



Minutes of the FOC's Strategy and Coordination Meeting
10:00 - 13:00 - Tuesday 12 June, RightsCon Conference in Tunisia

Attendance: Canada, Finland, Germany, Ghana, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Tunisia, UK, US; FOC Support Unit [SU]

ANNEX FOR MINUTES AVAILABLE

1. INTERNET FREEDOM TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

1.1 Information sharing on Internet freedom trends and policy developments: Briefing, summary points and recommendations provided by Sanja Kelly, Independent Expert

1.2 Upcoming Internet freedom events

- The SU highlighted the upcoming events relating to Internet Freedom
 - 11-14 June – [RightsCon](#), Tunis, Tunisia
 - 13-14 June – [Annual Privacy Forum 2019](#), Rome, Italy
 - 19-20 June – [EuroDIG 2019](#), The Hague, Netherlands
 - 24 June -12 July [UN Human Rights Council](#), Geneva, Switzerland
 - 10-11 July – [Global Conference for Media Freedom](#) London, UK. The event, jointly hosted by Canada and the UK, would seek to address a deteriorating situation of freedom of the media. The SU noted the conference will include FOC activities, with more details to follow.

Action>> SU to notify Members of any updates regarding FOC activities at the [Global Conference for Media Freedom](#).

1.3 Christchurch Call briefing - David Reid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand.

- New Zealand provided Members with a briefing on the [Christchurch Call](#), including an introduction to the Call, its processes and next steps
 - Members indicated their support for the initiative and highlighted their support for the message of the Christchurch call.
 - New Zealand thanked Members for their input and support for the initiative.

2. HOUSEKEEPING

2.1 Schedule overview of FOC meetings at RightsCon

- The SU provided an overview of FOC meetings and planned activities at RightsCon.

2.2 Summary of actions from last Strategy and Coordination Meeting

- The SU provided an overview of the action points from the Strategy and Coordination Meeting in Berlin, which had been completed since.

2.3 Finance

- The SU noted funds for 2019 had been secured, with thanks to contributions from Germany, The Netherlands, Australia, Germany and Sweden.
- Further fundraising would be conducted with a focus on supporting FO Conference costs, including facilitating civil society travel to/from the FO Conference in Accra, and directly supporting the operations of the Support Unit.

3. UPDATE ON CHAIRMANSHIP PROGRAM

3.1 Annual Conference

3.1.1 Update on FO Conference

- The FO Conference will take place from 12-14 February in Accra.
- Ghana's team had recently hired a Program Manager to assist with preparation.
- Ghana highlighted that they intended to introduce capacity building sessions as part of the Conference.
- The Conference would seek to attract decision makers and include high level engagement, with the involvement of the local Missions of FOC members in Ghana.
- Ghana noted its high level of political interest in the Conference, including presidential political commitment to the issues of the FOC.
- The first draft of the Conference concept note would be circulated to the Members for input on the focus of the Conference and its outcomes.
- Finland highlighted interest in enhancing cooperation with Ghana on Conference preparations.
- The Netherlands suggested combining a scoping trip with engagement with Missions from Ghana and noted that the concept note ought to include a well-defined vision for outcomes.

Action>> Members to save the dates 12-14 February for the FO Conference.

Action>> Ghana to circulate first draft of Conference concept note to the Friends of the Chair.

