ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITAITION AND ABUSE (OCSEA)

AFRICA UNION INITIATIVE ON:
Strengthening Regional and National Capacity and Action against Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Africa

Strategy and Plan of Action 2020 – 2025

1   Introduction

The African Union's vision is that of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. Agenda 2063, officially adopted by the AU Assembly in 2015, provides a collective vision and roadmap to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny. The vision recognizes that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples. In Aspirations 6 emphasis is on *'creating opportunities for Africa's youth for self-realisation, access to health, education and jobs; ensuring **safety** and **security** for Africa's children, and providing for early childhood development*.'[1]

The Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) has the basic principles as The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) under article 34 and 36 which require States to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse as defined in its principles on the status of children[2]. Article 27 of the ACRWC protects children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. As of June 2019, the ACRWC has been ratified or acceded to by 49 African Union Member States[3].

Under Article 27 ACRWC not only requires States Parties to undertake to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, but, in particular, to take measures to prevent the inducement, coercion or encouragement of a child to engage in any sexual activity, the use of children in prostitution or other sexual practices including pornographic activities, performances and materials.

Article 15 calls for the protection of children from all forms of economic exploitation and from performing "any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development" and commits States Parties to "take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure the full implementation of this Article which covers both the formal and informal sectors of employment and having regard to the relevant provisions of the International Labour Organization's instruments relating to children". Furthermore, article 16 obliges States Parties to "take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while in the care of the child".

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[1] https://au.int/en/agenda2063/aspirations
[2] African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-rights-and-welfare-child
[3] African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). https://www.endcorporalpunishment.org

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) draws its mandate from Articles 32-46 of the ACRWC with the main goal of making Africa a continent that is fit for children by protecting and respecting their rights. Article 42 of the African Children's Charter mandates the Committee with functions such as promoting and protecting children's rights and in particular, collect and document information, commission inter-disciplinary assessment of situations on African problems on the rights and welfare of the child. As one of only three human rights treaty bodies serving the continent, the work of the ACERWC to promote and safeguard the rights of children takes on special significance. The ACERWC is mandated to monitor the implementation of the Charter and ensure protection of children's rights by examining reports submitted by State Parties[4].

It is upon the above backdrop that this five year (2021-2025) continental plan of action aims to put in place a comprehensive and coordinated effort and to mutually reinforce a set of activities to galvanize member states, key stakeholders and partners to accelerate actions in addressing Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) including prevention, protection and prosecution.

OCSEA refers to crimes committed by offenders who are using Information Communications Technology (ICT) and/or the Internet to facilitate the sexual abuse of children. OCSEA is an emerging child protection issue in Africa and State Parties to the ACRWC have an obligation to protect children from it.

The African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (AU Cyber Convention) 2014
The AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (also known as the Malabo Convention) imposes obligations on Member States to establish legal policy and regulatory measures to promote cybersecurity governance as well as control cybercrime[5]. Unfortunately, Member States are slow to ratify this Convention.

The Convention criminalizes producing, registering, offering, manufacturing, making available, disseminating or transmitting, procuring, importing or exporting and possessing 'child pornography'. The definition of 'child pornography' is inclusive of digitally/computer generated CSAM as defined in the Terminology Guidelines.

Article 29 (3) (1) Child Pornography:
(a) Produce, register, offer, manufacture, make available, disseminate and transmit;
(b) Procure for oneself or for another person, import or have imported, and export or have exported;

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[4] African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). https://www.endcorporalpunishment.org
[5] Uchenna Jerome Orji (2018). The African Union Convention on Cybersecurity: A Regional Response towards Cyber Stability? Accessed online: https//www.researchgate.net/publication/32798684.

(c) Possess an image or representation of child pornography in a computer system or on a computer data storage platform;

(d) Facilitate or provide access to images, documents, sound or representation of a pornographic nature to a minor[6].

There are two Council of Europe Conventions which are open for signature by both, member and non-member States. These States have participated in its elaboration and for accession by other non-member States:

- The Europe Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention)
- The Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuses (Lanzarote Convention)[7].

2.0 Background and context

This strategic plan and Plan of Action (PoA) is based on a situation analysis and identification of priority areas for action after The AUC two year (April 2018 –March 2020) OCSEA project implementation. The aim of the project was to Strengthen Regional and National Capacity and Action against OCSEA in Africa. The Action Plan has been prepared bearing in mind the framework of Agenda 2063, which attempts to develop a 50-year vision for Africa and the African Union Human Rights Strategy published in 2011.

Internet connectivity and usage has continued to expand rapidly in Africa and though this has brought great benefits to the region, it has also exposed children to the risk of OCSEA. Due in part to restricted Internet connectivity until recently in many countries, there has been a false perception that OCSE is not a major problem for the African region. The understanding and awareness of OCSE as well as the capabilities to tackle it have remained very limited among African Union (AU) Member States. There is also a notable lack of scientific evidence documenting OCSEA's actual prevalence and scope in Africa.

