Attended: Netherlands (Chair 2024); Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Switzerland, UK; Support Unit (SU)

Welcome / Opening Remarks
- The SU welcomed Members to the eleventh SC meeting of 2024 and thanked Members for their participation in the recent SCM hosted in The Hague.

Housekeeping

- The SU provided housekeeping updates, noting:
    - A detailed summary report of the Strategy and Coordination Meeting has been circulated to the FOC, and will be shared with the FOC-AN and published on the FOC website.
    - The call for expressions of interest to join the 2025 Steering Committee (SC) (14 seats available) and Chair the Coalition in 2026 has been circulated earlier this week.
    - The SU is currently developing a capacity building foundational curriculum, consisting of modules based on the needs assessment conducted earlier this year, feedback from the SCM in October, and FOC outputs and documents.
    - The Joint Statement on the future of the Multistakeholder Model at the UN is a Joint Statement from FOC Governments, and Canada as the lead drafter will be responsible for receiving and addressing FOC redlines and any objections to the text.
- The SU also provided a breakdown of upcoming deadlines:
    - **COB UTC Wednesday 11 December:** Expressions of Interest to join the SC in 2025
    - **COB UTC Wednesday 18 December:** Expressions of Interest to Chair the FOC in 2026
- The SU also provided a breakdown of upcoming events and meetings:
    - **28 November | Geneva:** Universal Periodic Review Information Session *[Please note this meeting has taken place.]*
    - **3 December | New York:** UN OEWG on ICTs Breakfast Meeting
    - **9 December | Geneva:** Chairship Handover & Documentary Screening
    - **11 December | New York:** WSIS Information Sharing Session
    - **15-19 December:** IGF 2024, featuring 4 sessions led by FOC Member States, and a reception.
        - Day 0 Event (15 Dec): Human Rights Impacts of AI on Marginalized Populations
        - Day 0 Event (15 Dec): Inclusive multistakeholderism: tackling Internet shutdowns
        - Networking Session (17 Dec): A Rights-Respecting Approach to Emerging Tech Development
        - FOC Reception & Chairship Handover (18 Dec)
        - Open Forum (19 Dec): Ensuring an Inclusive and Rights-Respecting Digital Future
- The SU provided updates on the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN), noting:
    - The FOC-AN is currently in the process of electing a 3rd co-Chair to ensure diversity in leadership. *[Please note the FOC-AN has elected its 3rd co-Chair, 'Gbenga Sesan, representing Paradigm Initiative.]*
    - The FOC-AN is developing proactive advice on the WSIS+20 Review and the Internet Shutdowns in Kenya, both of which will be shared with the FOC once finalised.
    - Moving forward, the FOC-AN is looking to establish the norm of making their advice public, as per the FOC-AN Terms of Reference, and that the SC will be provided the opportunity to object should they consider the advice confidential.
- The Netherlands, FOC Chair 2024, noted several updates relating to outputs and upcoming events, including:

- A draft statement relating to the UN Convention Against Cybercrime will be shared shortly, following discussions taking place with the Netherlands' interagency.
- Outreach is ongoing to gauge support for the statement on Digital Repression in Venezuela, for which EU unity is an important condition for the Netherlands to pursue its development.
- An SC meeting will take place on the margins of the IGF, and the Netherlands will host an online meeting to discuss shared messaging with FOC Members in advance of the forum.
- Estonia, FOC Chair 2025, noted updates on the PoA and FOC convenings in 2025:
  - The final version of the PoA is currently under silence procedure. *[Please note the PoA 2025 has now been confirmed.]*
  - The first FOC convening of 2025 will take place on the margins of the RightsCon summit, with Day 1 on Monday (24 February) and additional sessions throughout the week.
    - Denmark noted the importance of prioritising strategic discussions, and to ensure capacity building sessions support these conversations.
    - The Support Unit noted the capacity building curriculum includes plans for introductory sessions, and an interactive exercise including a simulation of WSIS negotiations.
    - The Netherlands noted the benefit of holding capacity building sessions in-person, and emphasised the need to ensure funding is available to support travel for Global South Members.

