

Freedom Online Coalition Program of Action 2024

The following consensus document was developed by the FOC 2024 Chair, the Netherlands, in consultation with FOC Members and the FOC Advisory Network to outline the FOC's vision, priorities, and activities for 2024.



FOC Mission Statement

The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) is a group of Member countries committed to the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to upholding their respective obligations under international human rights law. The FOC believes that the human rights that people have offline must also be protected online. The Coalition serves as a coordinating body that advances cross-regional diplomacy and commits to working together, including through multistakeholder engagement with its independent Advisory Network (FOC-AN) and others who share these views, to support Internet freedom and protect human rights online worldwide¹.

Context

Over the past decade, the FOC has made meaningful contributions to global debates on key policy areas related to the FOC's mission, including digital inclusion, closing civic space, Internet shutdowns, disinformation and information integrity online, human rights impact of cybersecurity laws, practices and policies, and artificial intelligence and human rights.

Building on the foundation laid by the United States' Chairship in 2023, the Netherlands' Chairship of the FOC in 2024 comes during a pivotal year for the governance of digital technologies, marked by actions that could either strengthen or undermine human rights online as well as existing global commitments to the multistakeholder approach to Internet governance. This is why the FOC remains committed to fostering an open, free, and secure digital future shaped in an inclusive and collaborative manner.

Priorities in 2024

In 2024, the FOC aims to actively shape the global agenda by focusing on the following priorities of the Netherlands' Chairship:

- **Advancing a human rights-based and multistakeholder approach to the governance of:**
 - 1) **the Internet**, by ensuring the Internet remains open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, secure and human rights-respecting, and reaffirming the commitment to multistakeholder governance of the Internet's technical layer;
 - 2) **artificial intelligence technologies**, by ensuring that norms and standards are human rights-respecting and human-centred.
- **Addressing ongoing challenges to Internet freedom**, by advocating for the protection and promotion of human rights where they are impacted by digital technologies, including by addressing Internet shutdowns, censorship, surveillance, and digital inclusion, and working towards ensuring the integrity, authenticity, and reliability of information online.

¹ As outlined in the [FOC Terms of Reference](#).



Goals, Objectives, and Activities

In 2024, to allow for the pursuit of the above priorities, the Coalition will focus its efforts on the following four goals, with its respective objectives and activities:

GOAL 1: To advance a human rights-based and multistakeholder approach to the governance of digital technologies, including the Internet and artificial intelligence (AI)

1.1. Shape the outcomes of key governance processes to ensure the Internet remains open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, secure and human rights-respecting, and the commitment to multistakeholder governance of digital technologies and the Internet's technical layer is upheld

- a. Cooperating actively and visibly in relevant processes leading up to the World Summit on Information Society Review Process (WSIS+20), including the Summit of the Future and the Global Digital Compact (GDC), including through:
 - i. Leveraging existing resources, coordinating positions, and developing statements and/or sub-entity output(s);
 - ii. Raising awareness of existing multistakeholder forums related to Internet governance, such as the Internet Governance Forum, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), and the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF);
 - iii. Informing FOC engagement by facilitating consultations with FOC Member States and key partners from all regions, and through meaningful and diverse collaboration with civil society, including via the FOC-AN.

1.2. Actively shape international governance of artificial intelligence (AI) by advocating for norms and standards for AI that are human rights-respecting and human-centred, reaffirming the commitment to multistakeholder governance of digital technologies

- a. Engaging in relevant processes within the UN system, including the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and the High-Level Advisory Body on AI in preparation for the Summit of the Future, and monitoring and exploring linkages with other relevant processes through:
 - i. Leveraging existing FOC resources and other relevant frameworks, such as the OECD Principles on AI, UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
 - ii. Coordinating positions and developing statements and/or sub-entity output(s);
 - iii. Collaborating with relevant stakeholders and partners, including the FOC-AN.