Despite the scope and actual prevalence of OCSEA being unknown in Africa, there is evidence that proves that Africa as a region is not exempt from this threat. Available research suggests that more and more African children and adolescents are now exposed to online threats and vulnerabilities due to expanded access to new information and communication technologies, whether at home, school or cyber-cafes,

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[6] AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.
https://au.int/en/search/node/The%20African%20Union%20Convention%20on%20Cyber%20Security%20and%20Personal%20Data%20Protection%20%28AU%20Cyber%20Convention%29%202014
[7] Council of Europe - Convention on Cybercrime https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/185

where few controls or protection methods are not in place[8].   In recognition for the need of cyber security and cybercrime, AU Convention on Cyber Security and Data Protection (Malabo Convention, June,2014) raised awareness on the importance of political, legislative and diplomatic efforts, cooperation and commitment necessary in tackling the inherent cross-border nature of cyber-attacks and cybercrime. The Malabo Convention imposes obligations on Member States to establish legal policy and regulatory measures to promote cybersecurity governance as well as control cybercrime.   So far only eleven and five Member States have signed and ratified respectively on it and more advocacy is required to get this political commitment.

A mapping research done by OCSEA project and based on Model National Response (MNR) revealed that of the six pillars only Kenya and South Africa had achieved the standards on Policy & Governance and Criminal Justice. Most member States had partially or not achieved on the four pillars (Victim, Industry, Societal, media and Communication). It's also worthwhile noting that not all the accomplishments translate to action on the ground mainly due to resource constraint. OCSEA being a new concept, will require specialized training and targeted resource allocation to effectively tackle the crime.

Consequently, a perfect storm brews over Africa if timely measures to address it are not put in place. A combination of factors including: the rapidly increasing connectivity[9], limited regulation, COVID-19, little awareness, and poverty together hold the potential for an explosive growth in OCSEA in the coming years. Also, successes that have been achieved in fighting OCSEA in some other continents might induce facilitators and perpetrators to shift to continents with weaker regulations such as Africa knowing that there is less risk of detection, arrest, and punishment. The Commission of the African Union and its Member Stares can therefore not afford to ignore this emerging form of sexual exploitation, and need to put in place timely measures to tackle it.   Therefore, the AU Member States and AU organs such as the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the AU Commission, Pan African Parliament and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child cannot afford to ignore this emerging form of sexual exploitation, and need to put in place timely measures to tackle it.

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[8] http://digitalinclusionnewslog.itu.int/2018/11/02/innovation-fund-for-rural-connectivity-seeks-to-increase-access-to-icts-in-ghana-and-uganda/

[9] It is foreseen that between 2016 and 2021, the Middle East and Africa will have the strongest mobile data traffic growth of any region, and the 4G fiber cab being installed throughout Africa will increase internet speed and bring mobile internet to many more remote areas.

Though some progress has been made with some promising initiatives within AU Member States[10], 19 member States have signed up to WePROTECT Global Alliance (WPGA), 32 Member States have ongoing activities in terms of country plans, strategies and stakeholder committees.

Based on capacity building already done by the AUC project, most Member States started withholding stakeholders meetings and creating awareness on the problem. With the help of partners, some have moved ahead in advocacy work to address legal and policy issues that focuses on OCSEA. Some States have taken steps to develop new or review existing laws to be able to address the problem. These are but some of the few actions, however resources are required to train the people handling the problem, procure necessary equipment and set up institutions of safety for victims.

The WePROTECT Global Alliance is an international movement comprising of 84 countries dedicated to national and global action to end the sexual exploitation of children online. Amongst many of its initiative, is to have a worldwide cooperation to stop the crime of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. The nature of this crime calls for cross boarder effort to tackle it hence the alliance.

A legal review conducted in nine African countries by End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Child Trafficking (ECPAT International), revealed serious limitations in legislative frameworks including Internet Service Providers (ISPs) regulation and in law enforcement infrastructure to identify and respond to OCSEA. Awareness and understanding of these forms of criminality often remains limited among policymakers.

It is in this context, that the Commission of the African Union has drafted this 5-year Continental Strategy and Plan of Action to guide continental and country level actions to prevent and tackle OCSEA using a multi-pronged strategy that includes the 4Ps approach (Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership).

3.00 Analysis of OCSEA

The significant growth of Internet connectivity and ICT access in Africa, has raised concerns over online security and safety, with children becoming increasingly at risk of OCSEA. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the world has reached an important milestone, more than half of the world's population is now using the Internet[11]. In all ITU regions, the strongest growth was reported in Africa, 24.4% of the population in Africa was using the Internet as of December 2018 compared to 2.1%

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[10] UNICEF Country offices in Madagascar, Namibia, Uganda, Kenya, and Algeria, have received grants to address OCSE and the Internet Watch Foundation is currently deploying online reporting mechanisms for child abuse materials across Africa.

