FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting and Ministerial Meeting - Summary Report
8-10 October | Tallinn, Estonia

> *The third FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM) in 2025 took place on the 8th and 10th of October, on the margins of the Tallinn Digital Summit. The FOC also hosted a Ministerial Meeting on the 9th of October. The convenings included in-person and virtual participation from 27 FOC Members, 1 Observer, and 17 FOC Advisory Network Members.*

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SCM Session Summaries[1]

Wednesday, 8 October

Capacity Building: Is Pulling the Plug Ever the Answer? The Hidden Geopolitics of Internet Architecture
12.00 - 17.00 EEST

Participants: FOC Members; Observers; External Stakeholders; Support Unit

The tabletop exercise *"Is Pulling the Plug Ever the Answer?"*, facilitated by Joyce Hakmeh from Chatham House, with an introductory presentation from Konstantinos Komaitis (How the Internet Works: From Cables to Protocols), FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) Member and Research Fellow at the Atlantic Council's DFR Lab, brought together government representatives from the FOC, simulating a decision-making scenario during a cross-border disinformation and infrastructure crisis. Against a backdrop of rising extremism and digital sabotage, the scenario tested how fictional governments would respond to threats targeting shared Internet connectivity routes.

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[1] Please refer to Annex 3 for the minutes of the FOC and Joint Roundtable meetings.

The exercise highlighted the complex interplay between national security, public trust, and international reputation in an era of digital interdependence. Participants grappled with competing imperatives - decisive action versus democratic restraint, sovereignty versus cooperation - and recognized that an Internet shutdown, though politically tempting to some, deepens instability. The scenario ultimately underscored that resilience, transparency, and coordinated communication are more effective defences against disinformation and sabotage than blunt technical restrictions.

Thursday, 9 October

FOC Ministerial Meeting: Building a Digitally Inclusive Future for All
10.00 - 12.00 EEST
Participants: FOC Members; Observers; FOC-AN; External Stakeholders; Support Unit

The FOC convened its 2025 Ministerial Meeting to advance discussions on digital inclusion and to launch the Rights-Respecting Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Principles, offering a roadmap for a future where digital transformation is grounded in freedom, dignity, and justice. Opening the meeting, Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna underscored the importance of FOC's work amid rising digital authoritarianism and highlighted Estonia's FOC Chairship priorities, including supporting rights-based digital public infrastructure (DPI) and addressing backsliding among FOC Members. Expert remarks by Liv Marte Nordhaug, CEO of the Digital Public Goods Alliance, reinforced the centrality of rights-based governance in DPI design and called for open, secure, and scalable technology-sharing models.

Member States shared national examples of inclusive digital innovation - from Chile's human rights-driven data reforms to Korea's Digital Inclusion Act, Mongolia's e-Government services, and Taiwan's reaffirming its view of broadband as a basic right. Delegations also addressed the rise of disinformation and digital authoritarianism: France, Moldova, Germany, and the Netherlands described strategies to strengthen democratic resilience, while Luxembourg cautioned against uncritical AI adoption that could entrench inequality. Other Members, including Norway, Finland, Lithuania, and Sweden, emphasized digital literacy, child protection, and responsible technology governance as foundations for a trustworthy digital environment. Austria framed digital sovereignty as the ability of societies to make autonomous, rights-based technology choices, while Armenia, the Coalition's newest Member, spotlighted its Human Rights Council initiative on digital technologies and the rights of women and girls, reinforcing the value of inclusive participation in technology design and deployment.

Civil society, academia, and private sector representatives reinforced the need for multistakeholder collaboration to ensure that technology serves democratic ends. They warned of growing concentration of control over digital infrastructure, widespread Internet shutdowns, and persistent gaps in access and literacy. Speakers called for a "democracy stack" of technologies rooted in transparency, participation, and rights protection, underscoring that meaningful digital inclusion requires both connectivity and civic empowerment.

The launch of the Rights-Respecting DPI Principles, endorsed by 26 Member States and one Observer, marks a significant milestone for the Coalition. As the FOC approaches its 15th anniversary in 2026, participants reaffirmed their shared commitment to defending Internet freedom, advancing meaningful digital inclusion, and ensuring that technology serves democratic values rather than enabling authoritarian control. This resolve comes at a time when digital rights face growing challenges worldwide, including pressures within both emerging and established democracies.

