# Friends of the Chair Meeting #1

Wednesday, 25 January 2023

Attended: US (FOC Chair), Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK; Support Unit (SU)

## **Housekeeping**

- As discussed in 2022, following the confirmation of the final Program of Action (PoA) 2023, the Internal PoA 2023 has been reviewed and adopted. [Update provided in writing.]
  - No changes to the Internal PoA 2023 were identified, thus the document will serve as an outline of SU activities in 2023.
- SU noted the FotC meetings in 2023 will dedicate more time for discussions, with most updates to be shared in writing.
  - Due to the <u>UNESCO Global Conference</u>, the next FotC monthly meeting will be rescheduled to take place on Tuesday, 28 February.
- Upcoming deadlines:
  - Wednesday, 25 January Silence procedure for Slovakia's membership ends. [Please note the silence procedure was successful and that Slovakia is now a member of the FOC.]
  - Tuesday, 31 January -Deadline to provide comments and suggested edits on the "Guiding Principles on Government Use of Surveillance Technologies and Subsequent Data Generation, Management, and Use". [Please note this deadline has passed.]
- Upcoming events:
  - Wednesday, 25 January Ottawa Agenda launch and Chairship handover. [Please note this event has already taken place.]
    - Members were encouraged to amplify the launch on social media.
  - Wednesday, 2 February Geneva Diplomatic Network kick-off event.
  - Tuesday, 21 February side-event on the margins of the <u>UNESCO Global Conference</u> in Paris, hosted by Canada.
- Communications
  - The FOC Digital Hub will be rolled-out in the coming weeks, with access details forthcoming via email.
- Task Forces (Internet Shutdowns; Digital Equality; Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights) and Silicon Valley Working Group updates:
  - SU noted the Task Force on Internet Shutdowns and the Task Force on Digital Equality are currently undergoing open calls for membership; the deadline to express interest is Monday, 6 February.
  - SU noted the Task Forces and Working Group are currently discussing goals and outputs for 2023 to ensure alignment with the US PoA. [Update provided in writing.]

## **Discussion Items**

#### Stockholm Terms of Reference amendments

Action>> US to share the proposed ToR amendments in writing with the Friends of the Chair.

# Key milestones in 2023

- Strategy and Coordination Meetings
  - US highlighted their intention to organise SCM's on the margins of Internet freedom events to ease the burdens of travel.
  - SU noted the majority of respondents to a poll circulated earlier this month identified members' availability to attend an SCM at the end of March in Washington DC, on the sidelines of the Summit for Democracy (S4D).
  - US queried whether the FotC would attend an SCM in Nairobi, Kenya or other global majority state, if it takes place during a different date, noting the current proposed dates are in between two religious holidays (Easter and Passover).

- Switzerland noted they would be happy to attend an SCM in Kenya on different dates, emphasising they would need sufficient time to request travel authorisation internally.
  - Switzerland also noted it can be challenging to receive authorisation if other members of their department are not attending an event in-person, where an FOC meeting is being held.
- Switzerland suggested sharing a calendar of expected events and meetings in 2023 to ensure members' attendance.
- Denmark and the UK noted challenges around the proposed SCM dates.
- Netherlands noted they are able to attend the SCM in Washington DC or Nairobi
- US noted they are awaiting confirmation from Access Now if the second SCM can be facilitated on the margins of RightsCon (expected date of SCM 5 June).
- US highlighted there will be a number of Internet freedom events taking place in the fall (September to November) and noted that the third SCM will likely take place in Europe.
- FO Conference / Ministerial
  - US noted they are planning to host a ministerial event in the US in November or December with further details to come.

Action>> Friends of the Chair to share any events they plan to travel to in 2023 with the US and CC the SU by Tuesday, 28 February.

# FOC UNESCO engagement and submission to the consultation on "Towards Guidelines for Regulating Digital Platforms for Information as a Public Good"

- SU noted they have submitted procedural input into the consultation process which includes existing, agreed-upon FOC language.
  - SU noted there will be more opportunities for states to input into the drafting process in the coming weeks, including at the UNESCO Conference in February, and in another round of consultations in April.
  - The final draft is planned to be launched in May in New York at the <u>World Press</u> <u>Freedom Day Conference</u>.
- Canada noted the FOC side-event on 21 February on the Ottawa Agenda at the Conference will
  also be an opportunity to consider how the FOC can continue to be involved in UNESCO.
- Denmark noted their Paris delegation's involvement with UNESCO, particularly on issues of cultural expression and diversity as it relates to the digital sphere.

## Outreach strategy and identifying an FOC Chair for 2024

- US thanked FotC members for their input and encouraged members to provide any further feedback on the list of proposed states for outreach.
  - US noted they will be sending a demarche to their capitals and the governments on the list.
- US encouraged the FotC members to lead on state-specific outreach with countries of their choice from the proposed list.

# FOC participation in the Global Digital Compact (GDC) process

- The FOC's GDC submission is being prepared by Canada and the US, and consists of input submitted by each of the Task Forces and Working Group, using FOC agreed-upon language.
- US noted the FOC's GDC engagement will be channelled through the New York Diplomatic Network.
- SU noted there are two additional opportunities for members to input into the GDC process, independently from FOC.
  - The first <u>opportunity</u> is Friday, 3 February, and the second is Friday, 10 February.

## **Program of Action 2023** [Please note some of the following updates were provided in writing.]

- US shared updates on the "Guiding Principles on Government Use of Surveillance Technologies and Subsequent Data Generation, Management, and Use"
  - The principles are aimed to be published as an official FOC product by the Summit for Democracy (28-30 March).

• The deadline to provide input on the third draft has been extended to **COB Tuesday**, **31 January**. [Please note this deadline has passed.]

## Diplomatic Networks

- The Paris Diplomatic Network kick-off event is being planned, and expected to launch ahead of the <u>UNESCO Global Conference</u>.
- US is planning to lead FOC engagement in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Committee on Digital Economic Policy (CDEP) fora, while Canada - FOC involvement in the UNESCO process.

# FOC-AN updates

FOC-AN held their first meeting of 2023 on Wednesday, 18 January where they
discussed input to the "Proposed Guiding Principles on Government Use of Surveillance
Technologies and Subsequent Data Generation, Management, and Use", developing a
list of potential FOC Chairs for 2024, and identifying how the FOC-AN can get involved
in activities outlined in the PoA 2023.

# • RightsCon submissions

- FOC has submitted a proposal to hold a session on the misuse of technology.
- The following Task Forces are submitting proposals: TFAIR, TFDE, and TFIS.

#### **AOB**

- EU working-level meeting [Please note some of the following updates were provided in writing.]
  - The European Union invited the FOC, the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC) and the Partnership for Information and Democracy to a working-level meeting to discuss collaboration (in Brussels and online), and how the EU and its member states can contribute to the work of the three initiatives.
  - The FOC was represented by the SU and the US, who presented the Coalition's overall work and priorities in 2023. Attendees called for a closer collaboration and exchange of information.
- US noted that going forward more detailed information will be included in the emails ahead of monthly FotC calls and encouraged members to review them in preparation for the meetings.