[11] New ITU statistics show more than half the world is now using the Internet. Access online: https://news.itu.int

in 2005[12]. Furthermore, ITU statistics show that out of every three internet users in Africa, one is a young person in the age group 15 to 24 years[13]. Reports of OCSEA have increased significantly, corresponding with global trends of rising internet use, the uptake of social networking, and the increasing presence of mobile internet-enabled devices[14]. The growth in mobile-cellular subscriptions in the last 5 years was driven by countries in Asia-Pacific and African regions[15]. In response the AU initiated a two year project, aimed at strengthening capacity and action against OCSEA in all 55 AU Member States.

Through the two-year AU OCSEA project implementation, it was realized that there were need gaps that should be addressed and in doing so at best with a strategy and plan of action. Member States are addressing the problem but not adequately due to lack of proper skills and tools and not in a systematic way for best outcomes. The result of which may not be ultimately helpful to the victim to start a healing process whilst also running the risk of putting the victim in a state of helpless/hopeless situation. The OCSEA project carried out an online mapping research in all the 55 Member States and none had achieved the requirements in all the six pillars of the Model National Response (MNR). Some of the continental overview findings and gaps are as follows:

1. **POLICY AND GOVERNANCE CAPABILITY**

i) Leadership

Most AU Member States have relevant ministries responsible for child protection. The Ministry of Social Affairs or Welfare was identified as the lead department responsible for child protection, which includes dealing with issues related to Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The commitment of government to the online safety of children and young people is very important. Most Member States have established committees dealing with child protection, however, very few countries have established a dedicated Task Force with a focal person. A Task Force, is ideally a government-led body, responsible for dealing specifically with OCSEA across all sectors.

ii) Research, Analysis and Monitoring

Very few research studies, specifically national situational analyses of OCSEA, have been conducted in Africa. Consequently, there is a lack of empirical research information and data in most African countries, which greatly impacts the awareness and prevention of OCSEA. Development of a National Child Online Protection Framework without any baseline assessment would be making assumptions without

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[12] ITU press release, 7th December 2018. Accessed online: https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/Pages/2018-PR40.aspx
[13] ITU 2017, Measuring the Information Society Report, 2017, Volume 1, pg. 21.
[14] WePROTECT Global Alliance. Global Threat Assessment (2018), p15.
[15] New ITU statistics show more than half the world is now using the Internet. Access online: https://news.itu.int

facts. The findings of this online research provides evidence which can be used to inform advocacy, policies as well as programmes aimed at promoting online child safety.

iii) Legislation

All Member States have ratified international treaties including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and at a regional level the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Youth Charter. Only five Member States including, Ghana, Guinea, Namibia, Mauritius and Senegal have ratified the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection (2014), known as the "Malabo Convention"[16]. Although Members have ratified these treaties, it appears as if countries do not always respond according to the requirements set by these international treaties.

All Member States have numerous national legislative instruments in place, addressing child exploitation and abuse; as well as child marriage, child labour and human trafficking laws. These national laws need to complement the development of specific OCSEA laws. Specific legislation addressing OCSEA is limited, however, in most cases national legislation includes legal stipulations related to Child Pornography. Some countries are in the process of reviewing existing legislation and drafting legislative instruments addressing OCSEA.

On the overall under Policy and Governance of the MNR capability, only 5 Member States had achieved this requirement while 50 had partial achievements.

2. CRIMINAL JUSTICE CAPABILITY
i) Dedicated Law Enforcement

Some Member States have dedicated units, investigating crimes against children. Very few countries, however, have dedicated units dealing specifically with OCSEA or 'cybercrime'. Several capacity-building programmes have been organised to train law enforcement officials. However, it is unclear if the training focuses particularly on how to conduct an investigation into child online abuse cases and how to handle the victims without endangering their future. It was also found that most investigation units, do not have the necessary resources (human and financial) available to investigate OCSEA related cases or conduct forensic investigations, to obtain relevant evidence needed to support prosecution. On the other hand, there seems to be international cooperation,

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[16] List of countries which have signed, ratified/acceded to the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection. African Union. Accessed online at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/29560-sl-AFRICAN%20UNION%20CONVENTION%20ON%20CYBER%20SECURITY%20AND%20PERSONAL%20DATA%20PROTECTION.pdf

with most Member States working with INTERPOL and other international structures dealing with law enforcement and protection of children both online and offline.

ii) Judiciary and Prosecutors

The capacity of judiciary and prosecutors to conduct child-sensitive proceedings in cases of child sexual abuse varies. Some countries have introduced special children's courts or court proceedings for child victims, however, limited information was found on the training of judiciary and prosecutors on the topic of OCSEA or the number of successful prosecutions. This finding emphasises the importance of incorporating cybersecurity, vulnerability of victims and profiles of offenders into the curriculum of the law schools.

iii) Offender Management Process

It was notable that there is very limited to almost no information available on existing sex offender management processes in African countries. This is an important focus point and it seems that almost nothing is currently being done to prevent the re-offending, rehabilitation and re-integration of sex offenders.

iv) Access to Image Databases

There appears to be insufficient image databases in AU Member States.   It seems as if only one Member State (Kenya) currently have a national image database. Some countries, however, seem to be in the process of using INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation database (ICSE DB) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their efforts to identify victims and offenders.