Friday, 10 October

Opening Remarks, Activity Recap, and Upcoming FOC Engagements
10.00 - 10.30 EEST

Participants: FOC Members; Observers; FOC-AN; External Stakeholders; Support Unit

To open the FOC Strategy & Coordination Meeting (SCM), Rasmus Lumi, Director General for International Organisations and Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia and 2025 Chair of the FOC, welcomed participants to Estonia and the Tallinn Digital Summit, and thanked Members, the FOC-AN, and the Support Unit for their collaboration throughout a productive Chairship year. The remarks reflected on key achievements since the last SCM in Norway in June, including the launch of the Rights-Respecting Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Principles and strengthened cross-regional engagement, particularly through outreach in Latin America. They noted successful visibility-building for the FOC and emphasized the importance of maintaining continuity in focus and momentum.

The FOC-AN Co-Chairs also expressed appreciation for the strong partnership with the Estonian Chairship, highlighting the FOC-AN's proactive and reactive advisory role, openness to exploring new working methods, and readiness to support the Coalition's engagement in key global processes such as the WSIS+20 and Pact for the Future summits, as well as efforts to deepen collaboration with Global South countries.

The opening remarks were followed by a brief presentation provided by the FOC Support Unit to recap recent activities and outline upcoming FOC engagements in support of the Program of Action 2025. The presentation can be accessed via the FOC Digital Hub.

Government-Only Session I: Planning for 2026
10.30 - 11.30 EEST

Participants: FOC Members; Observers; Support Unit

Switzerland opened the session by calling for government input on the Coalition's 2026 priorities, underscoring the importance of carrying over ongoing efforts around WSIS+20, the Global Digital Compact, and lessons learned from prior Chairships and processes. Emphasizing human rights in digital governance, especially around AI, Switzerland advocated for operationalising multistakeholder approaches and building on established rights frameworks to be the focus in 2026. Participants formed groups to reflect on the priorities and goals for 2026 in more detail.

Discussions highlighted the need for leadership on key issues, including global governance of AI, multistakeholder approaches, reflecting on framing, gaps, and concrete actions. At the end of the discussion, the Support Unit provided a finance update. As a next step, Switzerland and the Support Unit will be circulating the draft Program of Action 2026 for FOC and FOC-AN feedback.

Action Point >> Switzerland and SU to share the draft Program of Action 2026 with Members and FOC-AN for feedback.

Government-Only Session II: WSIS+20 Process & Next Steps
11.45 - 12.45 EEST
Participants: FOC Members; Observers; Support Unit

The meeting focused on the ongoing engagement of FOC Members in preparation for and during the WSIS+20 Review negotiations. The Netherlands led the discussion, presenting the [Proposals for FOC Engagement in the WSIS+20 Review Process](#) and [Annex](#) as resource papers that are meant to guide national delegations in engaging with the process, while emphasizing the importance of inclusion of stakeholders and ongoing coordination with the FOC-AN and broader civil society and non-governmental stakeholder groups.

Participants broadly supported the direction of the Zero Draft of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document, highlighting strong language on human rights, inclusion, and multistakeholder approaches, while flagging some areas, such as the rights of the child and Internet governance, for possible improvements. Throughout the session, participants discussed the balance between defending the strengths of the current draft and proactively pursuing further improvements, including through introducing new language and proposals. Several participants expressed satisfaction with the current text, however noted the benefit of having the EU be on the defense, while the FOC could pursue more ambitious positions in the negotiations, especially around human rights, AI, and Internet governance. The session concluded with an agreement to continue consultations, anticipate further drafts, and hold additional coordination calls between the FOC, FOC-AN, and broader community of stakeholders.

FOC Advisory Network Member Meeting
10.30 - 12.30 EEST
Participants: FOC Advisory Network; Support Unit

FOC-AN Members discussed a number of topics during their parallel meeting, including preparations for the SCM meetings with FOC Members, a review of the 2025 priorities and initial planning for the 2026 Program of Action. Members also reflected on key global digital governance trends and the FOC's positioning in relation to ongoing processes.