Action >> The SU to circulate an invitation for an online call for FOC Members to coordinate messaging in advance of the IGF.

Action >> The SU to circulate an invitation for an in-person Steering Committee meeting during the IGF.

Discussion Items:

FOC Sub-Entities 2025
- The SU noted that the call for expressions of interest (EOI) to lead sub-entities has closed, and that the Netherlands and Germany seek to co-Chair the FOC Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (TFAIR).
  - The SU also noted that the UK has noted their intent to step down as a co-Chair of the FOC Task Force on Internet Shutdowns (TFIS), and the FOC Task Force on Information Integrity Online (TFIIO) co-Chairs are requesting further input from the SC on whether the Task Force should continue in 2025.
  - The SU outlined next steps, including the submission of a mandate request which the SC will review during the December monthly meeting. Should no governments step forward to Chair TFIS or TFIIO in 2025, their mandates would end.
- The Netherlands emphasised that Task Forces should have a clear purpose and objective to continue their work, and noted TFIIO is a strong example of a Task Force that delivered a concrete output which could now be mainstreamed into the FOC's activities without necessarily requiring a Task Force model.
- The Netherlands noted concern with the lack of engagement from FOC Members, considering only two Members submitted an EOI, and asked SC Members if they are experiencing challenges within their Ministries to commit time to the FOC.
  - Estonia posed the question of why Members are not leading Task Forces, and whether it is an issue of political buy-in to convince leadership of the effectiveness of the Coalition.
  - Switzerland highlighted challenges around resourcing FOC activities, and to identify focal points who have expertise in the topic at hand and are available to lead such activities. Switzerland welcomed further insight in regard to what is required to lead a

Task Force from a resourcing perspective, and noted that there may be procedural confusion as to who can lead a Task Force.
- ○ The SU noted that Members have been engaging through various mechanisms such as leading the development of statements, events, and diplomatic networks, which may not always be recognized.
- ○ Canada noted there are opportunities in the FOC to be active without necessarily taking on a leadership role, and posed the question of whether the activities taking place are still relevant in the current geopolitical context for members outside of the SC.
- ○ The Netherlands noted the benefit of framing messaging around the FOC as a geopolitical strategic tool to better coordinate and outreach to non EU, non Five Eye countries to push back against influences in the UN.
- Denmark asked SC Members to provide input on whether information integrity is an important issue to continue to address in a Task Force format, and ask for further procedural clarity on next steps should a government not submit an EOI.
  - ○ Denmark flagged a number of activities planned for 2025 that could be taken forward by a TFIIO Chair, including a roundtable discussion during RightsCon and a digital campaign, and noted a strong interest from external stakeholders to continue TFIIO's work.
  - ○ The SU clarified that if no government steps forward a mandate extension can not be put forward for 2025, and flagged the need to explore messaging for the broader community should Task Forces not continue next year, including how their work will be pursued through the FOC.
    - ■ Denmark emphasised that activities related to TFIIO will continue, and that messaging could focus on the need to resource other priority areas in the FOC.
  - ○ The UK noted that TFIS also has plans for a session at RightsCon in 2025, and other ongoing work that could be rolled over into the next year relating to Internet shutdowns during elections and times of conflict.
  - ○ Estonia highlighted the importance of work on these topics continuing, and that references have been included in the Program of Action 2025.
  - ○ The Netherlands emphasised that should activities already be planned for 2025, these could either be streamlined into the FOC's broader program for the year or current Chairs need to decide if they would like to submit an EOI.
  - ○ Denmark noted the collaboration with Government and FOC-AN co-Chairs, members, and external stakeholders, who provided a significant amount of support to progress TFIIO's work throughout the year.
    - ■ Denmark called on SC Members who may be considering to lead the Task Force in 2025 to reach out directly, and that Denmark would consider co-Chairing alongside another FOC Member.
  - ○ Canada noted their limited bandwidth and capacity to lead a Task Force in the coming years, and thanked those who have Chaired Task Forces for their work on these issues.

Action >> Members who may be interested in co-Chairing the Task Force on Information Integrity Online are requested to contact Denmark (mialar@um.dk) by **COB Friday, 6 December**.

