

Minutes of the Friends of the Chair Call #1 - 25 March 2020 at 2pm UTC

Attendance: Canada, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, UK and the US; Support Unit (SU)

Housekeeping

- Recap of action items from the February Call
 - All action items from the February Friends of the Chair (FotC) have been completed.
 - SU will be following up with Members bilaterally on some of the action items.
- FOC outlook and calendar:
 - Update on COVID-19 and rescheduled/canceled meetings and events.
 - Due to COVID-19, in-person meetings and conferences are being canceled or rescheduled:
 - The World Press Freedom Conference in the Hague has been postponed to October; RightsCon Costa Rica has been moved to next year.
 - As RightsCon will be postponed, there will be no in-person Strategy and Coordination Meeting in June.
 - Members discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the FOC and noted that while there will be some changes, for example no in-person meetings in the foreseeable future, other work streams such as statement development and the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights can continue as planned.

FOC Chairmanship

- Update on FOC Chairmanship 2020
 - As the FOC has not identified a Chair for 2020, the FotC will be leading the Coalition's work until January 2021 when Finland's Chairmanship begins.

Program of Action 2020

- General updates
 - Update on PoA 2020: Rethinking working methods and activities in light of COVID-19.
 - The SU will be reviewing the Program of Action to adjust the working methods, activities and priorities to the current situation.
 - The SU will share its recommendations in the coming weeks to be discussed in more detail on the next FotC call on 29 April.
 - Members agreed that the Coalition will publish a statement addressing COVID-19 and its implications for Internet freedom, highlighting concerns around the use of surveillance practices, Internet shutdowns, and disinformation.
 - US will work with the SU on the first draft of the statement and will share it with the FotC for review and input.
- Diplomatic Coordination
 - New York: Pre-draft of the OEWG report
 - The negotiations that were scheduled to take place in New York on 30-31 March have been canceled and the Chair is now requesting written input into the pre-draft by Friday, 3 April.

- SU is compiling input from the AN for FOC members to consider in their written responses to the draft.
 - Geneva: 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)
 - Germany delivered a statement on behalf of Members of the FOC in the general debate of the HRC. The statement used existing language from the FOC Joint Statement on Digital Inclusion that was launched in February.
 - Paris, Vienna: n/a
 - UN High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (HLPDC)
 - Canada thanked all Members for their input into the HLPDC's Roadmap document on Recommendation 3A/B.
 - Due to several factors, for example a tight timeline to provide input, the FOC is unable to provide specific feedback on the Roadmap at this time.
 - Canada will prepare a consolidated response reflecting concerns that were raised in conversations between Members regarding both the process and the substance of the UN HLPDC Roundtable 3A/B.
 - Canada will circulate the draft response to FotC for their review and comments before sending it to the UNSG's office and the co-Champions.
 - Shaping Global Norms
 - Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights:
 - Canada thanked Members for their interest to join the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (T-FAIR).
 - Canada noted that the work of the group has commenced and a questionnaire had been circulated to Task Force Members to provide feedback on the Briefing Note and Terms of Reference.
 - Following input from the Members, the first call of the Task Force will be scheduled for early April.
 - Disinformation Statement:
 - The leads (Finland and UK) are currently developing a new draft following input and recommendations from Members.
 - Members suggested that the leads might want to address COVID-19 as it relates to disinformation in the statement.
 - Finland and the UK noted that they will take the recommendation into account and will discuss the next steps bilaterally.

Action>> SU to share recommendations to adjust the PoA 2020 ahead of FotC call in April.

Action>> SU to work with the US on the first draft of COVID-19 statement and share with FotC by the end of the week.

Action>> SU to work with Canada to schedule the first call of T-FAIR for the first week of April.

Action>> Members to provide feedback on the FOC response to the HLPDC's Roadmap on Recommendation 3A/B by emailing Canada by COB Thursday 2 April.

Advisory Network (FOC-AN)

- Update on FOC-AN activities
 - AN held their monthly call on Tuesday, 24 March.
 - Priority agenda items discussed on the call included coordination around the OEWG process, T-FAIR and COVID-19 and its impact on the work of the FOC-AN.

FOC Membership

- Updates on enlargement of FOC membership

AOB

- N/A