children. Your commitment and your passion make it possible to achieve our vision for a world in which all children enjoy their rights and achieve their full potential.

By working together as one—and working together with children—we can continue to create sustainable solutions that protect and advance their rights and well-being now and long into the future.

***Remarks by Lisa MacSpadden, Strategic Communications Advisor***

Thank you Simon. It's great to have you open our programming for the release of our new strategic plan in conjunction with Safer Internet Day.

For those of you who haven't met me previously, I am Lisa MacSpadden, the Alliance's Strategic Communications Advisor. I will be facilitating today's webinar.

First, I wish to echo Simon's welcome to all of you who are joining us today—be it your morning, afternoon or evening. For our colleagues who couldn't be here, we are recording today's program and we will be sure to share a link with all of our members so those who wish to watch afterwards, can easily do so.

We do have a full hour of programming to share with you. From ChildFund, we will hear from the Alliance's Secretary General and from our Advocacy & Policy Advisor. In addition, we will hear from one of our colleagues from ChildFund Australia, about the Swipe Safe program.

We also are honored to be joined by two guest speakers—Ernie Allen, Chair of We Protect Global Alliance who is an international expert on the digital economy and the dark web. Mr. Allen cofounded the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children where he served for nearly 30 years, first as Chairman and then as President and CEO.

We also are joined by Philip Jaffé, Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. A long-time advocate of children's rights and safety, he serves as the Director of the Centre for Children's Rights Studies at the University of Geneva.

We are hopeful, if time permits at the end, that we will be able to take questions during a question and answer session. In preparation for this, if you do have a question along the way, please feel free to share it in the Q & A panel within your Zoom platform.

Without further ado, I'd like to introduce our first speaker, Secretary General Meg Gardinier who joins us with an overview of our new strategic plan, *Working Together to Address Emerging Threats to Children's Safety*.

## ***Remarks by Meg Gardinier, Secretary General***

Thank you Lisa and thank you everyone for joining us today. We are very excited by this opportunity to share a lot of important updates with you, and so I am going to open with a refresher about ChildFund Alliance.

As you know, ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child focused development and humanitarian organizations working in 70 countries around the world. We provide nutrition, health care, education and life skills to nearly 23 million children and families. Established in 2002 as a global force for children, the Alliance builds on 80 years of member experiences to improve the lives of children, families and communities.

We are pleased today to release our new Strategic Plan for the period 2022-205. It is titled: Working Together to Address Emerging Threats to Children's Safety. The Board of Directors adopted this Strategic Plan in June 2021 after a two consultation process with the Board, the CEO Forum, Alliance Committees, our Secretariat and Country Directors.

We are particularly grateful to the three working groups led by our Alliance members who through their efforts helped define recommendations for our three Strategic Priorities: These groups are the Program Choices Working Group; Identity and Value Proposition Working Group and the Capacity Working Group.

There are three key strategic priorities in the four-year plan

- The first Strategic Priority is Protecting Children from Emerging Threats
- The second Strategic Priority is Working Together as One
- The third Strategic Priority is Building Partnerships for Sustainable Impact and Growth.

For the purposes of today, I will focus on strategic priority one Protecting Children from Emerging Threats. We recognize that there are multiple emerging threats negatively impacting the lives of children, their families and communities.

These range from extreme climate - related events, violent conflicts, global health emergencies, and historic levels of global migration. In addition to this, we are seeing the emergence of the digital environment. Shortly, we will hear from our Advocacy and Policy Advisor Ryan DeSouza about how we plan to initially tackle this increasing threat. In particular Ryan will walk us through the Campaign highlights.

I wish to point out that there are four thematic areas members can ascribe to. One: Advocacy. Two: Programmatic. Three: Branding and Four: Fundraising. We will hear more about Campaign Advocacy today but you will be kept posted on engagement in other areas. Now I would like to review our second and third strategic priority.

