

March 25, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

The undersigned organizations thank you for calling attention to the harms faced by children on the Internet during your State of the Union address. We applaud your commitment to protecting children online, and we concur that action must be taken. Protecting children from online sexual exploitation and abuse is an urgent task. A critical first step is to ensure all U.S. government agencies and offices are working in concert to address this issue. Therefore, we request the appointment of a coordinator on the White House Domestic Policy Council that is tasked with elevating the issue of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC) across the government and making the internet a safe and positive place for children.

By any number of measures, OSEAC is at crisis levels. In 2021 alone, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received [29.3 million CyberTipline reports of suspected OSEAC, which included 84.9 million images, videos and other content](#). According to the WeProtect Global Alliance's 2021 Global Threat Assessment, "The scale of child sexual exploitation and abuse online is increasing" and its "[sustained growth is outstripping our global capacity to respond](#)." The U.S. Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) issued a notice to members in September 2021 due to a [17% increase in suspicious activity reports \(SARs\) for online sexual exploitation of children](#), including the production of child sexual abuse materials (CSAM). Both [INTERPOL](#) and [EUROPOL](#) warn that "livestreaming of [child sexual abuse increased and became even more popular during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)."

There are many U.S. government entities working towards ending OSEAC:

- The Department of Justice (DOJ)'s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program (OJJDP) partners with NCMEC to develop effective prevention and intervention programs and supports Internet Crimes Against Children task forces, which investigate and address OSEAC.
- DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) prosecutes child exploitation cases.
- The Department of Homeland Security's Cyber Crimes Center has a Child Exploitation Investigative Unit (CEIU), which conducts operations throughout the world to identify and rescue child victims and to identify and apprehend offenders.
- The Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) manages Child Protection Compact programs overseas, including a U.S.- Philippines compact focused on OSEAC issues.
- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is midway through its Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity Strategy (2019-2023), which includes initiatives that safeguard children online globally.
- The USAID Digital Strategy (2020-2024) includes commitments within its approach to digital development to build awareness on the online harms and risks facing children and to support the development and implementation of policies that prevent and protect children from online violence and sexual exploitation.

All of these efforts are essential and valuable in the fight to end OSEAC. However, more needs to be done. The U.S. Government inter-agency coordination on OSEAC must be better streamlined to ensure maximum effectiveness in addressing this issue and to avoid duplication of efforts, inadequate communication and sharing of information and missed opportunities for collaboration, as well as the development of more efficient programming and interventions, especially between domestic and internationally focused agencies.

We call on you to appoint a coordinator within the White House Domestic Policy Council to elevate the priority of OSEAC issues across the government, as well as coordinate efforts and allocate resources in a whole-of-government approach. This action is a crucial step towards catching up with the fast-growing pace of these crimes. We stand ready to work with you and your administration to address this scourge of abuse and exploitation of children.

Sincerely,

ChildFund International

ECPAT-USA

Enough is Enough

Fairplay

International Justice Mission

Lynn's Warriors

National Center on Sexual Exploitation

National Children's Alliance

The National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College

ParentsTogether

Protect Young Eyes

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

Thorn

UNICEF USA