



52nd session of the Human Rights Council

**Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child
The rights of the child and the digital environment**

Afternoon Panel - How legal and policy frameworks for upholding children's rights in the digital environment can be strengthened

Benelux intervention

10 March 2023

Thank you, Mr President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the three Benelux countries, Belgium, the Netherlands and my own country, Luxembourg.

We welcome the participation of Mariana, Kidus, Nidhi and all other children who spoke today. Children have an inalienable right to be heard. In order to promote and protect children's rights and act in their best interest, this Council needs to give them the opportunity to express their views and expectations in a meaningful way, whenever possible.

Thanks to efforts to bridge the digital gap, more and more children use digital technologies during their daily lives to learn, socialise, and play, all over the world. While tech presents many opportunities, children are also more at risk of having their rights violated or abused. If we want to protect children online, we have to make sure that legal, policy, and technological frameworks uphold their rights and effectively protect them against both recognised and emerging risks of all forms of violence and harassment in the digital environment.

States have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of every child, also in the digital environment. The Benelux countries call on all states to ensure that national policies relating to children's rights specifically address the digital environment and put in place measures that protect children from various risks such as cyber-bullying or technology-facilitated and online child sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes investigating online



crimes and providing remedy and support for children who are victims. A particular responsibility also falls to private companies in the tech sector, in particular social media platforms, which should always place children's rights ahead of profits.

The Benelux countries would like to ask the panellists what their recommendations are to make sure children are heard both by governments and by private companies when it comes to protecting their rights in the digital sphere.

Thank you.