

TikTok and AU Commission launch **#SaferTogether** for digital safety in Africa

TikTok has announced a partnership with the African Union Commission's Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate (WGYD), aimed at bolstering online safety awareness among the youth as well as parents, teachers and guardians in Africa.



TikTok and the African Union Commission Forge Multi-Year Partnership. Source: Supplied.

Collaboration

This collaboration emerges at a critical moment, addressing the urgent need for digital safety amidst the unique challenges faced by the continent. Africa stands at a digital crossroads, with the rapid proliferation of social media platforms juxtaposed against rising concerns for the safety of its youngest citizens. The recent wave of regulatory scrutiny and the shadow of potential bans underscore the importance of proactive measures to ensure a safe online environment.

Against this backdrop, TikTok and the African Union Commission (AUC) are teaming up to launch the Africa-wide **#SaferTogether** campaign, aimed at educating and engaging youngsters, parents, teachers, and community leaders on digital safety through in-app and on-ground activities.

This flagship, multi-year initiative, launched at the TikTok Safer Internet Summit in Accra, Ghana on 14 March and attended by various government officials and regulators from across the continent.



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14 Mar 2024



This initiative, combining in-app and on-ground efforts, aims to educate and empower communities on digital safety, aligning closely with the AUC's focus on children's safety in the digital space and the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa. It includes a comprehensive in-app campaign featuring educational videos on internet safety, supported by hashtag challenges and content creator safety endorsements. Additionally, TikTok and the AUC will distribute "Digital Safety Toolkits" to aid teachers and guardians in addressing crucial digital safety issues. These resources will be accessible on

TikTok through a dedicated microsite, serving as an interactive guide for promoting safer online practices.

Fortune Mgwili-Sibanda, Government Relations & Public Policy director, TikTok, Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighted this collaboration's strategic nature: "Our *#SaferTogether* partnership with the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate reinforces TikTok's deep commitment to the diverse tapestry of markets across Africa. Through initiatives like our educational workshops, and the development of comprehensive safety toolkits, we are committed to nurturing a digitally safe environment for all."

Vital step

Echoing this sentiment, Prudence Nonkululeko Ngwenya, director of the Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate African Union, lauded the partnership as a vital step towards empowering Africa's youth and safeguarding their digital futures.

"The *#SaferTogether* campaign launch with TikTok is in line with the African Union's ongoing efforts to promote and advocate for not only safe online experiences for young people in Africa, but also their mental well-being through the 1 Million Next Level Initiative. While access to internet can help children and young people stay connected, improve their digital literacy, and diversify their livelihoods, it is crucial that they are provided with a safe environment to reap the benefits of digital platforms."

Through continental frameworks and initiatives such as the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa and the 1 Million Next Level Initiative, AUC aims to not only champion increased access to digital platforms for young people, but to also promote their safe use to address issues related to unsafe internet use.

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