In preparation for the SCM, FOC-AN Members exchanged ideas for the FOC to strengthen its advocacy around AI, digital public infrastructure, freedom of expression and technology-facilitated violence, by connecting these themes to broader governance discussions.

FOC-AN Members also reflected on the importance of reengaging governments, encouraging a more positive, forward-looking outreach to less engaged FOC Members. They also discussed the possibility of inviting feedback from governments on how they have used FOC-AN's proactive and reactive advice, in order to improve the relevance and uptake of future recommendations.

Looking ahead to 2026, FOC-AN Members agreed that outreach to the Global South should remain a priority and that the FOC should consider aligning the Program of Action with the strengths of the incoming Chair. They stressed the importance of connecting human rights to digital development goals - particularly through work on DPI, data governance, and AI - to make the FOC's agenda more inclusive and globally resonant. Despite current geopolitical challenges, FOC-AN Members agreed that the Coalition holds an essential role as a platform for maintaining an open dialogue, defending human rights online and fostering coordination and outreach to current and new partners - essential for sustaining the Coalition's credibility and impact in the years ahead.

Action Point >> FOC-AN to prepare a comprehensive summary of the suggestions provided and share with the incoming FOC Chair by COB Friday 31 October.

Presentation from the ITU, and Taking Stock and Exploring Key Trends for 2026 & Beyond
12.45 - 13.30 EEST
Participants: FOC Members; Observers; FOC Advisory Network; External Stakeholders; Support Unit

Presentation from Gitanjali Sah, Strategy & Policy Coordinator, International Telecommunications Union

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU), provided a presentation (WSIS Briefing) on 20 years of the implementation of the WSIS process, and to look beyond 2025. The presentation provided an overview of the WSIS process, including its origins, multistakeholder structure, coordination among UN agencies, and alignment of the WSIS Action Lines with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The presentation underscored the goal to achieve a common vision, desire and commitment to build a people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented information and knowledge societies where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information through digital and new technologies.

Key highlights and outcomes were shared from the recent WSIS+20 Forum, including progress on digital inclusion initiatives, the launch of the WSIS stocktaking database updates, recognition of projects through WSIS Prizes, and preparations for the WSIS+20 review and upcoming consultations.

The ITU encouraged FOC Members to: submit national or collective 20-year country reports; participate and follow the WSIS+20 Review process in New York; brief permanent missions in New York/Geneva and request ITU/UNESCO/UNDP briefings if needed; to strengthen the multistakeholder model of the WSIS Process, including the WSIS Forum, IGF and other multistakeholder mechanisms, in addition to highlighting the existing mechanism of the WSIS process in GDC discussions; and to look ahead at engaging in the 2026 WSIS Forum.

FOC Advisory Network-led Discussion on Taking Stock and Key Trends

The session emphasized the FOC's role in strengthening coordination, capacity building, and coherence across key digital governance processes. Participants highlighted the need for continued engagement in the WSIS+20 review and implementation phase, ensuring collective alignment on priorities once the zero draft is finalized. They also noted the importance of tracking the rollout of the Global Digital Compact (GDC), including the Global Dialogue on AI and Scientific Panel, to promote complementarity between the GDC and WSIS+20. The UN Cybercrime Treaty was identified as another key process, with the FOC encouraged to uphold rights-respecting implementation, prevent overly broad provisions, and support civil society oversight.

Speakers underlined the value of the DPI Principles in maintaining continuity between 2025 and 2026 and deepening outreach to the Global South. The FOC was encouraged to connect global, regional, and local governance efforts, including through local missions to gather input from stakeholders unable to participate internationally. Strengthening the link between human rights and development, particularly within the SDG and AI governance contexts, was viewed as central to fostering inclusion and ensuring that messages from Geneva and New York resonate at the national level.

Participants raised ongoing concerns about the limited integration of human rights across digital governance frameworks, including cyber norms and AI policy. They noted challenges such as technology-facilitated violence, digital exclusion, and threats to net neutrality, alongside the fragmentation between digital rights, cybersecurity, and data governance. The FOC was urged to promote consistent rights-based language across forums, strengthen multistakeholder coordination, and engage actively in venues such as the Human Rights Council and upcoming digital governance processes.