Under this capability, the online research found out that 2 Member States had achieved, 20 partials and 33 had nothing in place.

3. VICTIM CAPABILITY

i) End-to-End Support

Some Member States have support available for child victims during investigations, prosecutions and after-care, however no information could be found for specialised support provided to victims of OCSEA. There is a need to develop and provide integrated services during investigations, prosecutions and after-care for child online abuse and exploitation cases.

ii) Child Protection Workforce

All 55 Member States have an established child protection workforce. Services for children are provided by different organisations based on their area of expertise and mandate. In most cases child protection services are provided by non-governmental organisations rather than the government. It was also found that international organisations such as UNICEF and Save the Children, play a significant role in the

availability and support of the child protection workforce. It seems, in most cases, the existing child protection workforce are not trained to deal with incidents involving OCSEA. There is a need to build their capacity and knowledge on how to manage online abuse cases involving children and young people in order to coordinate efforts in providing support services to victims.

iii) Compensation, Remedies and Complaints Arrangements

Very limited information was found on existing complaints structures or the availability of compensation for victims. There needs to be provision of effective remedy and reparations for OCSE victims and their parents/guardians. In addition, procedures need to be in place to ensure victims have the best possible opportunity to access the services available including provision of child sensitive information and advice of services.

iv) Child Helpline

Most AU Member States have operational helplines which are accessible for children to report cases and receive support as well as address issues such as abuse. It was found that considerable progress has been made among AU Member States with regard to Child Helplines. According to Child Helpline International, 34 child helplines have been established in 31 different countries with 18 child helplines using the '116' number. These helplines are either operated by government, non-governmental organisations or supported by international organisations. The limitations that were identified include a lack of awareness of the helplines, lack of resources (human and financial) and diversity of the access code[17].

Under this capability, the online research found out that only 2 Member States had achieved requirements, 26 partially and 27 had nothing.

4. SOCIETAL CAPABILITY

i) Reporting Hotline

Some of the Member States have established operational reporting hotlines, several countries do not have a dedicated public and industry hotline for reporting child online abuse offences. In some cases, however, arrangements are being made to have a dedicated hotline for handling children and young people's cyber abuse cases.

ii) Education Programmes

In most Member States, education programmes focused on online safety are intended for school going children and not parents, teachers or members of the community. Overall, awareness-raising and education initiatives related to OCSEA seem to be

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[17] Proposal to the Assembly of Head of States of the African Union. Child Helpline International, November 2017, Updated March 2020)

unstructured and ad hoc. It is also likely that these programmes have been restricted to certain areas. A national education programme should be implemented in order to raise awareness of OCSEA – while empowering children, young people, parents, guardians, caregivers and professionals with relevant information, their rights regarding protection, where to find help as well as where to report exploitation and abuse.

iii) Child Participation

Some AU Member States allow children and young people to participate in different forums to share their views, including children's committee's and the children's parliament. However, it was found that child participation in child protection is unstructured and ad hoc and often limited to performance of children in events. Ensuring that the views of children and young people are incorporated when developing policies and practices related to online safety is essential.

iv) Offender Support System

Limited information was found about any specialised medical, psychological, self-help, or awareness systems in place for adults convicted of child sex offences. Therefore, there is a need to leverage on available support systems and incorporate relevant services for OCSEA related offenders and thus prevent re-offending.

Under this capability, the online research found only 1 Member State to have fully achieved the requirements, 19 partially while 35 had nothing.

5. INDUSTRY CAPABILITY

i) Notice and Takedown Procedures

Most Member States do not have any guidelines or legislation that explicitly mandates Internet Service Providers (ISP's) to report child abuse materials to law enforcement. Furthermore, there seems to be limited or no structures in place to remove and block OCSEA Material. Overall, it has been found that among Member States, efforts from industry are inadequate and more collaboration is needed to effectively address OCSEA in Africa.

ii) Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Reporting

There does not appear to be any laws, policies or practices requiring ISP's to preserve content-based or non-content-based data, nor to provide such material to law enforcement. It was found that very few countries have a mandatory obligation to report. Industry needs to be required to put in place processes and allocate resources to enable the timely identification and reporting OCSEA to authorities.

iii) Innovative Solution Development

There are limited examples of innovation by industries to address regional issues related to OCSEA. Industries are encouraged to develop and share innovative tools and techniques to identify and remove child sexual abuse materials on their platforms. This is needed to reduce the access to Child Sexual Abuse Materials on the Internet.

iv) Corporate Social Responsibility

In some AU Member States, the corporate sector has made attempts to create awareness and educate the public about both the online dangers and safety mechanisms available. However, this needs to be strengthened. It is essential for the corporate sector to be a part of a multi-sectorial approach addressing OCSEA. Corporates need to be encouraged to integrate child safety considerations into appropriate corporate policies, procedures and processes and to take adequate measures to identify, prevent and mitigate against OCSEA.

