

Friends of the Chair monthly call #3

Wednesday, 30 March 2022, 14:00 UTC

Attending: Canada (FOC Chair 2022), Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK, US; Support Unit [SU]

Horizon Scanning

- Canada noted that activities in March were focused mostly on the situation in Ukraine.
- Most of the FOC states are engaged in the ongoing 49th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), including in activities around Ukraine's resolution '*The role of states in countering the negative impact of disinformation on human rights*'.
- [The Cyber and Tech Retreat](#) was held in Silicon Valley, co-organised by Denmark.

Program of Action 2022

- **Shaping Global Norms**
 - Capital-level coordination:
 - Canada will be hosting the Global Speaker Series - events, held throughout the year, connecting the FOC networks for discussions on digital technology, and high-level conversations ahead of relevant processes, such as UNGA, UNESCO, OAS.
 - The first event of the series will be a hybrid event highlighting connectivity and bridging digital divides on April 25 in Geneva. *[Please note that this event has been postponed - members will be made aware of the rescheduled date.]*
 - It will feature a fireside chat with H.E. Leslie E. Norton, Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN, followed by a panel discussion.
 - Canada published its [FOC Chair statement on Disinformation in Ukraine](#) on March 2.
 - Canada noted that 19 FOC members have endorsed the statement.
 - SU provided an overview of engagement on the FOC Twitter profile and the Coalition's website:
 - SU highlighted a significant increase in engagement, especially around new followers, mentions and tweet impressions following the FOC joining the conversation around Ukraine and disinformation.
 - Cross-promotion by FOC members drove traffic from social media channels to the FOC website, and led to an increase in mentions of the FOC.
 - These demonstrate the benefits of engaging in active conversations taking place on Twitter through trending hashtags and topics in the news cycle, which also led to uptake from Canadian media publications and notable Twitter channels covering the situation in Ukraine.

- Diplomatic networks:
 - Geneva diplomatic network
 - A virtual briefing was held on 21 March, and included presentations from civil society and the private sector, providing context on the topic of disinformation in the context of HRC engagement.
 - Paris diplomatic network
 - An in-person meeting on promotion of digital freedom and digital inclusion in UNESCO, was held on 30 March.
 - Dr. Tawfik Jelassi, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information spoke on the recent developments in UNESCO's work with regards to promotion of Internet freedom and digital inclusion.
 - Canada noted that the World Press Freedom Day Global Conference will be held May 2- May 5, 2022.
 - Canada is working with the Netherlands to develop a concept note and to co-host an event with the Media Freedom Coalition on misuse of digital surveillance tech and impact on media freedom.
- **Promoting Multi-stakeholder Engagement**
 - Task Forces / Working Groups
 - Germany provided an update on the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (TF-AIR).
 - The March monthly call featured guest speakers from Google on the topic 'How algorithms are being designed, monitored and adjusted by companies'.
 - Ghana provided an update on the Task Force on Digital Equality.
 - The group will be organising a working session in April, with an award-winning human rights lawyer, Nani Jansen Reventlow, specialised in strategic litigation on freedom of expression and digital rights.
 - The group finalised its 2022 work plan, and is looking to engage external support to develop a digital equality glossary to complement Canada's glossary of agreed-upon language from UN resolutions related to the FOC mandate.
 - SU provided an update on the Task Force on Internet Shutdowns (TFIS).
 - TFIS circulated their first newsletter at the end of February, noting deliverables, engagements and relevant information on Internet shutdowns.
 - TFIS organised a virtual briefing for the FOC and AN on March 9 on the steps governments can take to help the people of Ukraine prepare for, and mitigate against, the impacts of potential network disruptions.
 - TFIS co-Chairs are working on developing best practices for bilateral engagement on Internet shutdowns.