Remarks highlighted escalating threats to free expression and civic space online, including persistent Internet shutdowns, restrictive foreign agent laws, and growing state pressure on online platforms to align with political priorities. Expanding surveillance and shrinking civil society funding were also noted as key risks. The FOC was encouraged to maintain rapid-response coordination and continue defending free expression globally through timely statements and principled engagement.

On AI, remarks underscored that it is a human-created tool whose misuse can amplify censorship, distort information ecosystems, and restrict access to information. To promote responsible use, participants identified three priority areas: governance, dialogue, and harms. The FOC and TFAIR were encouraged to expand uptake of the AI and Human Rights Joint Statement, align national and procurement policies with human rights standards, and actively engage in key summits such as the AI Impact Summit (India), AI for Good (ITU), and the Global Dialogue and Scientific Panel. They were also encouraged to develop mechanisms for reporting AI-related harms and assessing the environmental impact of AI systems.

FOC & FOC-AN Joint Roundtable Meeting
13.30 - 14.45 CEST
Participants: FOC Members; Observers; FOC Advisory Network; External Stakeholders; Support Unit

FOC governments and the FOC-AN held a joint roundtable to strengthen collaboration, review progress and discuss priorities for the 2026 Programme of Action. Discussions centred on ensuring continuity between FOC Chairships and maintaining FOC's engagement in key international processes, including WSIS+20, GDC and the UN Cybercrime Convention. Members reaffirmed their commitment to advancing a free, open, secure and inclusive digital environment and underscored the importance of embedding human rights and multistakeholder principles across all areas of FOC engagement.

FOC-AN provided a summary of the recommendations in their proactive advice to the FOC on the Commission on the Status of Women, which addressed persistent gender digital divides, technology-facilitated gender-based violence and algorithmic bias. FOC-AN Members emphasised the need for stronger feedback loops between the FOC and the FOC-AN to ensure that advice is timely and aligned with government priorities. In turn, the governments welcomed the FOC-AN's advice on a range of topics, including digital public infrastructure and AI governance, noting its usefulness for policymaking, capacity building and national-level coordination. Participants also discussed the value of capacity building efforts as complementary to formal advice, helping governments better navigate complex and fast-evolving digital policy discussions.

On outreach and engagement, participants discussed opportunities to expand the Coalition's membership and reengage less active Members, particularly from the Global South. FOC-AN encouraged the Coalition to continue supporting broader participation through targeted outreach strategies, the inclusion of FOC-AN Members in multilateral delegations and mechanisms to address

capacity and resource barriers. In addition, FOC-AN representatives underlined the importance of maintaining the Coalition's diversity through inclusive participation and context-sensitive engagement.

Finally, the meeting focused on the wider impact of global funding constraints around digital rights and multilateral processes. Governments reaffirmed the importance of sustained investment in digital rights and multistakeholder cooperation, and recognised the need to adapt to a changing funding landscape. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to build on these discussions during future convenings, ensuring that the FOC remains a collaborative and forward-looking platform for digital rights and governance.

Annex 1: Agenda (Abridged)

Wednesday, 8 October - Capacity Building Session

EEST	Topic
11.45	**Arrival & Registration**
12.00	**Catered Lunch / Welcome & Overview of FOC Engagements at TDS**
12.45	**Is Pulling the Plug Ever the Answer? The Hidden Geopolitics of Internet Architecture**
16.45	**Recap & Closing**
17.00	**End of Day**

Thursday, 9 October - FOC Ministerial Meeting

EEST	Topic
9.45	**Arrival**
10.00	**FOC Ministerial Meeting 2025:** *Building a Digitally Inclusive Future for All* **Opening Remarks from the 2025 FOC Chair** **Publication of the Rights-Respecting Digital Public Infrastructure Principles** - Presentation of the Principles for Rights-Respecting DPI - Reflections from Expert Speaker - Remarks from FOC Chair on the Next Steps **Ministerial Roundtable on Building a Digitally Inclusive Future for All** - Scene-Setting Remarks - Remarks from FOC Members & Observer on Advancing Digital Inclusion and Meaningful Connectivity **Reflections from the Multistakeholder Community** - Remarks from FOC Advisory Network Members and other Key Stakeholders **Closing Remarks**
12.00	**End of Ministerial Meeting**
16.00	**FOC Steering Committee Meeting**