Our second strategic priority is working together as one. Our voice and actions are amplified when we stand united. Recognizing this, our CEOs and Board identified eight guiding principles that inspire us, keep us aligned, and guide our collective decision making.

Our third strategic priority is building partnerships for sustainable impact and growth. This priority reflects our conviction that strong partnerships and sound financial health are essential to achieving our mission. Mobilizing more resources through multi-member collaboration to serve more children and their families is the central focus of our new plan and the exclusive focus of strategic priority three.

As I mentioned with priority one; our plan is to tackle emerging threats to children, one of which is the negative impact to children of the digital environment. It is now my pleasure to introduce Ernie Allen. He will give us an in-depth look into this pressing issue based on decades of experience.

It was my pleasure to be introduced to Ernie shortly after I joined ChildFund. I recently reached out to him after we landed on this campaign topic and he graciously agreed to join us today. Ernie a warm welcome and over to you.

#### ***Remarks by Ernie Allen, Chair of We Protect Global Alliance***

Thank you Meg. It's an honor to be with you. Congratulations to you, to Simon, and to the whole international ChildFund Alliance network. You are doing extraordinary things.

I am particularly pleased to be with you today as you launch your new strategic plan, *Working Together to Address Emerging Threats to Children's Safety*. Congratulations on your vision and your leadership. What you are doing is timely and incredibly important.

I speak to you today as Chair of the WeProtect Global Alliance: an alliance of 98 countries; 53 technology companies; 61 civil society organizations; and 9 international bodies, including INTERPOL, UNICEF, the European Union, the African Union and others.

In 2014 at the first WeProtect Summit, UK Prime Minister David Cameron said, "the online exploitation of children is happening on an almost industrial scale. It is a major international crime of our age."

Five years later, the New York Times wrote, "Twenty years ago, online images were a problem; 10 years ago, an epidemic. Now, the crisis is at a breaking point." That is my message to you today. The crisis is at a breaking point.

As I speak to leaders around the world, I continue to hear, "this might be a problem somewhere else, but it isn't a problem here." Are they right? How serious is the problem globally?

In October 2021 we released our latest [Global Threat Assessment](#), concluding that the problem is getting worse. Some quick anecdotal examples:

- In my 28 years at the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, we never handled as many as 1 million reports in any year. I stepped down in 2012. In 2020 NCMEC handled 21.7 million reports of online child sexual abuse material involving 65 million images and videos;
- INHOPE, the global network of internet hotlines, reported that 89% of its reports of child sexual abuse material involved children between 3 and 13;
- UNICEF estimates that 1 in 3 internet users is a child.
- In 2018 INTERPOL estimated that 1.8 million men with sexual interest in children were newly online. That number has grown during the pandemic.

How is this possible? Prior to the internet, someone with sexual interest in children felt isolated, aberrant, and alone. Today he is part of a global community. He can share images, fantasies, techniques, and even real children with people just like him all over the world. And he can do it all with virtual anonymity.

But let me dig a little deeper. As part of our Global Threat Assessment, we asked Economist Impact, the research arm of the Economist news magazine, to conduct a global survey of young adults regarding their online experiences as children. They interviewed 5,000 18 – 20 year olds in 54 countries in order to measure how many had experienced online sexual harm as children.

We looked at various types of sexual harm online, including being sent sexually explicit content by an adult, having sexually explicit images of themselves shared online without their consent; being asked by an adult to do something sexually explicit online, and more.

The results were stunning. 54% were victims during their childhood. The victimization rate for girls was higher than boys. Minorities were at particular risk. 65% of LGBT+; 59% of transgender/non-binary; 58% of ethnic and racial minorities; and 57% of disabled youth.

But perhaps the most important finding was that online child sexual exploitation was a problem in every region of the world. The highest victimization rate occurred in the US and Canada (71%); followed by Australia and New Zealand (67%); and Western Europe (65%).

