

Minutes of the Friends of the Chair Call #6 - 30 September, 2020 at 2pm UTC

Attendance: Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, UK, US; Support Unit [SU]

Housekeeping

- Recap of action items from the August call
 - All action items from the August Friends of the Chair (FotC) call have been completed.
 - Recommendation to amend the FOC Stockholm Terms of Reference
 - Following a consultation among Members and as recommended by the United States during the August Friends of the Chair meeting, the recommendation to amend the FOC ToR was shared with Members for reflections.
 - SU highlighted that Members suggested shortening the silence procedure, as outlined in the recommendation.
 - Finland advised Members to take notice if/how a shorter silence procedure affects the participation rate of Members.

- FOC outlook and calendar
 - The September monthly call of the FOC Advisory Network will take place on Thursday, 1 October.
 - The next Friends of the Chair call is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 28 October.
 - Joint FOC - National Cyber Security Centre, Ghana event on Digital Inclusion in the Era of COVID-19
 - The session is jointly organised by the FOC and the National Cyber Security Centre during the National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) in Ghana on Thursday, 15 October. The event will focus on digital inclusion in the era of COVID-19, and more specifically on raising awareness of the FOC, the Joint Statement on Digital Inclusion and its key recommendations, and the future activity of the FOC. Panelists will include representatives from the Governments of Ghana and Germany, as the Joint Statement on Digital Inclusion leads, and a Member of the FOC Advisory Network.
 - SU will circulate the link once the invitation is ready.
 - [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#)
 - The Taskforce on AI and Human Rights (T-FAIR) will host an event during Day 0 on Thursday, 5 November at 12:40 UTC under the theme “Promoting Rights-Respecting AI: a Call for Action from the Freedom Online Coalition”. The Joint Statement on AI and Human Rights is intended to be launched during this session.
 - The FOC Open Forum is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 5 November at 13:50 UTC and it will focus around disinformation. The FOC Joint Statement on Disinformation is intended to be launched during this session.
 - Next Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM)
 - SU suggested to replace the November Friends of the Chair call with the SCM due to be scheduled in the last quarter of the year.
 - Norway invited Members to a seminar organised by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Journalism & Media International Center (JMIC) at OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, UNESCO and International Media Support on the occasion of

the International Universal Access to Information Day “[A Right to Know. How can we secure reliable information in times of crises?](#)” taking place on Thursday, 1 October.

Action>> SU to circulate recommendation to amend the FOC Terms of Reference to the full FOC for a 30-day silence procedure until **COB Thursday, 5 November**.

Action>> SU to follow up with Members regarding the November Strategy and Coordination Meeting’s time and date.

FOC Chairship

- Finland introduced the draft Program of Action 2021
 - Finland is working on a more detailed schedule of activities to be shared later for input and ideas.
 - The incoming Chair for 2021 will focus on three key issues: visibility, effectiveness and continuity.
 - Finland will work to increase FOC visibility by featuring the 10-year anniversary in communications and events throughout 2021 by:
 - Highlighting the anniversary at the proposed Ministerial level event at UNGA in New York in September 2021 and at the FO Conference in Helsinki in December 2021;
 - Preparing an outcome document following the FO Conference outlining FOC’s way forward.
 - Activities may be subject to change depending on the pandemic.
 - Finland will support more continuous diplomatic network work and will strengthen multistakeholder engagement by:
 - Revitalising New York and Geneva networks, in particular, and encouraging coordination among diplomats in a more systematic way;
 - Developing networks in Silicon Valley and supporting more direct dialogue with the FOC-AN, including involving them in the joint statement drafting process early on;
 - Enhancing communications with existing FOC Members, especially with the global South, to actively participate in the FOC.
 - Finland will advance the following priorities - digital inclusion, cybersecurity, disinformation and artificial intelligence by:
 - Creating more continuity in normative work by following up on statement implementation, including by reviewing themes of FOC’s past work and finding opportunities for advancing those themes in the future.
 - Additionally, Finland will work on a one-page document on overall themes, including disinformation, safe Internet for women and girls, Internet freedom and development, and digital inclusion.
 - Initial reflections:
 - Members thanked Finland for preparing the draft PoA 2021 and offered their support and assistance on various priorities.
 - Canada and the UK noted that they would be interested in supporting work on AI and disinformation, respectively.
 - UK recommended that Finland explore the taskforce model to take priority areas forward.
 - US noted that they would like to see more detailed outcomes and a list of concrete deliverables. In addition, the US encouraged Finland to include digital authoritarianism, discussed and raised by the FOC and the FOC-AN on a regular basis, as a priority issue.

- Finland highlighted that they are currently not planning on developing new joint statements as the incoming Chair but instead on following up on the implementation of past statements. However, Finland is open to proposals from Members.
 - SU noted that it is developing an internal PoA to complement the external PoA as stated by the FOC ToR. The internal PoA will be centred around the operational side of the work of the FOC and the SU.

Action>> Members to provide written feedback to Finland (Rauno.Merisaari@formin.fi and JanetteSorsimo@formin.fi) on the draft Program of Action 2021 by **COB Friday, 16 October**.

Program of Action 2020

- Diplomatic Coordination:
 - SU provided an update on SOPs for leading a diplomatic network
 - Following previous discussions, the Support Unit has prepared draft FOC guidelines for leading diplomatic networks, which were circulated to Friends ahead of the September Friends of the Chair meeting. The aim is to finalise the guidelines before the start of Finland's Chairship in January 2021.
 - US encouraged Members to share the guidelines with relevant missions for their reflection.
 - Finland suggested adding inner guidelines to highlight that the proposed activities are optional to reflect that different networks might have different priorities.
 - Finland offered their support to co-lead with other Members.
 - Finland also suggested integrating information of the diplomatic networks and contact points on the FOC website.
 - SU noted that a revamp of the website will be included as part of the internal PoA currently being developed to complement the external PoA.
 - New York, Paris, Geneva, Vienna: N/A

Action>> Members are encouraged to share the draft guidelines for leading diplomatic networks with relevant diplomatic missions and to provide written comments to SU.

- Shaping Global Norms:
 - Canada provided update on the Task Force on AI and Human Rights
 - Canada is currently consolidating feedback after a consultation process with FOC, T-FAIR and FOC-AN Members and external consultees.
 - Canada is aiming at circulating the second draft by the end of this week.
 - UK provided update on the Joint Statement on Disinformation
 - The revised draft was circulated to the full FOC and the FOC-AN for final redlines until Wednesday, 7 October.
 - UK and Finland will consolidate the feedback and use the expedited silence procedure starting from Monday, 12 October.

Action>> Members to reach out to Canada by **COB Tuesday, 6 October** if interested in participating at the IGF panel on Thursday, 5 November to launch the Joint Statement on AI and Human Rights.

Action>> Members to provide final redlines on the Joint Statement on Disinformation by **COB Wednesday, 7 October**.

Advisory Network (AN)

- Update on AN activities

- FOC-AN will hold their monthly call on Thursday, 1 October.
- FOC-AN is finalising the revision of their Rules of Procedure.
- FOC-AN Members have provided feedback on the two FOC latest joint statements drafts, and will participate in the joint FOC/NCSC Ghana event and the FOC Open Forum at IGF.

FOC Membership

- Updates on FOC Member engagement
 - SU noted that the FOC has welcomed new points of contacts of several FOC Member states.
- Updates on enlargement of FOC membership

AOB

- N/A