Engagement with Kenya
- The SU noted civil society organisations and local media reports that communications operators in Kenya were required to suspend the operation of Telegram in the country, and that throughout 2024, there have been reports of widespread crackdown on protests, including reports of alleged arrests and abduction of protestors and human rights defenders, Internet shutdowns, and curtailment of press and media freedoms.

- - The SU highlighted discussions from recent SC meetings which noted the lack of available guidance and procedures on ways to address situations where adherence to membership commitments is put into question, and noted the ongoing development of proactive advice by the FOC-AN.
  - The Netherlands noted that they have reached out to Kenya's FOC focal point, and shared resources from FOC-AN Members with their mission in Nairobi to encourage them to coordinate with other embassies of FOC countries.
    - The Netherlands underscored their belief that a diplomatic approach communicating directly with Kenya, and to raise these concerns during scheduled political consultations, is more effective than any public messaging.
    - Estonia noted the importance of communicating to the FOC-AN that engagement is ongoing through silent diplomacy.
    - The UK noted agreement with this approach and the effectiveness of silent diplomacy as a first option, which could be reviewed moving forward, and noted their willingness to coordinate any planned discussions with Kenya.

Taiwan Observer Status
- The SU noted that Taiwan's Observer status will be up for review in February of 2025, and requested Members to provide comments and input on renewing Observer status prior to a procedure commencing for objections. The SU also provided an overview of Taiwan's engagement in FOC activities over the past two years, including:
  - Participation in all FOC Strategy & Coordination Meetings held in 2023 and 2024;
  - Attendance to the UNGA 78 and UNGA 79 FOC Ministerial side-events held in New York;
  - High-Level Participation in FOC Meetings, including at Director General and Minister-level during Ministerial or Task Force convenings;
  - Promoting the FOC and its mission during the 2023 "International Organization Day" held in Taiwan;
  - Inviting the 2024 FOC Chair to provide remarks and participate in the panel session organised by the Taiwanese Ministry of Digital Affairs during APrIGF, titled "Promoting Trust Under the Age of AI and Emerging Technologies";
  - Providing support for the FOC's regional dialogue held during APrIGF, including through the provision of shuttles for FOC travellers and recommending regional stakeholders to participate in the dialogue; and,
  - Participating in the FOC Task Forces on Information Integrity Online and Internet Shutdowns.
- Switzerland, Canada, the UK, Estonia and the Netherlands noted support for commencing the procedure.
- Germany posed a question on Observership, and whether the EU has been engaged to become an Observer of the Coalition.
  - The Netherlands noted they will engage bilaterally to provide further information on Observership discussions.

Action >> SC Members are requested to note any objections to renewing Taiwan's Observer status by **COB Tuesday, 10 December**.

Increasing Member Engagement in FOC Activities
- Estonia noted that Members have flagged the lack of political buy-in for the FOC within their governments, and highlighted plans to host a high-level FOC call for senior officials in January to support PoC's efforts to raise the importance of the FOC internally.

- ○ Estonia suggested that each SC Member selects 3-4 FOC Member States to commit themselves to regular 1-1 contact with the nominated PoCs to support their engagement in the FOC, and increase their awareness of ongoing activities.
- ○ The UK noted support for a high-level gathering to engage senior officials and direct outreach to Members, and highlighted the potential for further internal communications activities to ensure the FOC's processes, procedures, and activities are accessible for new PoCs.
- ○ The Netherlands noted support, and underscored the importance of showing the added value of FOC Membership through activities such as capacity building through the Coalition's internal communications.
- ○ Canada noted the need to communicate the different levels of engagement, and opportunities for Members to contribute to discussions outside of leading a specific FOC mechanism.
- ○ Germany noted additional opportunities to increase engagement, including resources such as a database of shared language, and highlighted that they are actively exploring how to streamline the FOC internally to better show the benefits of the FOC for various units and departments.
- ○ The SU noted its role in onboarding and work that can be undertaken to repackage information and share resources with Members.

AOB

- ● Estonia raised the topic of undersea cables and infrastructure security, and the need for the FOC to explore engagement on this topic.