But no region was immune. There was a 59% victimization rate in Central America; 57% in Southern Africa; and 52% in Southeast Asia. The lowest recorded rate was 44% occurring in three regions: the Middle East and North Africa; Eastern Europe; and East Asia.

To put this in context, in no region was the victimization rate lower than 44%. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that this crisis has already impacted at least half of the world's children.

Particularly disturbing is that most of these interactions happen in private. 68% of the victims used private messaging services. Another troubling finding was the age at which victimization began. The average age of first victimization was 12. There is a clear trend to younger and younger kids.

But there is also progress. As part of our Threat Assessment, the Technology Coalition, an association of major tech companies, surveyed 32 companies: 87% reported using image hash-matching tools to detect, report and remove child sexual abuse material. Yet, just 37% are using tools to detect online grooming, a problem that has doubled during the pandemic.

Thus, much of this activity still goes undetected. Even with our progress, most online sexual abuse and exploitation of children remains, under-recognized, under-appreciated and under-reported.

In conclusion, while we are proud of the progress, there is much more to do. Our Global Threat Assessment makes it clear that we are in a period of crisis regarding the online sexual exploitation of children and that this problem is touching every part of the world.

Technology has fundamentally altered the way those with sexual interest in children access them and prey upon them. But this crisis is not yet a priority on global policy agendas. Your campaign can help us change that.

***Remarks by moderator, Lisa MacSpadden, Strategic Communications Advisor***

Ernie, thank you. Your insights really drive home that what our members are committing to is both timely and urgent.

And the statistics you shared serve as a powerful reminder that this threat is very real and it will cause much greater harm to children if left unaddressed. So thank you for speaking with us today about the alarming rise in risks to children online.

I would like to now introduce our second guest speaker—Philip Jaffé, Vice Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and founding director of the Centre for Children’s Rights Studies at the University of Geneva.

Philip’s academic and professional activities have focused on the protection of children, in particular in the area of sexual abuse. In his role at the UN, he coordinated the completion of General Comment 25 on Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment.

Philip, I realize it is quite late your time, so thank you ever so kindly for speaking with us and sharing your experience on this issue—in particular—on the rapidly moving nature of this threat.

## **Remarks by Philip Jaffé, Vice Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

Thank you very much Lisa for that introduction. Late night greetings from Geneva Switzerland where the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child is in session. Many thanks for the invitation to speak at your event, and in particular I appreciate the opportunity to share with you some views as a representative of the body that is the beating heart of children's rights.

But first let me commend you for all the energy and the neurons that you are dedicating to this strategic plan to reduce online threats to children's safety. Mark my words, I am certain you will make a difference and I support full steam ahead with your plan. However, let me inject of dose of realism... it will be very difficult to assess the reduction of a problem that is growing exponentially day by day and that has not yet reared all of its many ugly heads.

Let's face it, in a fast-changing digital ecosystem, the nature of risk is continually evolving, sometimes exposing children to emerging risks well before adults know how to mitigate them.

To draw a parallel, like with fact we are in the midst of a climate crisis and the planet is burning, I believe your best hope, our best hope is to mitigate the extent and the impact of online threats. So we have a really huge series of online threats some of them still unknown, we must remain realistic, we should certainly not panic and we must look for comprehensive multi-pronged solutions that address a very complex problem.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has had its sights on the digital universe for quite a few years and has even held a global Day of general discussion on the topic back in 2014. And since then we have consistently called on governments to scale up their efforts to regulate the digital environment and, going one step further, the Committee presented in 2021 its so-called [General Comment on Children's Rights in relation to the digital environment](#).

Most of you are probably not very familiar with general comments, but let me just state that governments and specialized civil society pay attention to these documents because they serve as authoritative legal and human rights guidance for governmental policy in upholding children's rights in every corner of the earth. They also help back up the advocacy and action of civil society.