- During the next TFIS monthly call, the co-Chairs will share the barebones for a few different avenues that governments could take.
- FOC members will be encouraged to share their views. TFIS co-Chairs will use the provided framework to develop detailed talking points that are specific to the ways members would be inclined to use them.
- SU provided an update on the Silicon Valley Working Group.
 - The group held a monthly meeting in March, where it reviewed the planned agenda for 2022, noting an overarching focus on trust and safety.
 - The next meeting will be dedicated to a conversation with representatives from TikTok.
- Advisory Network (FOC-AN)
 - SU provided an update on the selection of new members for the FOC-AN cohort.
 - Seven new members of the 2022/24 FOC-AN cohort were approved by the FotC in the beginning of March.
 - The new members participated in the FOC-AN's March monthly meeting.
 - FOC-AN co-Chair, Elonnai Hickok, introduced the FOC-AN Proactive Advice regarding the situation in Ukraine and Russia.
 - The Proactive advice was submitted on March 28 on the human rights situation in Ukraine, the impact of the Russian Government's military invasion on the access to the ICT platforms, ICT infrastructure and Internet services, and the implications for the vision of a free, open and secure Internet.
 - The Proactive Advice suggests reaffirming the relevant and already agreed upon language from past FOC statements with regards to the situation in Ukraine and Russia.
- Canada noted that it has committed to launching a multistakeholder process to develop a call to action on digital inclusion entitled 'The Ottawa Agenda', which would build on the [Tallinn Agenda](#) adopted in 2014, and reflect the evolution of the Coalition's vision and scope since the FOC's founding of in 2011.
 - The Ottawa Agenda will also aim to build on the previously agreed upon language from the [Helsinki Declaration](#).
 - Canada will be hosting five regional consultations in South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe that will feed into the final set of recommendations for the Ottawa Agenda.
 - The consultations are to be held before summer 2022, and will facilitate discussions on digital authoritarianism, digital divides, allowing participants to discuss issues of regional relevance and enhancing cross-regional credibility of the FOC.
 - Canada will send the invitations for the consultations in April.

Action>> Members to reach out to Canada if they have recommendations on participants from civil society, academia or industry to attend the Ottawa Agenda regional consultations by **COB Friday, 8 April**.

- **Ramping up Advocacy, Communication, and Outreach**
 - Canada provided an update on Country-specific Statements (CSS), noting that recent developments in Ukraine and the FOC Chair statement on Disinformation in Ukraine underscored the importance of finalising the FOC’s policy on issuing such statements.
 - Member states are working bilaterally to define the exceptionality for issuing CSS.
 - Canada noted that an updated proposal will be shared with members for review soon
 - Canada noted the process of issuing CSS will remain the same as set by Finland, with amendments on defining an exceptional basis.
 - Germany expressed support for the process that was followed during the FOC Chair’s statement on Ukraine.
 - Canada noted that the World Press Freedom Day Global Conference will be held May 2-May 5, 2022.
 - Canada is working with the Netherlands to develop a concept note and to co-host an event with the Media Freedom Coalition on misuse of digital surveillance tech and impact on media freedom.
 - Membership and Outreach
 - Canada noted that a number of FOC’s foundational texts are translated into French and can now be found on the website.
 - Canada continues to work with FOC members to translate FOC documents into Russian, Arabic and Spanish.

Housekeeping

- Internal Program of Action / SU activities
 - SU noted that fundraising efforts for this year are ongoing.
 - SU has initiated outreach to all FOC members to establish a more regular dialogue and optimise the support it provides.
 - The process was started in the middle of February and will continue into summer.
- FOC calendar
 - Monday, April 4 - Strategy and Coordination Meeting.
 - Wednesday, April 6- Joint FOC and FOC-AN Roundtable meeting
 - Monday, April 11 - Task Force on Internet Shutdowns monthly call
 - Thursday, April 14 - Silicon Valley Working Group monthly call
 - Wednesday, April 20- FOC-AN monthly Call
 - Thursday, April 21 - TF-AIR monthly call
 - Wednesday, April 27 - Friends of the Chair monthly call
 - Thursday, March 31 - Task Force on Digital Equality monthly call