Under this capability, the online research found no member States with achievement status but there were 11 partial achievements and 44 with nothing.

6. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY

i) Ethical and Informed Media Reporting

Although the media can play an important role in awareness-raising and education on OCSEA, it appears that this is not happening in most Member States. Some countries have codes of conduct in place, however, this does not always ensure ethical media reporting, especially on issues such as crimes against children. Furthermore, media practitioners are expected to receive training on OCSEA. Media coverage on OCSEA should be ethical, informed and balanced, and reported in a sensitive manner that the victim's dignity and rights are respected at all times.

ii) Universal Terminology

No information was found about the use of universal terminology related to OCSEA among the Member States included in the research. There are no standard definitions on terminologies used by all stakeholders. There is a need to adopt globally accepted terminologies and definitions to guide discussions and the implementation of child online protection. Universally agreed terminology will enable information and ideas to be communicated rapidly and clearly amongst all stakeholders.

Online research findings found no achievement level on this capability, 5 Member States scored partial achievement and 55 had nothing.

4.00   Policy perspectives on OCSEA

OCSEA is a new phenomenon to Member States and not many have developed policies and protocols specific to child sensitive ICT utilization. Kenya is one of the members with a National ICT policy[18] developed in 2019. It is a general and broad covering all sectors and requires a specific policy curved out to child –sensitive ICT utilization.   Ghana Ministry for Communication in collaboration with UNICEF did a country research on *Risk and opportunities related to Children's Online Practices* published in 2017[19]   which informed necessary actions under their National Cyber Security Center[20] specific to children related action.   Using the Model for National Response, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa are the only countries that have policies as it relates to tackling OCSEA.

It is enlightening to know that Member States are starting to take action on OCSEA. However, if policies are not specific in addressing OCSEA and lack continental approach to a trans boundary problem, then actions might be in vain as loopholes will be capitalized by perpetrators whilst also killing the stakeholders morale to tackle the OCSEA crime.

5.00 Continental Strategy on OCSEA

Vision:

An Africa where children's rights and welfare are enjoyed by all children, everywhere, every day, and where happy and healthy children make positive contributions to a peaceful and prosperous Africa**.**

Mission:

Promote and protect the rights and welfare of the child through provision of a safe and secure online space for learning and development by informing and influencing child friendly laws, policies and practices, empowering children and their parents to understand and exercise their rights, keeping governments accountable.

Goal

 The overall goal of Continental Strategy and Plan of Action is to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children from all forms of exploitation and abuse, including OCSEA in Africa.

Objectives:

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[18] National ICT Policy: https://www.ict.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/NATIONAL-ICT-POLICY-2019.pdf
[19]. https://www.unicef.org/ghana/reports/risks-and-opportunities

[20] https://cybersecurity.gov.gh/

The Continental Strategy and Plan of Action on OCSEA seeks to:

1) Generate **evidence** to guide advocacy and programmatic response to OCSEA.

2) Increase continental **awareness, political support and investments** in OCSEA.

3) Strengthen **institutional frameworks** and monitoring and accountability mechanisms on OCSEA at the continental regional and country levels.

4) Provide practical continental guidelines and technical assistance to catalyze **policy, programmatic and advocacy** actions, including strengthening institutional capacity and infrastructure to respond to OCSEA at continental, regional and country levels.

5) Develop stronger continental, regional and national **networks** and **multi-sectoral partnerships** between the education sector (integrate OCSEA into curriculum) and the ICT industry.

6.0 Expected Outcomes

- **Policy, Evidence and Governance**. A supportive reporting environment underpinned by improved research, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of OCSEA programs;
  AU Member States implement enhanced, coordinated cross-sectoral efforts in addressing OCSEA underpinned by:
  - ○ High level political commitment to OCSEA
  - ○ Comprehensive and effective legal, policy and programmatic frameworks to protect children, support victims, and investigate and prosecute offenders.
- **Media, Communication and advocacy**. Engaged Media in raising awareness to the public, professionals and policy makers.
- **Criminal justice**. Strengthened capabilities of justice system particularly law enforcement and judicial officers, with knowledge, skills and tools to perform effective and successful investigations, convictions and offender management.
- **Victim and Societal support**. Children and young OCSEA victims are provided with integrated end-to-end services to help recover from and cope with the immediate and long-term impact of their abuse;
  Children, young people, caregivers and other stakeholders are informed and empowered on how to protect children from OCSEA.
- **Industry and networks**. Engaged industry in developing and implementing solutions to prevent and tackle OCSEA. Member States join the international organizations working on OCSEA.

