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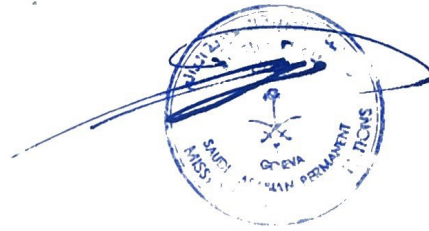الوفد الدائم للملكة العربية السعودية
لدى الأمم المتحدة
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Ref. No. 413/1973

Geneva, 6 February 2024

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and would like to refer to the note verbal ref: OHCHR/TESPRDD/Child and Youth Rights Unit, regarding the call for inputs for the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Study on the solutions to promote digital education for young people and to ensure their protection from online threats. In that regard, the Permanente Mission has the honor to attach herewith contribution of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the afore-mentioned report.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the assurance of its highest consideration.

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الوَفدُ اللّائمُ لِلْمَلَكَةِ العَرَبِيَّةِ السُّعُوديَّةِ
لَدَى الأُمَمِ المُتَّحِدَةِ
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This Paper has been prepared upon the request of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to contribute to the countries at the survey for preparing research of the resolutions of enhancing digital education for the youth and ensuring their protection from online threats. Upon the Resolution of Human Rights Council 51 /17, the report will be submitted to the Human Rights Council in its 57th Session, Regarding the contribution of the Kingdom to answer the following questions:

1) What are the main challenges that young people in your country face in accessing digital education? please consider the specific situation of marginalized young people and those in vulnerable situations in your response.

The interest in education within the Kingdom Vision 2030 resulted in accelerated improvements and reforms including Providing all the youth with education and ensuring that it is free for all and equal opportunities, developing the curriculum, taking care of the teachers' performance and educational supervision, developing the buildings and school supplies, improving instruments and methods of measuring, evaluation, and programs of students guidance and steering, taking care of youth with visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities and autism disorders, and ensuring that all the students with disabilities enrolled in the education. In this framework, the Lifetime Learning Initiative "Estidamah" is launched which is one of the initiatives of the National Transformation Program of Saudi Vision 2030. It seeks to achieve literacy and empower individuals to make use of the various opportunities for learning and training. This initiative targets adults from both genders between the ages of (15-50 years). On September 2021AD, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Prime Minister launched the Human Capability Development Program which is one of the programs for the achievement of the Vision. Moreover, its targets include the formation of an integrated educational journey, improvement of the equal opportunities to access education, and the

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development of the main education outputs. In addition, the statistics, on 2020AD, refer that the literacy rate among the people in this age group (15-24) years was (99,50%). Moreover, the net percentage of the rate of youth who enrolled in primary education was (99,39%) on 2021AD, On 2020AD the percentage of the completion of the primary education was (99,50%) .on ٢٠٢١AD t hepercentage of net rate of the enrolment in the middle education was (98.56%), and the percentage of completion the middle education was (93,13%). On 2021 AD, the percentage of net rate of enrolment in the high education was (99,37%) and the percentage of completion of the high school was (98%). On 2021 AD, the total enrolment percentage in the higher education will reach (71,41%). On 2021 AD, the expected years which the student would spend in education is (16,17) years.

With regard to technical education, the emergence of an urgent need as a result of the massive population explosion, the scarcity of educational staff in quantity and quality, to reduce financial waste (coordination in approved programs, training methods, production of educational materials, etc.), and to develop the progress of science and education and transfer it from Its traditional forms into various forms using technical means to explain the educational material. The National Information Technology Plan was prepared, which recommended adopting e-learning and distance education and their applications in university education, as well as establishing a national center to provide technical support and the necessary tools and means in order to develop digital educational content. In addition, an integrated educational system was established based on e-learning and distance learning techniques in a national center that supports the educational process in universities at all stages and for all categories and classes without restrictions of time or place, in order to achieve the Kingdom's mission to spread science and knowledge based on tolerant Islamic principles and values, in addition to unify the efforts of

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Universities and builds an idea of e-learning and distance education that benefits everyone and influence community members.

2) What steps is the Governmental taking to ensure that digital education is accessible and promoted among young people? please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programmes directed at ensuring young people's universal access to digital education.

One of the steps that the government followed to access to the digital education and enhance the same among the youth is forming the National E-learning Center which was issued by Resolution No. (35) of the Council of Ministers passed on 13.01.1439AH, corresponding to (3rd October 2017AD); the Center aims at achieving key goals as follows:

1. Disseminating e-learning and distance education applications in universities in accordance with quality standards.

2. Contribution to expanding the capacity of university education institutions, through e-learning applications and distance education.

3. Spreading technical awareness and the culture of e-learning and distance education, as a contribution to building an information society.

4. Contribution to the assessment of e-learning and distance learning projects and programs.

5. Supporting research and studies in the fields of e-learning and distance education.

6. Establish quality standards for the design, production, and dissemination of digital educational materials.

7. Providing consultations to relevant parties in the fields of e-learning and distance education.

8. Building and disseminating educational software to serve the educational process in the public and private sectors.

9. Encouraging distinguished projects in the fields of e-learning and distance education in university education institutions.