Friday, 10 October - Strategy & Coordination Meeting

EEST	Topic
09.45	**Arrival**
10.00	**Opening Remarks, Activity Recap, and Upcoming FOC Engagements** 1. Remarks from Estonia, 2025 Chair of the FOC 2. Remarks from the FOC Advisory Network co-Chairs 3. FOC SU Presentation on PoA 2025 implementation
10.30	**Government-Only Session I: Planning for 2026** 1. Presentation of Discussion Paper on Priorities & Goals for 2026 2. Discussion to define Coalition priorities, activities, and deliverables for the coming year 3. Summary of input and next steps for finalising the 2026 PoA.

11.30	Coffee Break (15 minutes)

11.45	**Government-Only Session II: WSIS+20 Process & Next Steps**
	1. Recap of inputs from FOC Multistakeholder Discussions on the WSIS+20 Process and Proposals for Engagement
	2. Discussion on key areas of concern in the Draft Outcome Document.

12.45	**Taking Stock and Exploring Key Trends for 2026 & Beyond**
	A stock-take of the global digital policy landscape, recent FOC efforts to address challenges and opportunities to protect human rights online, and insights on key trends and areas of concern in the years ahead.

13.30	Lunch Break (60 minutes)

14.30	**FOC & FOC-AN Joint Roundtable Meeting**
	1. Recap of Govt-Only Discussions
	2. Recap of FOC-AN Advice
	a. Overview of proactive and reactive advice provided to the FOC in 2025
	3. Discussion
	a. Focusing on key recommendations from FOC-AN advice, how Coalition Members have received and utilized the advice, and potential steps to follow-up.
	4. AOB

16.00	**Recap & Reflections with the FOC & Advisory Network**
	1. Outlining next steps following the SCM
	2. Closing remarks from the Chair and FOC-AN co-Chairs

16.15	**End of Day / SCM**

Annex 2: Meeting Minutes

FOC Government-Only Sessions I & II

Planning for 2026

- Switzerland highlighted the importance of gathering perspectives from governments present in the room on the Discussion Paper on Priorities & Goals for 2026.
    - Switzerland noted the importance of keeping up ongoing efforts around the WSIS+20 and its implementation in 2026, as well as integration of the Global Digital Compact, continued work on digital processes, and the significance of learning from Estonia's previous efforts.
- Switzerland highlighted:
    - The need to embed human rights considerations in digital governance mechanisms, especially concerning AI, and acknowledged the recurrence of this theme in prior discussions.
    - The importance of the upcoming Global Dialogue on AI governance scheduled for July 2026, focusing on principles and ensuring its success.
    - The value of the multistakeholder approach, connecting governments, civil society, and experts.
    - Building on established human rights frameworks, advocating for consensus rather than reinventing current rights language or processes.
- Participants proceeded to break into groups and discuss each of the priorities outlined in the discussion paper
    - Group 1: Navigating and shaping global digital governance processes (Ghana, Switzerland, Estonia, Finland, Chile, Luxembourg)
    - Group 2: Advancing conversations on artificial intelligence (Ghana, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Costa Rica, Armenia, Czechia)
    - Group 3: Multistakeholder approaches in digital governance (Switzerland, Netherlands, Estonia, Sweden, Canada)
- All participants were asked to reflect on whether allocated priorities are appropriately framed, if objectives and activities are suitable, and to identify any gaps in the current priority areas or processes.
- Groups were advised to nominate a rapporteur to summarize findings for the plenary session.
- Switzerland highlighted the value of focusing discussions on governance processes and the importance of identifying concrete priority issues for the coalition.
    - Switzerland noted their team's limited capacity and emphasized the need for other Members to take leadership on specific topics for tangible progress, specifically regarding information integrity, Internet shutdowns, and freedom online.
- Estonia underlined the importance of Member ownership over proposed activities, noting the recurring challenge of translating proposals into concrete leadership and action, especially given varying national capacities.
- Netherlands summarized discussions on integrating technical standards and human rights, promoting technical inclusion, and clarifying mechanisms for specific rights (e.g., gender).
    - Netherlands noted there would be benefits in the continuation of the work of the Task Force on AI and Human Rights, and emphasised the role of the FOC in advancing human rights-based governance of AI and digital technologies.
    - Netherlands also referenced the Blueprint on Information Integrity.