7.00 Guiding principles

The Continental Strategy & Plan of Action to prevent and tackle OCSEA is guided by the following fundamental principles:

- **A child rights approach.** The Convention of the Rights of the Child and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child the foundational documents for OCSEA programmes. Hence all efforts to prevent and respond to OCSEA shall be in the best interest of the child.
- **A Gender Sensitive Approach.** Measures to prevent and respond OCSEA and realise the rights of children to protection from all forms of violence without discrimination will ensure gender equality.
- **A Multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary Approach.** Given the multi-dimensional and multi-faceted nature of OCSEA, a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary partnership approach to prevention, protection and prosecution will be pursued.
- **A Participatory Approach.** Efforts will go into enabling children and communities participate and freely express their views in the design and implementation of OCSEA programmes. There should be safe and relevant communication procedures, systems, and mechanisms to lodge complaints.
- Development of **Internal partnerships** with relevant ministries and civil society organizations within countries.
- Country leadership, ownership and cross border cooperation.
- Coordination and harmonized interventions, cross border cooperation.
- Development of effective external partnership (co-ordination and collaboration between communities, governments and development partners).
- Community based strategies

8.0 Strategic Approaches

- The Plan of Action will be based on Model National Response (MNR) as the benchmark for accomplishments. The MNR is a framework to enable countries establish and develop coordinated national responses to OCSEA. The Model lists the capabilities that a country needs in order to achieve a comprehensive national response, in the context of the wider needs to tackle all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation of children. MNR intends to help a country to:
- Evaluate its current response to OCSE and identify gaps;
- Prioritise national effort on filing gaps;
- Enhance international cooperation.
- The model has capabilities broken into six categories, each of which is linked to an outcome that will support a country and sets out a desirable outcome that will have significant child protection benefits.

Member States have had some training on MNR however more capacity building is required for optimal deliverables. The technical skills need further capacity reinforcement partly due to OCSEA being a new phenomenon and inclusive training for all officers and sectors working with children. The Plan of Action will be based on the MNR, a framework that will enable Member States to establish and develop coordinated national responses to OCSEA. The Model lists the capabilities needed in order to achieve a comprehensive national response with the intention of helping Member States to:

i) Evaluate its current response to OCSEA and identify gaps
ii) Prioritise national effort on filing gaps
iii) Enhance international cooperation

The model has six capabilities as follows:

1) Policy and Governance. This capability seeks the highest level national commitment to prevention and response to OCSEA;
2) Criminal Justice, seeks to have effective and successful investigations, convictions and offender management;
3) Victim – This capability looks at having appropriate safeguards for children and young people in place;
4) Societal - Addresses the society efforts in preventing child sexual exploitation and abuse;
5) Industry – This capability's intention is to engage Industry in developing solutions to tackle and prevent online OCSEA;
6) Media and Communication- This capability intends to ensure that awareness is raised amongst the public, professionals and policy makers.

The pillars are coordinated to maximise national outcomes and help achieve a desirable and significant child protection benefits.

9.0 Anticipated Outputs

1. Enhanced capacity of regional and national institutions to implement Policies, laws and programmes that are specific to and support tackling OCSEA.
2. Political will and commitment in tackling OCSEA through:

- Adequate budgetary allocation;
- Effective programmatic frameworks that protect children and provide victim support;
- National data to inform effective and continuous OCSEA interventions;
- Cross border coordination in tackling the OCSEA.

3. Active and participating internet providers in tackling OCSEA through developments of tools/solutions that can block and take down CSAM.

4. Established continental central and common knowledge management hub on laws, policies, good practices and research on OCSEA.

5. Effective and working networks with international organizations.

10.00 Results Framework:

POLICY, EVIDENCE AND GOVERNANCE

Outcome 10.1.
a) **A supportive reporting environment underpinned by improved research, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of OCSEA programs;**
b) **AU Member States implement enhanced, coordinated cross-sectoral efforts in addressing OCSEA underpinned by:**
   - **High level political commitment to OCSEA**
   - **Comprehensive and effective legal, policy and programmatic frameworks to protect children, support victims, and investigate and prosecute offenders**

Indicators:

No	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification
10.1.1	# of Member States that have conducted research on OCSEA, including epidemiological surveys or surveillance to counteract OCSE	3	30	Reports
10.1.2	An online resource centre established at the AU Commission for data repository.	0	1	A platform set with a link on the AU website.
10.1.3	# of Member States with effective stakeholders committees on OCSEA/ Plans of Actions/strategies.	5	30	Reports
10.1.4	# of Member States that have ratified the AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection	9	30	Reports

Proposed activities	Responsible	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5

10.1.1 Develop a regional research agenda on OCSEA including documentation of good practices.	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	X
10.1.2. Create an online resource centre that would act as Member States repository on OCSEA data, a platform for knowledge exchange and inter-country learning.	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	X
10.1.3 Develop a model law on OCSEA and inform Member States on the model to respond, adapt and coordinate OCSEA.	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	X
10.1.4 Provide guidance and technical assistance to Member States to: (i) Develop and implement comprehensive and effective legislation and national strategies on OCSEA to address ICT-related violence, exploitation and abuse in collaboration with partners including statutory provisions for remedy and reparations for OCSEA victims and their guardians/caregivers. (ii) Put in place a national multi-stakeholder, cross-sector national body on OCSEA responsible for coordinating OCSEA work across government, industry and civil society.	**AUC** **Member States**	X X	X X	X X	X	X
10.1.5 Advocate to Member States to ratify the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	

MEDIA, COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Outcome 10.2: Media is engaged to raise awareness among the public, professionals and policy makers.