Let me share with you some takeaways from this most recent General comment. Firstly, it establishes that children's rights apply in the digital world. It may seem obvious to you, but it needed to be affirmed unambiguously. And the core principles of children's rights also apply. The obligation to ensure the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions concerning the child certainly poses a regulatory challenge in the digital age, and requires a nuanced and context-dependent balance between rights to protection and civil rights and freedoms.

This might best be achieved through a mix of regulation of the online industry, provision of appropriate protection, interpretation of confidentiality and privacy rules, and emergence of new social norms and institutional practices.

The Committee considers that quote “States parties should ensure that, in all actions regarding the provision, regulation, design, management and use of the digital environment, the best interests of every child is a primary consideration.” (Paragraph 12.)

Now if anyone thinks it will be easy to generate stricter regulations for the online industry, think again, because this is an industry that adapts better than any governmental or intergovernmental entities. It can operate from countries where there are no regulations or where regulations are not enforced. It can harness algorithms that are well kept industry secrets, n’est-ce pas Facebook, algorithms that will steer children into discovering harmful practices that can be quite horrific such as encouraging self-harm or glorifying extreme dieting.

Marketing has moved into neuromarketing. Next Sunday, Switzerland is voting on a new law prohibiting any form of marketing for tobacco products aimed at children. The problem is that it only affects traditional marketing. The online industry has long ago moved into social media and harnessed the power of influencers that ensnare and capture children at young ages, anchoring them, I would say tenderizing them for future tobacco consumption. These harmful commercial practices are mostly unaddressed.

As my wonderful colleague Sonia Livingstone puts it, we have moved from an online environment in which the child was invisible to a digital universe in which the child is hypervisible. Invisible because in the old days if a child wandered into a sex shop he or she would be probably be identified as a child and subject to refoulement. But in the digital universe it is really difficult to know who is a child and who is not and most children are unsupervised in their online activities which makes them vulnerable and easy prey.

Now we are moving into a hypervisible digital environment, Livingstone refers to a digital panopticon, where datification threatens autonomy, evolving capacity and privacy... also for children. We need balance.

In the mid 1990’s I co-founded an NGO called [Action Innocence](#), which has become a significant player in the French-speaking world to educate children, parents and school authorities on the dangers and measures we could take to protect children’s sexual innocence from online threats.

It was a good idea but awareness raising and education is way passé. We must move into regulation through regulatory legislation, the creation of enforcement agencies and collaboration with the digital industry.

But just as this is beginning to take shape, the beast is moving into a new universe... the Metaverse... no one know exactly where this will bring us... but the next generation may live most of its waking hours in the digital world, in some form of constant virtual reality.

We need to also focus on the risks for children in this new world. Many thanks for your attention.

***Remarks by moderator, Lisa MacSpadden, Strategic Communications Advisor***

Thank you Philip. We appreciate your remarks, and the work you are doing on the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Centre for Children’s Rights Studies.

I think in particular the framing you shared from your colleague Sonia Livingstone, speaks volumes of the dangers children are facing today in the digital environment.

To go from an environment where children were invisible, to one where they are now hyper-visible most certainly puts this threat into perspective.

So how might ChildFund Alliance members address this increasing threat to children and young people? That is a question for which I will turn to my colleague Ryan De Souza. He joins us to talk about our plans to undertake a campaign focused on protecting children from the emerging threats of an increasingly online world.

***Remarks by Ryan DeSouza, Advocacy & Policy Advisor***

Thank you Lisa. Good afternoon and thank you for having me. My name is Ryan De Souza and I am the Advocacy and Policy Advisor here at ChildFund Alliance. Please allow me to take a few moments to thank Ernie and Philip for their timely and insightful addresses and inform you all about our online safety campaign.

