



**The Freedom Online Coalition**  
**Joint Statement on the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU)**  
**Plenipotentiary Conference 2018**

We, the Freedom Online Coalition governments, recognise the importance of accountability, transparency and multistakeholder engagement where international public policy issues are discussed. Our engagement at the ITU aims at building and improving our telecommunications network. Moreover, our decisions are anchored in the existing human rights framework as we all have a duty to promote and protect human rights in all forums where we engage, including the ITU.

The International Telecommunication Union's 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference will set the ITU's strategy for the upcoming years, and will see a wide range of technical and policy matters on the agenda.

In line with the values set out above, we recognize the importance of engaging non-governmental human rights experts in our national processes for the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference, precluding any obligation.

We further encourage governments that are not members of the Freedom Online Coalition to also consider enhancing their processes by engaging non-governmental human rights experts.



## **About the Freedom Online Coalition**

The FOC is a multilateral coalition of 30 governments that collaborate to advance Internet freedom worldwide. The Coalition provides a forum for like-minded governments to coordinate efforts and work with civil society, the private sector, and other Internet stakeholders to support the ability of individuals to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms online. The FOC invites all states that support an open and interoperable Internet to apply to join the FOC.

The mission and vision of the FOC are founded upon the notion that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online; a pioneering notion originally outlined in the founding FOC Hague Declaration, reaffirmed in the Nairobi Terms of Reference , Tallinn Agenda and San José Statement, and further confirmed in UN Human Rights Council resolutions 20/8, 26/13, 28/16 and 32/13, adopted July 5, 2012, June 26, 2014, March 26, 2015, and July 1, 2016, respectively, as well as resolutions 68/167, 69/166 and 71/199 adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly respectively on December 18, 2013, December 18, 2014, and December 19, 2016.

The FOC seeks to identify best practices regarding the application of human rights obligations and commitments in the evolving online landscape, as well as to call attention to conditions that undermine those rights.

The FOC, through the Digital Defenders Partnership, also provides rapid response to a range of threats to Internet freedom; from supporting bloggers and cyber activists who find themselves under digital attack, to helping them exercise their human rights online in Internet repressive environments. More information on the Freedom Online Coalition is available at: [www.freedomonlinecoalition.com](http://www.freedomonlinecoalition.com) . More information on the Digital Defenders Partnership is available at: [www.digitaldefenders.org](http://www.digitaldefenders.org) .