

Friends of the Chair monthly call #5 (June 2022)

Wednesday, 29 June, 13:00 UTC

Attending: Canada, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Switzerland, UK, US; Support Unit (SU)

Welcome

Program of Action 2022

- **Shaping Global Norms**

- Capital-level coordination:

- Canada noted that regional consultations are taking place to feed into the Ottawa Agenda.
 - The consultations were held in Canada, US, Asia-Pacific, Sub Saharan Africa, Europe,
 - Regional consultations in Latin America will be taking place in July.
 - Regional consultations reports will be translated into English and French and published on the FOC's website.
- Members provided feedback on the FOC Strategic Retreat held in Paris in May and discussed holding a Strategic Retreat in Rome in October.
 - Canada noted that Italy and Canada are planning to organise a second Strategic Retreat in Rome in October; the exact dates are still being discussed (October 12-13 or 26-27).
 - The second Strategic retreat will likely include discussions on the Ottawa agenda, the FOC's role in the [Global Digital Compact](#), and US's Chairship.
 - UK noted its support for the Friends of the Chair to meet on day 0 of the Strategic Retreat in Rome, to discuss direction the FOC would be taking in the future and what the FOC should be focusing on, as there are a lot of different views noted during the Strategic Retreat in Paris.
 - UK noted that the Tallin Digital Summit will be taking place on 10-11 October, which might prevent some Members from attending the Strategic Retreat in Rome.
 - UK noted that the Strategic Retreat in Paris indicated a significant potential of the FOC collaborating with diplomatic networks, particularly around emerging topics, e.g. Internet Shutdowns.
 - Switzerland noted that it would encourage further discussion of the FOC agenda in terms of different initiatives taking place globally, e.g. B-Tech Project, connections with the Tech for Democracy Initiative and Global Digital Compact.
 - Canada noted that the open segment of the meeting would be focusing on the direction the FOC would take moving forward, ramping up the public interest of non-FOC members and different stakeholders to the Ottawa agenda, which would be delivered at the Ministerial meeting later in the year.

- Canada noted that since the FO Conference is not planned for 2022, the open segment of the meeting could provide more visibility and impact for the Coalition.
 - Canada highlighted that the FOC and the FOC-AN Members noted the value of the sessions on relevant topics held by external partners.
 - Germany agreed that it would be helpful to hold the Friends of the Chair meeting ahead of the Strategic Retreat, to inform discussion on how to shape the focus and activities of the FOC going forward.
 - US noted that the open meeting provides an opportunity for engagement of other stakeholders, including targeted governments to be familiarised with the FOC.
 - Germany noted that the dates October 12-13 for the Strategic Retreat might not be suitable for all the members, as the OSCE will be holding a conference on cyber at that time. *[Please note this information has not been confirmed.]*
- Canada provided an update on diplomatic networks:
 - It is looking at how to collect and consolidate input from the FOC for the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap to Digital Cooperation and the Common Agenda.
 - It will be hosting a roundtable meeting on Internet fragmentation to help feed into the specific point on the Global Digital Compact.
 - A draft of the Freedom of Expression resolution to be presented at the 50th session of the Human Rights Council has been shared with the FOC.
 - It is planning on hosting a side-event along with the Netherlands during the Third Substantive Session of the UN Open-ended Working Group in July, to bring together some of the FOC stakeholders in New York, to discuss the multistakeholderism at the OEWG and to reinvigorate activities taking place in New York.

Action>> Members to share further feedback and takeaways from the Strategic Retreat in Paris in writing, to help inform organising the second Strategic Retreat in Rome.

Action>> Members to get in touch with Canada with recommendations on participants for the Latin America regional consultations for the Ottawa Agenda.

Action>> Members to reach out to Canada if interested in helping to collect input from the Members for the Global Digital Compact.

