

Protecting Societies, Families, and Youth from the Misuse of Digital Platforms: A Human-Centered Imperative

H.E. Dr. Abdulla Belhaif Al Nuaimi

Abdulla.Belhaif@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

As digital platforms become the primary arena in which more than 5.6 billion people, over two-thirds of the world's population, access information, the protection of societies, families, and the young from their misuse emerges as a defining challenge of the present era. This paper situates that challenge within the United Arab Emirates' distinctive model of intercultural dialogue and tolerance, advanced as a sustained national project for safeguarding social cohesion. It observes that roughly seventy percent of young people now derive their information, and frequently their convictions, from the internet, where fragmented and unverified content tends to divide communities rather than unite them. Drawing on the observation that children largely internalize the worldview of their parents until approximately the age of eleven, after which they enter an open and largely unmediated digital sphere, the paper underscores the family as the formative line of defines in cultivating discernment and resilience. It further notes the scale of global investment in digital infrastructure, exceeding six hundred billion dollars in 2026, and argues that a meaningful share of such expenditure must be explicitly human-centered, oriented toward the wellbeing of families and communities rather than engagement alone. Positioning the convening as a recurring platform for evidence-based dialogue among scholars, policymakers, and practitioners worldwide, the paper concludes that protecting children and the future of societies requires sustained international cooperation and a deliberate reorientation of digital innovation toward human and communal flourishing.