

Attended: Estonia (FOC Chair), Germany, Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States; FOC Support Unit.

Welcome / Opening Remarks

- The SU welcomed all members to the second Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 2025 under the chairship of Estonia, rescheduled from earlier in February.
- The next Steering Committee meeting will be held at the end of March.

Housekeeping

- The Support Unit provided internal updates including:
 - In the January SC call, SC Members were asked to review the list of FOC and prospective Members for outreach and volunteer support by email to the FOC SU:
 - The Support Unit and Estonia encourage Members to please let Estonia and the Support Unit know whether they have capacity to support in outreach efforts.
 - Last week, the FOC hosted a discussion between capital and New York points of contact on the WSIS+20 modalities - Members were encouraged to share thoughts and reflections during the WSIS discussion item.
 - The full report from FOC engagements at RightsCon 2025, including from the FOC Strategy & Coordination Meeting, will be shared shortly [please note that the [report](#) has been shared for FOC review].
 - The revamped Digital Hub, including a learning curriculum and language mapping tool of FOC language, will be live next week.
 - The FOC-AN has drafted proactive advice on the sixty seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which was circulated to the FOC yesterday. The SC has been asked to raise objections, if any, to making the advice public, until the end of this week [please note that the advice is now available on the [FOC website](#)].
- SU provided an overview of upcoming FO outputs, deadlines and events:
 - **FOC Outputs & Deadlines:**
 - The [Joint Statement Presented at the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council](#) during general debate item 3 of the HRC on Friday, 14 March by the Estonian delegation is now available to view on the FOC website.
 - The Final Draft of the JST on Protecting Human Rights & Preventing Internet Shutdowns in Times of Armed Conflict is still being developed by the lead-drafters following the consolidation of comments and redlines, and will be incoming for SC sign-off, however the deadline is still TBC.
 - The Zero Draft of the Rights Respecting Principles on DPI has been circulated for comments until **31 March**.
 - The Support Unit has also launched a [public call for input](#) on the DPI principles. Members are encouraged to amplify via their networks.
 - **Upcoming Events:**
 - **11-12 March:** FOC Multistakeholder Consultations on WSIS+20 and GDC Implementation | Geneva, hybrid (Geneva, capital, NY) [please note the report from this event was circulated to the FOC]
 - **29 April - 1 May:** Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum | Lusaka, hybrid
 - The FOC will be hosting a session and regional dialogue, co-hosted by Paradigm Initiative, with more information to be provided shortly.
 - **12-14 May:** EuroDIG | Strasbourg, hybrid
 - The FOC will be hosting a pre-event on 12th May, with more information to be provided shortly.

Chairship and Program of Action Updates

- Estonia thanked Members for their participation in the Strategy and Coordination Meeting, which took place at the end of February on the sidelines of RightsCon.

- Estonia also provided updates on the implementation of the [2025 Program of Action](#), including:
 - Under Goal 1 of the PoA, there will be a continuation of information sharing and coordination events on WSIS+20 and the FOC's role in coordinating positions, with the next meeting to take place in Geneva.
 - Under Goal 2 of the PoA, Estonia is gathering feedback on the draft Digital Public Infrastructure Principles. The FOC will be hosting consultations on the draft at DRIF and EuroDIG, and is currently looking to identify opportunities to gather feedback from Latin American regional stakeholders, and invites Members to share any suggestions for this. The current timeline aims for the principles to be launched at the Tallinn Digital Summit in October 2025.
 - Under Goal 3 of the PoA, Estonia will be facilitating outreach to both Global South Members and prospective Members, and is asking the SC for support in this activity:
 - SC Members are asked to let the Support Unit know which countries they will be reaching out to.

Discussion Items

Recap of the FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM) / RightsCon engagement

- The SU provided a recap of the Strategy and Coordination meeting, noting the following:
 - The SCM consisted of the standard FOC meetings - FOC only, AN meetings; a Multistakeholder Dialogue that included FOC, AN members, and external stakeholders from the region which spotlighted trends and developments in the Asia Pacific region; and a WSIS negotiation simulation exercise.
 - Within the SCM, the conference, and on the sidelines, there were many substantive conversations around WSIS+20 (see agenda items below).
 - With the SCM held on the margins of RightsCon in Taipei, there were obvious barriers to getting a large number of Member States to join - we only had 12 FOC Members join the event. However, the SU noted that the FOC funded 16 AN Members to attend both the SCM and RightsCon.
- Members expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to hear about regional issues and dynamics and capacity-building activities, and noted that they would value additional time at future meetings to have more strategic conversations amongst Member States.
- In regards to the upcoming SCM, Members discussed options between hosting this as part of the WSIS+20 High Level event or the upcoming Internet Governance Forum.
 - The US suggested that the Support Unit should circulate a survey to all Members to gather intel about where they will be travelling and which forum they will be attending [*please note the survey has been circulated.*]

FOC engagement in the WSIS+20 Process

- The Support Unit informed Members that they had received requests from the Advisory Unit about whether the FOC could facilitate wider stakeholder engagement in the upcoming CSTD negotiations in April, such as through developing an Expression of Interest for governments who would invite stakeholders to join their delegations.
 - The Support Unit requested any Members who may have concerns about this process to keep them informed and agreed to follow up with Members on behalf of the Steering Committee to kickstart this process, provided there were no objections.
- Members provided a recap of the WSIS+20 Modalities meeting which was held towards the end of February, highlighting calls for more proactive engagement with the co-facilitators to ensure WSIS negotiations are meaningfully informed by wider stakeholder feedback.
- The Netherlands highlighted an upcoming event on the Global Digital Compact and data governance, requesting any interested Members to attend the meeting to exchange views, and a potential upcoming side-event for FOC Members on the margins of CSTD negotiations.
- The US noted that it would be valuable for the FOC to discuss ways to share information and bridge gaps amongst FOC Members, particularly those who have less active engagement, and between the FOC and other governmental coalitions in order to share intel, foster broader engagement and ensure diverse perspectives are shared.

Proposal to establish a funding mechanism for supporting civil society

- The Support Unit provided a high-level overview of a proposal to establish a funding mechanism to support stakeholder engagement in global processes, as discussed in the SCM in February.
 - The proposal is to establish a joint mechanism between FOC governments and other key partners to provide long standing support to multistakeholder engagement in key international Internet governance processes.
 - Estonia and Luxembourg expressed their support for the mechanism, with Luxembourg noting that a robust selection criteria and process would need to be developed to ensure broad and diverse participation, particularly from global Majority countries.
 - The Support Unit requested Members to review and provide any feedback on the proposal.

Undersea cables

- Estonia provided an overview of its current work on undersea cables and protecting Internet infrastructure, noting that the Advisory Unit is currently developing proactive advice on the topic.
 - Sweden and Luxembourg noted that the topic is also a current priority for their governments.
 - Luxembourg expressed the importance of framing these discussions in a more accessible way, looking at the integrity of Internet infrastructure for global Majority countries as well, particularly in the UN fora, such as the ITU.

AOB

- Luxembourg highlighted the importance of ensuring that the FOC and Steering Committee meetings remain a space for all Members to meaningfully participate, including those who may be dealing with developments with significant implications on democracy and human rights.