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Follow The Money: CMCF Urges Asean to Address Hidden Risks to Children Online

Kuala Lumpur, 10 November 2026 – A family video featuring a child can earn advertising revenue. A trusted influencer can persuade young followers to buy a product. And a seemingly genuine brand deal could be a way for a stranger to approach a young creator. As children become increasingly involved in the digital economy, a bigger question emerges: who is profiting, and who is looking out for them?

These were among the emerging risks highlighted by the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF) at the ASEAN ICT Forum on Child Online Protection in Manila, Philippines, on 3 and 4 November 2026, where the Forum also proposed three practical safeguards for regional consideration.

CMCF Chief Executive Officer Mediha Mahmood spoke at an industry fireside chat and at "Behind the Feed", a panel examining child safety in digital advertising and the influencer ecosystem, during the forum attended by nearly 400 participants.

> "*Follow the money and you begin to see the risks differently. Money can be made from children, through children, and even used to gain access to them. When the commercial incentives are this powerful, protecting children cannot be left to parents and children alone*," said Mediha.

CMCF proposed three areas for ASEAN to consider adopting common minimum safeguards:

1. **Clear advertising disclosures:** Ensure children can easily recognise paid promotions, with disclosures that are visible, prominent and in language they understand.

2. **Protection from age-restricted products:** Prevent the commercial targeting of children with age-restricted products, including paying under-18 creators to promote them.

3. **Safer brand collaborations:** Encourage brands to approach young creators through official channels, with platform safeguards to help detect suspicious offers that could expose children to grooming or exploitation.

Drawing from Malaysia's experience, Mediha shared how CMCF has been addressing these issues through the recently registered fourth edition of the Content Code, alongside its **proposed Influencer and Brand Collaboration Guidelines** and **Gaming Sub-Code**.

These efforts cover children's privacy, advertising transparency, the protection of young creators, age-appropriate gaming experiences and safeguards around online interactions. Both proposed instruments recently completed public consultation, with contributions from local and global industry players, creators, the public and child advocacy organisations, including UNICEF and ECPAT.

The discussions at the ASEAN ICT Forum also generated interest in Malaysia's co-regulatory approach, where industry helps develop practical standards supported by regulatory oversight. The forum provided a valuable opportunity to exchange experiences with regional and international stakeholders and explore how countries can learn from one another.

Mediha suggested that ASEAN's Regional Plan of Action and Industry Working Group could offer avenues to advance these proposals, while recognising differences in national laws and regulatory approaches.

> "*The feed doesn't recognise national borders. The money certainly doesn't. A child should not have less protection simply because the brand, creator or platform they are dealing with is based in another country. ASEAN has an opportunity to agree on common safeguards that can reach children wherever these commercial interactions take place*," she concluded.

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UNTUK SIARAN SEGERA

Ikut Jejak Wang: CMCF Gesa Asean Tangani Risiko Tersembunyi Terhadap Kanak-Kanak Dalam Talian

Kuala Lumpur, 10 November 2026 – Video keluarga yang memaparkan anak-anak boleh menjana pendapatan iklan. Pempengaruh yang dipercayai mampu mempengaruhi pengikut muda untuk membeli sesuatu produk. Malah, tawaran kerjasama dengan jenama yang kelihatan sah mungkin sebenarnya helah individu tidak dikenali untuk mendekati pencipta kandungan bawah umur.

Apabila kanak-kanak semakin terlibat dalam ekonomi digital, timbul persoalan yang wajar diberi perhatian: siapa yang meraih keuntungan, dan siapa pula yang menjaga kepentingan mereka?

Risiko yang sering terlepas pandang ini antara perkara yang diketengahkan oleh Forum Kandungan Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (CMCF) dalam ASEAN ICT Forum on Child Online Protection yang berlangsung di Manila, Filipina, pada 3 dan 4 November 2026. Dalam forum tersebut, CMCF turut mengemukakan tiga cadangan praktikal untuk dipertimbangkan di peringkat ASEAN.

Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif CMCF, Mediha Mahmood menyertai sesi dialog santai bersama pemain industri serta perbincangan panel bertajuk “Behind the Feed”, yang membincangkan keselamatan kanak-kanak dalam pengiklanan digital dan ekosistem pempengaruh. Forum ini menghimpunkan hampir 400 peserta daripada pelbagai negara.

> “*Kalau kita ikut jejak wang, kita akan nampak risiko yang selama ini mungkin terlepas pandang. Ada pihak yang menjana pendapatan dengan menampilkan kanak-kanak dalam kandungan, ada yang meraih keuntungan melalui pengaruh terhadap mereka, malah ada yang menggunakan tawaran wang sebagai jalan untuk mendekati kanak-kanak. Apabila kepentingan komersial semakin besar, tanggungjawab melindungi mereka tidak boleh diletakkan di bahu ibu bapa dan kanak-kanak semata-mata*,” kata Mediha.

