

POSITION PAPER !



COMMITTEE: United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)

TOPIC: Regulating the Impact of Beauty Filters and AI-Generated Imagery on Youth Mental Health and Body Image Standards

COUNTRY: Malaysia

POPULATION: 34.4 to 36.3 million people

I. Position Statement:

The Government of Malaysia is deeply committed to safeguarding the mental, emotional, and social well-being of youth, with a particular focus on the unique vulnerabilities faced by young women and girls in the digital age. In alignment with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Malaysia recognizes that the unchecked proliferation of hyper-realistic beauty filters and Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated imagery perpetuates artificial, Eurocentric, and toxic body image standards. These digital distortions directly fuel body dysmorphia, anxiety, and low self-esteem among youth. Malaysia firmly believes that multi-sectoral digital governance—combining strict legislative accountability, robust digital literacy frameworks, and culturally integrated mental health support—is imperative to foster a safe, inclusive, and authentic digital ecosystem.

II. Regional and National Context:

As a highly digitalized nation with rising social media penetration among adolescents, Malaysia experiences the dual impact of rapid technological adoption and escalating youth mental health crises. Research highlighted by national public health initiatives demonstrates a direct correlation between intensive social media

usage and body image dissatisfaction among Malaysian school-aged children and young adults.

To address these challenges, Malaysia has moved decisively past voluntary corporate pledges, enacting some of the world's most stringent regulatory frameworks to protect minors online:

- **The Online Safety Act and Under-16 Social Media Ban:** Recognizing that early exposure to toxic beauty standards permanently warps psychological development, Malaysia enforces a strict social media ban for children under the age of 16. This decisive age barrier protects vulnerable adolescents from algorithmic exploitation during their most formative years.
- **Mandatory Licensing and Financial Penalties:** To curb the unchecked power of social media conglomerates, Malaysia enforces a mandatory licensing framework for tech giants operating within its borders. Platforms that fail to remove harmful algorithms, exploitative filters, or predatory content face severe legal and financial repercussions, including non-compliance penalties of up to RM 10 million.
- **MCMC Mandatory AI Labeling and Transparency:** Under the direction of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Malaysia is actively implementing mandatory labeling protocols for all AI-generated content. By legally requiring platforms to flag synthetic media, Malaysia ensures total visual transparency, dismantling the illusion of digitized perfection.
- **The National Mental Health Strategic Plan:** Alongside strict technical regulation, this framework prioritizes early intervention, school-based mental health tracking, and peer-support networks to build psychological resilience against external social pressures.

III. Proposed International Solutions and Actions

Malaysia urges the UNCSW to champion a global, human-centric approach to digital body image standards by enacting three critical pillars of action based on successful sovereign models:

- **Global AI and Filter Labeling Protocols:** Mirroring the MCMC framework, Malaysia advocates for international consensus requiring social media platforms and AI developers to implement standardized, clear, and unremovable digital watermarks (e.g., "*Digitally Altered*" or "*AI-Generated*") on any content utilizing facial or body-modification algorithms.
- **Harmonized Corporate Licensing and Sovereign Penalties:** Multinational technology platforms must be held accountable globally for optimizing algorithms that actively exploit youth insecurities for financial engagement. UNCSW should push for mandatory "Safety by Design" frameworks globally, encouraging Member States to adopt licensing systems that carry heavy financial penalties for non-compliance.
- **Age-Gating and Age-Verification Mechanisms:** Malaysia calls upon international technical bodies to standardize robust, privacy-respecting age-verification technologies. This will enable Member States to effectively restrict minors from accessing harmful, body-warping filters and adult-oriented digital ecosystems.
- **Cross-Border Technical Cooperation:** Malaysia calls for enhanced knowledge-sharing between the UNCSW, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and global civil society to monitor the psychological impacts of deepfakes and generative AI, ensuring public health data directly guides international technology policy.

Malaysia stands ready to collaborate with fellow Member States to ensure that technological advancement does not come at the cost of our youth's mental health, affirming that the women and leaders of tomorrow deserve a digital world built on truth, dignity, and self-worth.
