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# MTN, DOVVSU launch 16 days of activism to combat digital violence

By Joyce Timbillah Awuni

**T**ELECOMMUNICATIONS company, MTN Ghana, in partnership with the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, has launched a 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence initiative, with a call to pupils to help end digital violence against women and children.

This is to raise nationwide awareness on emerging forms of online abuse and to equip young people with the knowledge to protect themselves and others in the digital space.

## Theme

The theme for this year's campaign is "Uniting to End Digital Violence against Women and Children." It seeks to protect all users, especially women and children who are increasingly exposed to online abuse.

The launch brought together officials of MTN, senior police officers, cyber security experts and pupils of the Police Basic Schools in Accra for an interactive session on online safety, cyberbullying and reporting mechanisms.

Speaking at the launch, the Chief Corporate Services and Sustainability Officer of MTN Ghana, Adjoa Afriyie-Wiafe, said increased use of the internet has exposed young people to new forms of

violence, including cyberbullying, harassment and harmful online content.

She explained that many pupils were unaware that insulting or offensive online behaviour can constitute cybercrime, making early education crucial.

Mrs Afriyie-Wiafe encouraged pupils to report incidents of harassment and to support friends who may be silent victims.

She added that uniting to end digital violence required cooperation, empathy and vigilance from all.

The MTN Ghana Chief Corporate Services and Sustainability Officer emphasised MTN's responsibility to make the digital environment safer and highlighted partnerships with bodies such as the Internet Watch Foundation to remove harmful content before it reaches users.

## Call for safer environments

The Director of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACoP) Owusuuaa Kyeremah, described the theme as a reminder that every Ghanaian has a responsibility to ensure safety both online and offline.

She applauded MTN Ghana for



• Adwoa Wiafe (middle), Chief Corporate Services and Sustainability Officer of MTN, with ACP Owusuuaa Kyeremah (4th from right), DCOP Benjamin Addae (3rd from right) and other dignitaries after the event. Picture: CALEB VANDERPUIE

consistently supporting national initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable groups, especially women and girls.

She expressed deep appreciation for MTN's longstanding collaboration with the Ghana Police Service, saying that the company's support strengthens the country's collective resolve to safeguard children.

ACoP Kyeremah stated that digital violence is real and rapidly growing, with women and girls being the primary targets of harassment, pressure for sexual content, hacking and the circulation of private images.

## Understanding online risks

The Director, Cybercrime Unit & Child Protection Digital Forensic Laboratory of the Ghana Police Service, Superintendent Emmanuel Gyebi, for his

part, helped pupils understand how the internet, despite its vast opportunities in governance, education and business, carries significant risks, especially for women, girls and the elderly.

He explained that online harm often begins with digital content, including images, videos, text messages and audio recordings that may contain hate speech, misinformation, false publications, or prohibited intimate material.

He said that the Cybersecurity Act now defines harmful intimate content more clearly and places strict criminal sanctions on those who produce, share or threaten others with such material.

He also warned that misinformation and disinformation have become major tools used to harm individuals and destabilise communities, and, therefore, must not be shared thoughtlessly.