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

Welcome / Opening Remarks

- The Support Unit (SU) welcomed FOC members to the fifth Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 2024 and expressed gratitude to those who attended the in-person SCM in Geneva in May. Additionally, the SU encouraged members to provide feedback on the event via email.

Housekeeping

- The Support Unit provided housekeeping updates, including:
  - The publication of an article on the [FOC website](#) regarding the Geneva FOC Strategy and Coordination (SCM) and its report.
  - The deadline for SC Members to provide any objections to Slovenia's membership application is **COB Tuesday, 2 July**.
    - Should there be no objections, the application package will be sent to the full membership on 3 July for silence procedure, with the application process expected to be finalised by 18 July.

Program of Action / Chairship 2024 Updates

- The Support Unit provided a brief update on the implementation of the Program of Action 2024:
  - The co-Chairs of the Funding Coordination Group (FCG) are currently developing the group's work plan, which will be circulated to the SC Members shortly.
  - In line with the membership responsibilities outlined in the [FOC Terms of Reference](#), SC Members will soon receive a proposal to operationalize the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) engagement and support members' self-reporting on domestic and foreign policy efforts to support Internet freedom. This proposal will be discussed at the next SC meeting.
  - The Netherlands expressed their appreciation for the outcomes of the May SCM, particularly in relation to the Global Digital Compact (GDC) negotiations, and highlighting upcoming focus on the Summit of the Future, the Ministerial Side Event at the UNGA in September, and the Hague SCM at the end of October.
- The SU provided updates related to the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN):
  - The election process for new FOC-AN Members has concluded, resulting in six new members who are currently undergoing onboarding.
  - Following the elections, discussions have begun on how to implement the recently presented DEIA recommendations for the FOC-AN.
  - The FOC-AN is finalizing their advice on digital public infrastructure, which will be submitted to governments shortly.
  - The Netherlands has requested advice from the FOC-AN on AI Governance, suggesting a focus on two sections: high-level input to Objective 5 of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and the H-LAB-AI report.

Discussion Items
Finance Updates:

- The Support Unit provided financial updates for June 2024.
- The US encouraged SC members to explore avenues to contribute to the FOC budget to support current funders.
- Germany and Canada reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring continuous funding, with Germany inquiring about the possibility of disbursing funds in the last quarter of the year.
- The SU emphasised that flexibility and the ability to carry over funds to the upcoming year are key elements to support the FOC in both the short and long term.

Upcoming FOC Outputs:

- The Support Unit highlighted the significant number of planned FOC outputs in the coming months, encouraging SC Members leading these initiatives to discuss prioritisation, considering the broader digital tech and human rights landscape. The outputs planned are as follows:
    - **The Pledge to Incorporate Responsible and Rights-Respecting AI Procurement**
        - The US, as the leading SC Member, noted that a first draft of the document would be shared with the Support Unit shortly, and subsequently sent to SC Members.
        - The US noted its intention to publicise the document during the Summit of the Future in September.
    - **The Joint Statement on AI Governance**
        - Germany, TFAIR co-Chair, reported that the statement has been drafted, with pending updates related to the HLAB-AI report findings expected at the end of June.
            - Germany proposes to publish the statement at the Summit of the Future while considering other outputs planned for the same period and pending a joint decision by TFAIR members.
        - The US raised questions regarding the correlation of the statement with the GDC, considering the timeline for its release, and suggesting a prudent approach to publishing statements to avoid superseding ongoing bilateral conversations on this topic.
            - Germany noted that the HLAB-AI report findings will be integrated into the GDC negotiations, indicating it would be best to wait and see how the GDC negotiations will further develop before deciding how and when to position the FOC on the topic.
                - This approach would also prevent the FOC from releasing statements that could conflict with ongoing bilateral conversations regarding the GDC.
        - The Netherlands recommended shifting the publication timeline to the Ministerial Side Event in NYC instead.
    - **The Blueprint for the Information Ecosystem**
        - Denmark, leading in collaboration with the Netherlands, noted that the blueprint aims to address information integrity, with the overarching goal of promoting trust, inclusion, and agency within the ecosystem.
        - The publication timeline for the blueprint is still under discussion.
    - **The Joint Statement on Internet Shutdowns in Times of Conflict**
        - The UK, TFIS co-Chair, noted their efforts in finalising a first draft in order to share it with the wider SC and FOC as soon as possible.
    - **The Joint Statement on Technical Standards and Human Rights in the Context of Digital Technologies**
    - **Program of Action 2025**

The US to share the zero draft of the Pledge to Incorporate Responsible and Rights-Respecting AI Procurement.

Global Digital Compact

- The Netherlands emphasised their outreach efforts to G77 FOC countries regarding the GDC negotiations, particularly around support for the multistakeholder governance model.
    - While G77 countries are well-coordinated on various GDC elements, there is less alignment on human rights factors.
        - To address these concerns, the Netherlands announced plans to organise a virtual call with G77 FOC countries.

The Netherlands to follow up on information regarding the virtual call on the GDC with G77 FOC countries.

Membership and Outreach
- The Netherlands briefly noted ongoing discussions with Colombia, Namibia, Fiji and Vanuatu on potentially applying to become a Member of the FOC.
    - The Netherlands also encouraged SC Members to reach out to the Netherlands with any relevant points of contact from the mentioned countries.