3.2 Implementation of Program of Action 2019-2020

3.2.1 Review of activities and progress on implementation

- SU provided a review of the first and second quarters of activities.
 - Diplomatic Coordination
 - The US hosted a briefing for the FOC New York network on 5 June 2019 to activate the network, which was attended by 21 FOC governments.
 - Members at the briefing discussed potential methods of coordinating at future processes, including the UNGA, GGE and OEWG.
 - The US noted the strategy at New York could provide a model for the coordination of diplomatic networks in Geneva, Vienna and Paris.
 - Members noted the importance of engaging with non-likeminded countries and noted that in the lead up to voting processes and decision-making scenarios, FOC Members could strategically identify and target swing-states.
 - Shaping Global Norms
 - SU and Members thanked Canada for their leadership of the Joint Statement on Defending Civic Space Online.
 - Ghana noted that the first draft of the Digital Inclusion Joint Statement had been shared with the Friends of the Chair and the FOC-AN for feedback.
 - Canada would be framing the learning call on AI within the wider strategy of leading the development of the statement.
 - The SU invited further input on how to structure the FOC's learning call on rights-respecting approach to the Internet, with the particular considerations of objectives and outcomes of the call.
 - The Netherlands highlighted that they had published a China strategy, and that the FOC could further engage on this issue.
 - Estonia and the Netherlands had submitted a Request for Advice to the FOC-AN for input into the FOC joint statement on Cybersecurity Laws.

- The SU highlighted that the FOC requires a lead for the statement on Disinformation.

Action>> Members to share with the SU suggested objectives and outcomes of learning call on rights-respecting approach to the Internet by **Friday 5 July**.

3.2.3 Next steps

- The SU provided a review of the third and fourth quarters of activities, including the status of the activities and anticipated next steps.

3.3 Strengthening Internal Coordination and Operations

- Members had highlighted that the FOC can improve its working methods by strengthening its operations and improving its process.
- The SU invited Members to provide reflections on lessons learned and good practice for in efforts to develop global norms and diplomatic coordination.
- Members noted that the FOC-AN can provide expertise and support in the FOC's efforts to facilitate diplomatic coordination and shape global norms.

3.3.1 Developing joint statements: lessons learned and good practice

- Canada noted that future joint statements may benefit by being shorter in length, in order to be concise, targeted and specific.
- Canada highlighted that high level language may enable faster finalisation of the statement, whereas more detailed scrutiny within the statement would enable stronger policy impact.
- The Netherlands highlighted that the process of developing joint statements would benefit from more transparency over edits and breaking of silence procedures, including identifying who had broken the silence procedure and their rationale.
- Members encouraged leads to use 'track changes' to enable a more open exchange, and to impose version control, to enable reviewers to easily identify the shifts in the language.
- Members highlighted a best practice of using virtual calls to review text, with the example of previous FOC statements that had been drafted in this way.
- The UK highlighted that the circulation of a short, clear description including the identification of the purpose of the statement and intended destination would encourage the cooperation of the FOC and relevant parties.
- Members highlighted the importance of early identification of a dissemination strategy with the FOC-AN, including timing and destination of release.

Action>> Statement leads to work with SU to implement recommendations for developing joint statements.

3.3.2 Leveraging diplomatic networks

- The SU highlighted the importance of identifying POC's for the networks to enable the organisation of coordination at the diplomatic networks.
- Members reiterated the importance of targeted conversations relating to specific issues or processes for the networks to coordinate around, with concrete goals for follow-up items. This would ensure the justification of involving the time of the local FOC experts at the networks.
- Members highlighted the importance of involving the FOC-AN.
- Members additionally highlighted the importance of using FOC diplomatic networks to engage with non-FOC Members.

Action>> Members to discuss next steps for leveraging diplomatic networks on June Friends of the Chair call.

3.3.3 Chairmanship 2020-2021

- The SU highlighted that Ghana's Chairmanship will be ending in March 2020 and encouraged Members to express interest in Chairmanship of the Coalition in 2020.

Action>> Members to notify SU of interest in Chairmanship of the Coalition from 2020 onwards.

3.3.4 Updates on internal engagement strategy

- Members highlighted lessons learned from conducting the internal engagement strategy.
 - Members noted that time zones for certain Members had posed a challenge for joining calls or meetings.
 - Members noted that the upcoming processes of the OEWG and GGE were of interest to many FOC Members and provided an opportunity for further engagement.

3.3.5 Updates on outreach to prospective Members

- Members discussed that Ghana's Chairmanship provided an opportunity for increasing the membership of African governments in the FOC.

Action>> Members to discuss next steps for outreach on June Friends of the Chair call.

4. AOB

- n/a