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10. Holding meetings, organizing conferences, and workshops that contribute to the development of e-learning and distance education.

11. International cooperation with international organizations, bodies, and entities related to the fields of e-learning and distance education.

3)What steps is the Government taking to ensure that young people can realize their human rights online in a safe, empowering and inclusive way?

One of steps that the government followed to ensure the ability of the youth to practice their rights online by a safe, empowered and comprehensive way is issuing the Royal Order dated 11.02.1439AH corresponding to (31 October 2017) judged to form National Cybersecurity Authority and approve its organization to be the competent authority of the cybersecurity and the national referral of its affairs to protect the vital interests of the Kingdom, its cybersecurity, infrastructures, priority sectors and the governmental services and activities. In the course of achieving the targets of the Authority for which it is formed and carrying out its competences and tasks, the formation of the Authority concludes transporting National Cyber Security Guidance Centre from Communications, Space & Technology Commission to National Cybersecurity Authority. Moreover, the National Cyber Security Guidance Centre works on enhancing the efforts of the Kingdom in raising awareness of the cybersecurity through raising the awareness and knowledge of the cybersecurity to avoid the cyber risks and decrease its impacts through issuing the warns of the last and the most dangerous gaps, and launch the campaigns, awareness programs and cooperating with the other guidance centres.

- The Center works on several initiatives aimed at creating a secure electronic environment, including the launch of a campaign entitled "Safely We Learn" in conjunction with the beginning of the academic year, which aims to raise awareness of cybersecurity

and reduce the risks that a student may be exposed to in the exercise of his daily educational tasks using the Internet.

- The Center published a guide to distance education that contributes to immunizing the home network against hacks and highlighted preventive measures to be taken to immunize computers and smart devices, and privacy guidance on the basics of equipping and customizing a place at home to receive virtual lessons and highlights the daily good customs that shall be used every day when dealing with these electronic educational systems, The guide also provides a vivid experience of the new educational system and highlights what needs to be taken into account to protect the student from technical breakthroughs.

- The Center also published on its "X" account several awareness guidelines on social engineering and electronic phishing that students may be exposed to via social media, which exploits the current circumstances to reach users. In addition, the Center has published the correct security practices targeting school students, Undergraduate students, as well as teachers, faculty, and coaches.

- The National Guidance Center works with the Ministry of Education to prepare and disseminate awareness materials to effectively reach target groups. The Center also worked with the Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) to publish the distance learning guide for up to 40 million users, and seeks to continue the campaign during the first month of school; to remind students, teachers, and parents of the importance of cybersecurity while studying remotely.

4) What are the main gaps and challenges to young people's protection from online threats in law, policy, and practice in your country and the impacts on young people's human rights? please consider the specific situation of marginalized young people and those in vulnerable situations in your response.

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As it is mentioned above, National Cyber Security Guidance Centre works on enhancing the efforts of the Kingdom which are exerted to raise the level of awareness of the cybersecurity through raising the awareness and knowledge of the cybersecurity to avoid the cyber risks and decrease its impacts through issuing the warns of the last and the most dangerous gaps

5) What steps is the Government taking to ensure that young people are protected from online threats? please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programmes.

In addition to the answer contained in Question No. (3), Anti-Cyber Crime Law issued by Royal Decree No. M/17 in 08.03.1428AH, corresponding to (27 March 2007). This Law aims at limiting the commitment of cyber crimes by identifying such crimes and sanctions prescribed of each of them. This leads to help in achieving the cyber security, in addition to preserve the rights resulted from the legal usage of the computer and the information network. in addition to protect the public interest, ethics, public morals and the national economy.

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, has spearheaded two international initiatives to strengthen cybersecurity protection.

- The first is the International Initiative of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince to Protect Children in Cyberspace, and the second is the Initiative of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince to Empower Women in Cybersecurity. It focuses on developing best practices, policies and programs to protect children in cyberspace. This initiative aims to address the increasing cyber threats targeting children as they use the internet, exposing them to diverse cybercrimes beyond their families' sight. This includes exploiting and victimizing children, luring them to commit crimes against themselves, influencing their mindsets ideologically, and pushing

them to adopt extremist and terrorist ideologies that pose a danger to countries and societies. The crimes against children also include cyberbullying, personal data theft, and fraud. One of the main objectives of the initiative will be developing programs and forming international partnerships to enhance achieving the desired goals at the international level and adopting the best enablers by teachers, families, and decision makers to protect children in the global cyber landscape.

- The second initiative calls for intensifying efforts to encourage and support women in the cybersecurity field, enabling them to obtain the required education and training to effectively participate in building the cybersecurity sector and assume leadership positions within it. Programs to strengthen the role of women and empower them in cybersecurity will be tremendously important and an added value to the quality and diversity of cybersecurity skills. This will also contribute to reducing the global shortage of cybersecurity skills and talent.