

Friends of the Chair Call #8 (October)

Wednesday, 27 October 2021 at 14:00 UTC

Attending: Finland, Canada, Estonia, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK, US

Housekeeping

- Recap of action items from the Friends of the Chair monthly call #7 (September)
- Internal Program of Action updates
 - SU has reached out to FOC members to continue the fundraising efforts for 2022 to help support the implementation of the PoA 2022.
 - Estonia announced its intention to allocate funding to the FOC in 2022.
 - Following Finland's sign off, the SU will begin implementing the FOC communications strategy.
- FOC outlook and calendar
 - *Internal events*
 - October 28 - Task Force on Digital Equality Monthly Call
 - November 9 at 13:00 UTC - FOC-AN informal briefing on Afghanistan
 - November 10 - Silicon Valley Working Group Monthly Call
 - November 17 - FOC-AN Call
 - November 24 - Friends of the Chair call
 - November 29 - Strategy and Coordination Meeting
 - November 29 - Joint FOC/ FOC-AN Roundtable
 - *External events*
 - November 18 - Tech for Democracy
 - November - Future Tech Forum hosted by UK
 - December 6-10 - IGF
 - December 8 - IGF FOC Open Forum on Internet Governance in the 2020s (preliminary schedule)
- IGF Virtual Booth - showcasing 10 years of FOC Joint Statements.

Action point >> SU to circulate the communications strategy with the FotC upon Finland's approval.

Action point >> FotC to express interest to continue serving on the FotC in 2022 by November 5.

Action point >> SU to circulate the invitation for the FOC-AN informal briefing on Afghanistan for the FOC. *[This has been completed already.]*

Program of Action 2021

- 10th Anniversary: Finland/ SU provided an update
 - Political Declaration

- Finland is consolidating comments from Members and the FOC-AN, and planning to circulate the final draft the week commencing November 1.
 - FO Conference
 - SU is coordinating with session organisers.
 - Internal invitations have been sent. External invitations will go out by November 2.
 - The Conference registration page has been shared internally, and will be made publicly available in November, followed by the Conference programme.
 - Additional information will be available shortly on the www.freedomonlineconference.com.
 - US noted the importance of raising visibility and showing relevance of the FOC through the FO Conference.
 - Members agreed that the Political Declaration has to be strengthened, to reaffirm FOC's mission and commitments in relevant fora.
 - High-level ministerial meeting
 - US shared their intention to invite the US Secretary of State.
 - Estonia announced the attendance of their Minister of Foreign Affairs.
 - UK shared the intention to invite the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.
 - Members agreed to encourage their Ministers to attend the Ministerial meeting.

Action point >> Finland to share the 3rd draft of the Political Declaration to the FOC for red-line edits during the week commencing November 1.

- Diplomatic Coordination:
 - Geneva:
 - The Finnish network lead is planning a coordination event at the end of the year to link the Finnish and Canadian Chairships and cover mutual priority issues.
 - Paris:
 - The network leads (Finland and Canada) are currently exploring opportunities for FOC engagement, including by organising a coordination event with T-FAIR ahead of the UNESCO General Conference in November.
 - New York:
 - The network leads (Finland and US) met in October and discussed lessons learned and best practices to implement in the future.
 - Setting up a handover call with Canada.
 - Vienna: N/A
 - SU encouraged Members to think about lessons learned when it comes to leading the diplomatic networks ahead of the Strategy and Coordination Meeting in November.

- Shaping Global Norms/ Advancing Priority Issues:
 - Country-specific statements:
 - Finland's proposal is to adopt one process for issuing both thematic and country-specific statements.
 - The proposal suggests statements to be issued on behalf of either:
 - The whole Coalition, i.e. by consensus; or
 - The Members of the Coalition, i.e. opt-in option.
 - Each statement will start from a position of consensus, i.e. the penholder will seek to achieve consensus. A statement that achieves consensus will be issued on behalf of the FOC.
 - If a consensus can not be reached, the lead drafter can seek an alternative route, in which case the Members will be offered an opportunity to proactively opt-in to support the respective statement.
 - The statement would then be issued on behalf of the supporting Members.
 - Finland noted that the proposal will be shared with the FOC for comments, to be further discussed at the Strategy and Coordination meeting.

Action point >> FotC members to comment on the proposed process on country-specific statements by **COB Tuesday, November 2.**

Action point >> SU to share the country-specific statements proposal with the FOC for comments on November 3.

- Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach:
 - Silicon Valley Working Group:
 - Since their establishment earlier this year, the group has been discussing the issues of disinformation and digital authoritarianism.
 - SU noted that the group held a meeting on 13 October, next call to be held on 10 November.
 - The leads have distributed a survey to reflect on the past year and to decide on a way forward. The results will be discussed at the next monthly call in November.

Chairship 2022

- Canada shared the first draft of the Program of Action for Canada's 2022 Chairship with FOC and FOC-AN.

Action point >> FOC and FOC-AN members to submit comments on the first draft of the Program of Action 2022 by **COB Friday, 5 November.**

Advisory Network (AN)

- FOC-AN will host an informal briefing with the FOC members on the Proactive Advice on Digital Harms Related to Human Rights in Afghanistan.

- FOC-AN Members expressed concerns over the Alliance for the Future of the Internet initiative by the US government, noting that it overlaps with the FOC's work and may divert attention from the core issues that the FOC is focused on.
 - Initiated by Jason Pielemeier from GNI, FOC-AN sent a letter regarding the upcoming Technology for Democracy Summit and Summit for Democracy to Danish and US governments. [7. FOC-AN letter to US and Denmark]

AOB

- Establishment of a multilateral anti-censorship tech fund [8. Concept note - technology fund]
 - US noted that one potential deliverable for the US Summit for Democracy is the establishment of a multilateral anti-censorship tech fund.
 - US noted that a démarche will be sent to the FOC governments to support and fund the initiative if this moves forward.
- Alliance for the Future of the Internet
 - US government is considering the possibility of establishing a new alliance focused on the future of the internet aiming to provide close attention to the topic.