Like Meg touched on earlier, ChildFund’s new strategic plan’s first priority is to protect children from emerging threats. To do this, we agreed to undertake two campaigns to end violence against children with the first being on online safety. We chose online safety because of the diverse risks children face online, risks that have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ernie highlighted some very revealing statistics in his address so I won’t go into those in detail. Instead, what I will ask, is that we all take a moment and have a good look at this map. It really illustrates both he and Philip’s key takeaways; this is a global problem, everyone, regardless of where you’re located, is affected.

When I joined the Alliance and was briefed about the campaign I saw an immense opportunity. ChildFund has extensive capacity and resources when it comes to child protection. At the Secretariat, we’ve started identifying the ways we can address online safety. We’ve built a core team and started engaging our members, our committees, and soon our country offices, we’re using this expertise to build on our existing programming and advocacy efforts.

We’re also leveraging our existing collaborations such as our participation in child focused agency groups like Joining Forces and we’ve also begun creating new partnerships with those committed to ending violence against children.

I'll give you one highlight: Our discussions with Ernie, Iain and the rest of the WeProtect Global Alliance has resulted in us joining the Alliance and being able to work with the other members to transform the global response to online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

We also want to address online safety by raising awareness of the issue by focusing on the areas of prevention, protection, and participation. These three areas form core pillars of our work, we are hoping that we will be able to lend our voice and contribute to the prevention of online abuse material, protect the rights of children, and have them participate in this space.

Finally, by mobilizing key stakeholders ranging from the public to private sector we will be able to help children reach their full potential. As such, we have identified our purpose. We know the desired outcomes we want to see in this campaign.

**Outcome 1:** being strengthening laws and policies to protect children from online child sexual abuse and exploitation. What this really speaks to is child protection. We aim to protect children and their digital rights by assessing and identifying whether there are any gaps that presently exist in global and national legislation. Where laws do exist, we aim to address weaknesses in their implementation and enforcement and really build on advances like General Comment 25 which Philip touched on earlier, and the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) updated Guidelines on Child Online Protection. We are also examining and lending support to upcoming legislation and we are using all the information and data we have been finding to advance our activities. One such outcome 1 deliverable is our Global Pledge. Which I'll also touch on later.

**Outcome 2:** really revolves around child participation and ensuring children are more effective digital citizens and are equipped to participate in online civic engagement safely. It is impossible to encourage child participation in the digital space without empowering their digital citizenship. What this means is equipping children with a full portfolio of skills and knowledge to help them avoid online risks, maximize online opportunities, and exercise their rights in the online world. Some of our members are already engaged in these outcome 2 activities, one of which is Swipe Safe, also on our agenda today.

When we started this campaign, we thought to ourselves, well what are doing in this space and how best can we contribute. To help us identify our capacity we knew we had to figure out whether our members were already involved in online safety programs. And that brought about the online safety mapping exercise. The objective of the mapping was to identify existing and planned programs related to the campaign and will help us develop connections between the campaign and program work of our members.

I know that the mapping has been shared with some of ChildFund committees, and we are working on sharing with everyone. But here's what we've learnt:

- 60% of our members have online safety programs.
- 80% of those programs are in the global south.

- And there are also countries where multiple members are engaged for example, Bangladesh, Bolivia and the Philippines. Also, 75% of all programs focused on online safety education and awareness.

But here's what else we've learnt, there are over 65 online safety programs. The mapping also identified innovative ways our members are collaborating on child online safety, such as the multi-country Global Partnership to End Violence against Children Online Safe application led by Child Fund Australia and involving Child Fund Korea, ChildFund New Zealand, Barnfonden, and Educo.

Additionally, we are happy to see that Educo, We World, Child Fund Germany and ChildFund Australia are working together on the EU Call for Proposal submission on online safety and they are reflecting on adapting the Swipe Safe methodology to new contexts.

While we continued our internal assessment on online safety, we started examining global legislation to identify those areas where ChildFund can add value. I mentioned some of them before – GC 25, the ITU COP Guidelines and more. What we discovered was that there were several areas that came up repeatedly and they formed the focus of governments when signing these treaties, we started calling them topline priorities.