Promoting Multi-stakeholder Engagement

- Task Forces / Working Group
 - Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights
 - Germany noted that the Group submitted a proposal to the IGF for a side event on AI and algorithms, on how to increase transparency and on possibilities of regulation.

- The Group received support from the ICNL, representatives from OSCE, Ghana and Costa Rica.
- The Group expects to receive information from the IGF by the end of August, whether the session slot will be open.
- Germany, as a chair of the Group, is preparing a concept note and will be organising a multistakeholder event regarding the Global Digital Compact to look into the topic of Artificial Intelligence.
- Task Force on Digital Equality
 - Ghana noted that the Group held a working session on April 28, with award-winning human rights lawyer, Nani Jansen Reventlow, specialised in strategic litigation on freedom of expression and digital rights.
 - Ghana noted that the Group will be discussing holding a learning call with Paulina Ibarra, the executive director of Fundación Multitudes, on countering disinformation online with regards to women in public life and LGBTQIA community and human rights defenders.
 - Ghana noted that the Group is developing a Task Force toolkit.
- Task Force on Internet Shutdowns (TFIS)
 - US noted that the Group is currently updating resources and best practices document for diplomatic engagement on Internet Shutdowns shared in April.
 - TFIS is working on the summary of legal strategies and outcomes, looking into precedents from different regions, complementing a call on judicial interventions held in May.
 - US noted that the Group is drafting a submission for the Global Digital Compact.
 - TFIS is also exploring possible new deliverables such as:
 - Developing database on ongoing Internet shutdowns.
 - Periodic automated reminders on the Internet Shutdowns to TFIS Members to take action on.
 - Protocols for using TFIS as a mechanism to coordinate bilateral action with governments on Internet Shutdowns.
 - US provided key takeaways from the RightsCon session organised by TFIS.
 - The Group identified a need to:
 - Find avenues to inform TFIS Members and other government representatives about the actual mechanisms of Internet Shutdowns.
 - Start an informal communication channel to enable rapid coordination between civil society and governments on preventative actions.
 - Convene discussions between Internet measurement experts and geolocation providers to determine the scope and locations of Internet Shutdowns.

- Silicon Valley Working Group
 - Canada noted that the working group is looking to see if there is any interest in taking over the chairship of the group next year.

Action>> Canada encouraged Members to reach out to Canada or the Support Unit if interested in chairing the Silicon Valley Working Group in 2023.

- Advisory Network:
 - Canada noted that FOC-AN Members agreed that it would be worthwhile for the FOC to engage in the WSIS+20 process on a longer term basis, to create more impact for the FOC.
 - Members agreed that this engagement could be discussed at the Strategic retreat in Rome, as a part of the discussion of the POA for 2023.
 - Canada noted that FOC-AN Members provided feedback on the Strategic Retreat in Paris.
 - FOC meetings could be organised more time in advance so that the FOC-AN could be more incorporated in future.
 - It was valuable to have external partners present.
 - FOC-AN discussed the Freedom Online South initiative.

- **Ramping up Advocacy, Communication, and Outreach**

- **Advocacy and Communication**
 - Canada thanked Members for their support during RightsCon.
 - Canada noted the launch of the [FOC Global Campaign on Digital Inclusion](#), which is still ongoing.
 - Canada noted that there was an estimated audience of 11 million potential viewers in over 50 countries.
 - Canada is planning to use the campaign's hashtag in key moments throughout the year.

Chairship / Program of Action 2023

- US noted that the White House is starting to draft a Joint Strategic Review of the FOC, which would help inform the US Chairship.
 - The stocktaking review would aim to develop options and recommendations for the strengthening of the FOC, as well as strategies to bolster diplomatic networks and their engagement to expand the FOC.
 - US noted that it will be reaching out to the Friends of the Chair Members individually, as well as to the FOC-AN Members to hold consultations.

Housekeeping

- FOC calendar

Action>> Members to indicate to SU their availability to attend the Friends of the Chair call in July.