Indicators:

No	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification
10.2.1	**# of Member States that have developed a communication plan on OCSEA, based on the information gathered at**	**3**	**30**	**Reports**

national, regional and continental levels.							

Proposed activities	**Responsible**	**Timeline**				
		Y1	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
10.2.1 Develop and implement a continental communication strategy and advocacy campaign including sensitising regional media houses on ethical, informed, and balanced and victim sensitive reporting.	**AUC**	X	X			
10.2.2 Provide guidance and technical support to Member States to sensitise national media houses on OCSEA and on making ethical, informed and balanced reporting that is sensitive to victims' dignity and with cognizance to rights and respect.	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	X

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Outcome 10.3: Strengthened capabilities of justice system particularly law enforcement and judicial officers, with knowledge, skills and tools to perform effective and successful investigations, convictions and offender management.

Indicators:

No	**Indicator**	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Means of Verification**
10.3.1	# of Member States that have established links with regional and international agencies on combating OCSEA, such as the INTERPOL, ICSE Data Base.	4	15	Reports
10.3.2	A platform is established at AU level for the sharing of good practices in combating OCSEA	0	1	A platform set with a link on the AU website.

10.3.3	# of Member States that have set up relevant sectorial units and equipment in place to coordinate investigations nationally and internationally.	0	10	Reports
10.3.4	# of Member States that have specialized OCSEA law enforcement units in place.	0	15	Reports
10.3.5	# of Member States that have law enforcement, prosecutors and judiciary who have undergone OCSEA training.	0	30	Reports
10.3.6	# of Member States that have established a child sexual abuse register for the identification of offenders.	0	15	Reports
10.3.7	# of Member States that have established hotlines and helplines.	5	30	Reports

Proposed activities	Responsible	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
10.3.1 Support Member States to partner with mutually agreeable law enforcement agencies from around the world that have experience in establishing and delivering dedicated law enforcement units on OCSEA.	**AUC**	X	X	X		
10.3.2 Support the sharing of experiences and good practices between Member States on the law enforcement response to OCSEA.	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	X
10.3.3 Provide guidance and support to Member States to establish and provide relevant equipment and logistics to law enforcement unit with an explicit remit to lead, support and coordinate investigations of OCSEA.	**AUC**		X	X	X	
10.3.4. Organise regular specialist OCSEA training for officers within the specialised law enforcement units, judiciary and prosecutors to enhance the knowledge and skills on OCSEA.	**AUC & Partners**			X	X	X

10.3.5. Provide guidance and technical support to Member States to put in place national child sexual abuse image database to enhance the efficiency of law enforcement efforts in identification of victims and offenders.	AUC	X	X	X	X	X
10.3.6. Advocate for Member States to connect to the Interpol's International Child Sexual Exploitation database (ICSE DB).	AUC	X	X	X	X	X

VICTIM AND SOCIETAL SUPPORT

Outcome 10.4: OCSEA victims are provided with integrated end-to-end services to help them recover from and cope with the immediate and long-term impact of their abuse and stakeholders informed and empowered on protection mechanisms.

Indicators:

No	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification
10.4.1	# of Member States that have developed and implemented SOPs or protocols to deal with OCSEA.	3	30	Reports
10.4.2	# of social workers trained to facilitate investigations and to render victim support at the same time.	0	30	Reports and AUC capacity building
10.4.3	# of Member States that have sensitised associated sectors such as education and health on OCSEA related tell-tale signs in victims.	4	30	Reports
10.4.4	# of Member States that have expanded national awareness and education on OCSEA to empower children, young people, parents, guardians, caregivers.	5	30	Reports
10.4.5	# of Member States documenting nature of children's participation in their reporting.	0	30	Report
10.4.6	# of Member States that have rehabilitation programmes and monitoring systems in place for convicted child sex offenders	0	15	Reports