One is that children need to be protected from abuse and exploitation, two is that they had a right to information and should be able to participate in the digital environment, three is that they could not participate if they did not have access to the internet and technology, and four is that they had a right to privacy.

These priorities cover both of our intended campaign outcomes and the activities we engage in, whether it's the global pledge, other campaign asks, and all other work, will be shaped by these bullets before you.

Now, when focusing on this topic, we acknowledge that there are several operators in this online safety space. And we don't want to do what everyone else is doing. Rather, we want to collaborate and in so doing identify our niche. We want to strengthen our name and work together but also identify opportunities where ChildFund can take a lead role.

In an information gathering exercise, we've started speaking with civil society, multilateral organizations, and UN missions. Some of the stakeholders we've already engaged with include WeProtect, the Global Partnership to End Violence, ECPAT, and Together for Girls. Here's what we've learnt:

Privacy and encryption are recurring themes. Children's right to privacy have been violated time and time again. I'll give you an example, terms and conditions of signing up for apps are things that we as adults barely read and almost always contain information that your data will be shared across other apps, third parties, and more. If we barely read this imagine how children react. These terms and conditions need to be rewritten in a more child-friendly way.

In addition, privacy should not come at the expense of protecting the rights of children. When apps like WhatsApp encrypts its data and focuses more on the privacy component, it serves as a tool for offenders to share messages more easily and makes it more difficult for law enforcement to access this data. **Data privacy should not come at the expense of child protection.**

Two, prevention is really not being adequately addressed. Much (but not all) of the work on online safety are reactions to child sexual exploitation and abuse. For example, we may focus on stronger law enforcement, removing statutes of limitations on prosecuting offenders, or strengthening and providing counseling and grief support services. These are all notable and valid, but we should also be paying attention to preventing child sexual exploitation and abuse at its root, so that it is harder for offenders to exploit children. Work is underway, but it needs more support.

Three, when it comes to digital literacy and digital citizenship, we found a direct correlation between children having low levels of digital literacy becoming more susceptible to abuse, and we need to avert this trend. Digital literacy means the ability to use technology competently, interpret and understand digital content and assess its credibility. Digital citizenship means that children appreciate their responsibility for their content as well as their actions when using the internet, cell phones, and other digital media.

Four, our commitment to elevate the voices of children is recognized externally as a very important element in our mission and to those who share our mission of ending violence against children. We have to continue our work in representing children and we are presently in discussion to identify what our child engagement efforts will look like in relation to this campaign.

As we started charting our path, we began identifying activities that would become key elements of our campaign. Two of them are our global pledge and policy asks. The global pledge is intended to be a pledge focused on children's rights, including their safety, meaningful access to digital technology, and their right to privacy. We want this pledge to be endorsed by champion countries who are leaders in the digital environment, having already made commitments through national laws, UN or similar international documents.

Presently, we have created a draft version of the pledge within the campaign core team which has been shared with our ChildFund committees for input. With that feedback, the core team will examine the pledge and create an updated version, which we hope to share with UN Member States for their comments, with the hope that when our campaign officially launches, we will be able have initial signatories to our Pledge at that launch event.

We also hope to use this pledge to help inform our policy asks, which would be those specific asks not in the global pledge. The reason for this is that we recognize countries will not sign onto a document that they interpret as controversial, or a non-starter. As such, our policy asks will include those specifics not included in the pledge for which we want to see change. To be even more specific, while the global pledge is intended for governments at the UN or global level, our policy asks are directed towards other forms of government such as local government, UN agencies, the private sector, and other civil society organizations.

To date, we are developing these asks with the help of the Advocacy Task Force and it is the hope that these asks can be made public at our launch event as well.