CMCF mengemukakan tiga cadangan supaya ASEAN dapat mempertimbangkan perlindungan asas yang boleh dilaksanakan secara bersama:

1. **Pendedahan iklan yang jelas dan mudah difahami:** Memastikan kanak-kanak dapat mengenal pasti kandungan berbayar melalui makluman yang mudah dilihat, jelas dan menggunakan bahasa yang mereka fahami.

2. **Perlindungan daripada promosi produk berhad umur:** Mengelakkan kanak-kanak daripada menjadi sasaran pemasaran produk yang mempunyai sekatan umur, termasuk melarang pempengaruh bawah 18 tahun daripada menerima bayaran untuk mempromosikan produk sedemikian.

3. **Kerjasama jenama yang lebih selamat:** Menggalakkan jenama menggunakan saluran rasmi apabila menghubungi pencipta kandungan bawah umur, di samping memperkukuh langkah keselamatan platform untuk mengesan tawaran mencurigakan yang mungkin menjadi pintu masuk kepada aktiviti pengantunan seksual (grooming) atau eksploitasi.

Mediha turut berkongsi pengalaman Malaysia dalam menangani isu ini melalui Kod Kandungan Edisi Keempat yang baru didaftarkan, serta dua instrumen yang sedang dibangunkan oleh CMCF, iaitu **Garis Panduan Pempengaruh dan Kerjasama Jenama** serta **Subkod Permainan Digital**.

Usaha ini merangkumi perlindungan privasi kanak-kanak, ketelusan pengiklanan, keselamatan pencipta kandungan muda, pengalaman permainan digital yang bersesuaian dengan usia serta langkah perlindungan dalam interaksi dalam talian.

Kedua-dua instrumen yang sedang dibangunkan itu baru sahaja melalui proses rundingan awam, dengan pandangan diterima daripada pemain industri tempatan dan antarabangsa, pencipta kandungan, orang ramai serta organisasi yang memperjuangkan hak dan keselamatan kanak-kanak, termasuk UNICEF dan ECPAT.

Pendekatan kawal selia bersama yang diamalkan di Malaysia turut menarik perhatian peserta forum. Melalui pendekatan ini, pihak industri terlibat secara langsung dalam membangunkan piawaian yang praktikal, dengan sokongan dan pengawasan pihak berkuasa.

Pertemuan tersebut juga membuka ruang untuk bertukar pengalaman, mempelajari inisiatif dari negara lain dan meneroka bentuk kerjasama yang boleh memperkukuh perlindungan kanak-kanak di rantau ASEAN.

Mediha turut mencadangkan agar Pelan Tindakan Serantau ASEAN dan Kumpulan Kerja Industri ASEAN dimanfaatkan untuk memperhalusi cadangan berkenaan, dengan mengambil kira perbezaan undang-undang dan pendekatan kawal selia setiap negara.

> "*Kandungan digital tidak mengenal sempadan negara. Aliran wang juga begitu. Seorang kanak-kanak tidak sepatutnya mendapat perlindungan yang lebih rendah hanya kerana jenama, pencipta kandungan atau platform yang berurusan dengannya berada di negara lain. ASEAN mempunyai peluang untuk membangunkan perlindungan asas yang boleh merentasi sempadan, seiring dengan cara ekonomi digital hari ini beroperasi*," katanya.

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ABOUT CMCF

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF), also known as the Content Forum, is an industry-led forum designated under the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and registered with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). CMCF is mandated to oversee and promote self-regulation of content disseminated over electronic networks in Malaysia.

CMCF brings together a broad cross-section of the communications and multimedia content ecosystem, including broadcasters, advertisers, advertising agencies, content creators and distributors, internet service providers, audiotext hosting service providers, technology, media and digital service providers, and civic groups. This multi-stakeholder composition ensures that content standards are developed with practical industry insight while reflecting public interest considerations.

As Malaysia's recognised industry self-regulatory body for electronic content, CMCF is responsible for the development, implementation, and enforcement of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code. First registered with MCMC on 1 September 2004, and most recently revised in 2022, the Content Code sets out governing standards and best practices for content dissemination, providing a framework that supports creativity, innovation, and the sustainable growth of the industry.

CMCF also houses a Complaints Bureau, which receives complaints from both industry players and the public regarding content disseminated over electronic networks. The Bureau is empowered to investigate alleged breaches of the Content Code, facilitate mediation, adjudicate cases, issue published orders, and impose sanctions where appropriate. In addition, it provides advisory guidance on electronic content matters.

Through self-regulation, CMCF aims to complement the existing legal framework by promoting responsible content practices, enhancing consumer protection, and fostering a fair and trusted content ecosystem.

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