Proposed activities	Responsible	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
10.4.1 # of Member States that have developed and implemented SOPs or protocols to deal with OCSEA. Document best practice models and develop Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) to inform and facilitate working with victims during the investigation and judicial proceedings.	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	X
10.4.2 Advocate to embed social workers within the specialised law enforcement unit to work alongside officers working on OCSEA investigations	**AUC**	X	X	X	X	
10.4.3. Organise specialist training for social workers to give appropriate and timely support to minimize harm, provide support through any law enforcement investigation and legal proceedings, and aid recovery	**AUC & Partners**	X	X	X		
10.4.4 Provide guidance and technical support to Member States to establish and/or strengthen child and gender sensitive reporting and complaint mechanism for children to file OCSEA grievances.	**AUC**		X	X	X	X
10.4.5 Provide guidance and technical assistance to Member States to conduct national education programme to empower children, young people, parents, guardians, caregivers and practitioners with information about OCSEA.	**AUC**	X	X	X		
10.4.6 Promote and enable participation of children and young people in the development of OCSEA- related policy, practices and existing guidelines.	**AUC**		X	X	X	X
10.4.7. Provide guidance and technical assistance to Member States to establish support systems for convicted child sex offenders as part of their rehabilitation to prevent re-offending			X	X	X	

INDUSTRY AND NETWORKS

Outcome 10.5: Multi-sectors including industry engaged in developing and implementing solutions to prevent and tackle OCSEA. Member States join the international organizations working on OCSEA.

Indicators:

No	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification
10.5.1	# of Member States that have engaged their internet industries to combat OCSEA according to the Model National Response guidelines.	0	15	Reports
10.5.2	# of Member States that have an agreement with their internet industries and placed legal obligation to report, remove and block child sexual abuse materials.	0	15	Reports
10.5.3	# of internet industries on the continent that are engaged/involved in innovative solutions to prevent and report OCSEA.	0	5	Reports
10.5.4	# of Member States that have involved their education and related sectors to mainstream OCSEA in their frameworks.	0	30	Reports

Proposed activities	Responsible	Timeline				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
10.5.1. Engage at a regional level Internet Industries with regional coverage on their responsibility to develop solutions on OCSEA Engage education sectors and others working with children to mainstream OCSEA in their frameworks.	AUC	X	X	X		
10.5.2 Advocate with Member States to include legal responsibility for mandatory reporting and removal or blocking of child sexual abuse material	AUC		X	X	X	X

10.5.3. Engage Internet Industries to develop innovative technological solutions that enhance existing approaches to preventing and tackling OCSEA or enable development of new approaches.	**AUC**		X	X	X	X
10.5.4 Engage education sectors and others working with children to mainstream OCSEA in their frameworks.		X	X	X	X	

Outputs
Output 1: Enhanced capacity of regional and national institutions to implement Policies, laws and programmes that are specific to and support tackling OCSEA. **Indicators:** 1.1 # of countries that developed/reviewed existing legislation and policies to make provisions for OCSEA. 1.2 # of countries showing the extent of mainstreaming OCSEA into laws and policies as reflected in national development frameworks and processes. 1.3 # of countries with effective institutional frameworks
Output 2: Political will in tackling OCSEA. **Indicators**: 2.1. Proportion of national resources allocated for the implementation of multi-sectoral action plans for tackling OCSEA 2.2. # of countries that have mainstreamed OCSEA in key sectors 2.3. # of countries with over 50% of all forms of media coverage on OCSEA awareness. 2.4. # of countries that have adopted cross border policies, laws and programmes 2.5. # of international cross border partnerships 2.6. # of countries that have ratified the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection (2014), known as the "Malabo Convention"
Output 3:   Active and participating internet providers in tackling OCSEA **Indicators** 3.1. # Internet providers with innovative solutions to tackle OCSEA 3.2. # of providers (national and regional) who have signed up to reporting, removing and blocking child sexual abuse materials.

Output 4. Established continental central and common knowledge management hub on laws, policies, good practices and researches on OCSEA

Indicators:

4.1. A functional continental knowledge management hub in place

4.2. National OCSEA documents (research, good practices, policies, legislation)

11.00.   Coordination and Implementation

The AU and UNICEF – Addis office has a partnership on all interventions that involves working with children. This partnership will continue in the implementation of this PoA whereby regional and national offices will support the implementation of the same. The PoA will also involve other international partners within the continent like ECPAT International, Child Helpline and others which include international organizations outside of Africa who are instrumental in the fight against OCSEA such as INTERPOL and IWF.

12.00.   MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

The Plan of Action will have an accountable mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of progress and impact as follows:

Monitoring and reporting
Monitoring and reporting will be conducted using the implementation framework and indicators to generate:

- Annual AU implementation reports
- Biannual implementation reports submitted to the Special Technical Committees (STC)
- The PoA acknowledges the work done by AU organs (ACERWC, Pan African Parliament permanent sub committees) who have already integrated OCSEA in their deliverables. Their reviews, recommendations and reports will be part of the monitoring process;
- The PoA has both quantitatively verifiable achievements and qualitative through reports as monitoring mechanisms.
- Departmental reports to the commissioner.

A final evaluation of the strategy and PoA will be conducted to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability and to provide an assessment of the results achieved and reasons for levels of achievement or non-achievement. The evaluation will assess both the intended and unintended outcomes   and document performance results, as well as provide an analysis of key challenges and lessons learned.