The policy asks which we're forming now will also help to influence the guidance we'll be forming on advocacy at the national level. In addition to working with the core team and ChildFund committees, we are going to work with you, members and countries offices, and tailor our advocacy and engagement to your operating environment. We'll certainly be reaching out to your offices to connect, engage, and collaborate on this campaign.

And like I mentioned earlier, we are developing options with the core team about the most practical way to engage with children on this campaign.

The campaign will launch in May 2022, timed to coincide with our CEO Forum and Board Meeting. At that event, we aim to launch our global pledge, publish these policy asks, highlight our ChildFund Online Safety Programs much like Swipe Safe today, as well as host a panel forum with representatives from the business community (ideally in tech), UN agencies, government, civil society, and child and youth advocates.

Let me take this moment to remind everyone that this will be a multiyear campaign and our activities will continue well after May. So let me end by repeating that I will be reaching out to you about this campaign, and exploring options for collaboration. For now, let me turn it back to Lisa who will take over the next segment of our agenda. Thank you, and stay tuned.

***Remarks by moderator, Lisa MacSpadden, Strategic Communications Advisor***

Ryan, thank you for walking us through our early plans for the first campaign of our new strategic plan. When developing our plan, Alliance members committed to supporting new resources, as well as to strengthening existing programs—with the goal of measurably contributing to the reduction of emerging threats to children online.

As we've heard from all of our speakers today, while the worldwide web brings new opportunities for learning and mobilizing—it also introduces significant threats to their safety and well-being.

In developing countries, these risks are amplified due to a lack of resources, education frameworks, and governance systems.

This is true in Vietnam for example, where internet capacity is now at more than 70 percent. In response to the increased connectivity in Vietnam, ChildFund Australia in 2017 launched Swipe Safe to help prevent the online abuse and exploitation of children.

For more on this important ChildFund program, we'd like to share a short video narrated by Rebekah Kofoed, ChildFund Australia's Senior Child Protection Advisor. Let's have a listen.

--[ChildFund Swipe Safe Video](#)--

***Closing remarks by Meg Gardinier, Secretary General***

I realize that there are several questions in the Q & A chat room that we didn't have a chance to get to, but we will respond to all questions we didn't get to today.

Many compelling and alarming insights have been shared with us today and it makes it clear that the Alliance is correct to reassert our commitment to EVAC, and an important part of this work will be tackling emerging threats. We know from what speakers have shared with us that the online digital environment can pose serious harms to children if left unaddressed.

As Ernie explained, the average first age of victimization is 12 but as he noted it can and does happen at a much younger age. As Ernie and Ryan said, we need to pay attention in particular to the Global South where there is a rising incidence of online exploitation and we need to pay attention to this.

Philip took us in a very interesting direction, one we hadn't thought of before.....how do we mitigate these risks to children before we know and understand them ourselves?

Generating stricter regulations for the online industry will be an enormous task because it is an industry that gets ahead of any and all governmental entities. Indeed, it is always going to be a challenge to get the support of the government entities too, knowing that industry is a step or multiple steps ahead of us.

All of this will require an accelerated response by our sector. We want to say on behalf of the Secretariat, that we are very proud to be part of a global organization with such devoted and committed colleagues. We recognize many of our members are taking action on Safer Internet Day. For example, earlier this afternoon our member ChildFund International presented at a symposium in Washington, DC on Digital Harms, convened by the U.S. Government. ChildFund Australia and ChildFund Korea also engaged in Safer Internet Day programs, like many others.

Thanks to all of you for giving your time today. As Simon, our Board Chair noted...it's the wee hours for some, late night for others. We appreciate the work you are doing, the time you took to join us, and we look forward to working together to tackle these emerging threats to children's safety.

This is just the beginning, so stay tuned as there is a lot more to come when we have our launch in May. And many thanks to Ernie and Philip for helping us understand how serious this issue is, for laying out the research and expertise you've undertaken so well, so that we can begin to grasp it. And to all of our 130 participants, thanks everyone and take care.