GOAL 2: To address ongoing challenges to Internet freedom

2.1. Advocate for the protection and promotion of human rights online and address violations and abuses resulting from the use of digital technologies

- a. Coordinating efforts on priority issues related to the Coalition's mandate through the FOC sub-entities and utilising existing resources, including previous FOC statements, background papers, and the FOC's rapid response toolkit.



- b. Facilitating engagement between FOC Members, FOC-AN, and other relevant stakeholders to explore developing new resources and ensure continuous learning on emerging tactics and tools.
- c. Supporting the FOC Funding Coordination Group to facilitate information and knowledge sharing, and implement the Donor Principles for Human Rights in the Digital Age.
- d. Contributing to global efforts to uphold information integrity, in particular during a year with a fully packed electoral calendar, by coordinating with relevant initiatives and leveraging the work of FOC sub-entities.

2.2. Strengthen dialogue on human rights considerations in ongoing international cyber-related discussions

- a. Fostering dialogue between the cybersecurity, cybercrime, and human rights fields, including in relation to the UN Open Ended Working Group on ICTs (OEWG), and the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime (AHC), to promote an open, inclusive, transparent, gender-responsive and human rights-respecting approach in addressing the challenges at this nexus that encourages inclusive participation by non-governmental stakeholders.

GOAL 3: To advance principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in the FOC and beyond

3.1. Promote digital inclusion

- a. Ensuring external advocacy and engagement of the FOC in key processes are informed by principles of DEIA.
- b. Supporting existing initiatives globally that work to ensure safe online spaces for persons in vulnerable situations, including human rights defenders, women, girls, LGBTI persons, ethnic and religious minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and other historically marginalized communities.
- c. Support existing initiatives globally that work to ensure equitable, inclusive, affordable, reliable, safe, and secure access to the internet.

3.2. Streamline the implementation of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility principles across FOC's mechanisms

- a. Collaborating with the FOC-AN to implement commitments to DEIA within the FOC, including through membership, structure, policy topics, events, and continuous learning.

3.3. Expand and diversify FOC engagement and membership

- a. Diversifying the membership of the FOC by inviting a number of select Global South countries to join the Coalition.
- b. Broadening and creating opportunities for greater engagement with Global South countries and civil society organisations, including through learning and coordination events and meetings of various FOC mechanisms.
- c. Increasing FOC presence in regions outside the Global North, including by participating in regional IGFs, and by exploring the possibility of an FOC convening in a Global South capital.



GOAL 4: To strengthen internal mechanisms

4.1. Facilitate and support capacity-building efforts of diplomats

- a. Organising training programs and developing internal and external tools on the technical and policy level focusing on human rights in the digital age and FOC priority policy areas, including on the multistakeholder model of Internet governance and its value.

4.2. Facilitate improved diplomatic coordination between Member States

- a. Strengthening information sharing, capacity-building, multistakeholder engagement, and diplomatic coordination between local and capital-level representatives through regular convenings of FOC diplomatic networks in Geneva, New York, and Paris.
- b. Exchanging information ahead of the Universal Periodic Review to assist Member States participating in the process.

4.3. Oversee and leverage FOC sub-entities

- a. Supporting the development of clear objectives for FOC sub-entities.
- b. Reflecting on key challenges and learnings to enable focused and effective action through the FOC sub-entities.
- c. Support further coordination and sharing of good practices and lessons, as well as substantive knowledge across sub-entities.

4.4. Enhance coordination with strategic partners

- a. Exploring ways to establish regular dialogue with relevant multilateral initiatives, such as the European Union (EU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the African Union (AU), utilising the FOC's liaison mechanism.
- b. Facilitating collaboration with relevant multistakeholder initiatives, such as the Community of Democracies (CoD), International IDEA, the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC), to avoid duplication of work and further align efforts to protect human rights online.
- c. Facilitating dialogue and collaboration with UN Secretariat and agencies whose work focuses on the impact of digital technologies on human rights, such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- d. Establishing dialogue and cooperation between governments, industry representatives, and civil society in relevant hubs, such as in Silicon Valley, and collaborating with existing initiatives dealing with technology and diplomacy.