- - Netherlands highlighted concrete ideas for engagement, including preparing briefing documents, inviting civil society to participate in negotiations, and inclusion of scientists from diverse disciplines in the process. Outreach to civil society and non-governmental actors, as well as connecting with the upcoming AI Summit in 2026, was noted as a priority.
  - Armenia and Switzerland noted opportunities for engagement with private sector actors and less active Member States, suggesting mapping relevant events, regional business networks, and supporting ongoing hub-based projects in various regions.
  - SU asked for reflections on the proposed direction and priorities, inviting feedback on whether significant structural changes were needed or if incremental adjustments would suffice.
  - Switzerland, Czechia, and others indicated general support for the current approach while suggesting a greater focus on specifying priorities and responsibility for action.
  - Costa Rica flagged the need to resist regressive changes in language regarding gender and stressed the value of engaging with regional bodies such as OAS for Latin America.
  - Ghana emphasized the importance of engaging with high-level regional mechanisms in Africa, notably the African Authority of Cyber Security, which brings together cybersecurity leaders across the continent.
    - Ghana suggested that this platform presents valuable opportunities for the Coalition to amplify African leadership and perspectives in digital governance processes.
  - Sweden underlined budgetary constraints from their side for follow-up activities, emphasizing earlier and diversified voluntary funding to ensure sustainability.
  - SU reported strong 2025 fundraising outcomes and outlined the need for multi-year, flexible contributions, calling for early commitments for 2026 to avoid funding cliffs. Alternatives such as tiered membership contributions for resource sustainability were discussed, highlighting national funding mechanisms and decision-making timelines.

Action Point >> Switzerland and SU to share the draft Program of Action 2026 with Members and FOC-AN for feedback.

WSIS+20 Process & Next Steps
- SU highlighted ongoing engagement in the WSIS+20 Review Process and summarized the evolving FOC priorities outlined in the [Proposals for FOC Engagement in the WSIS+20 Review Process](#) and [Annex](#), including transparent consultation, improved coordination, advancing human rights and inclusion, and multistakeholder cooperation.
  - SU clarified the supporting papers as resources for FOC Member States in the upcoming and ongoing negotiations, not official positions.
- Netherlands noted the ongoing efforts to exchange information and knowledge throughout 2025 on the process, and noted it will be continuing to lead these efforts in the coming months and upcoming milestones in the process.
  - Netherlands noted the possibility of opening up national delegations in the negotiations, and exploring how best to ensure meaningful inclusion of stakeholders.
  - Netherlands emphasised collaboration with non-governmental stakeholders, including the FOC-AN and the Global Digital Rights Coalition (GDRC-WSIS), and building bridges with external stakeholders and regional groups that are positive about the text in different regions.
  - Netherlands thanked Members for their continued engagement, and noted future plans to organise a call with the WSIS+20 co-facilitators (Albania and Kenya), as well as potential further coordination with external stakeholders.

- SU noted the aim of the discussion is to weigh whether to defend the existing, strong human rights text in the Zero Draft of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document, or push for further additions, and invited reflections on inclusion of stakeholders in delegations
- Germany expressed that while they are not personally working on the process, delegates who are satisfied with the Zero Draft, describing it as strong and generally meeting their expectations.
  - Germany applauded the Dutch efforts and supported ambitions for stronger language, especially around multistakeholder governance and Internet shutdowns.
  - Germany noted that the EU would be taking the lead in negotiations and that Germany would mostly play defense, aiming for a unified position.
- Armenia expressed their expertise is particularly around human rights and highlighted comments would be on the text that concerns human rights.
  - Armenia noted the text concerning human rights addressed almost all major concerns.
  - Armenia emphasised room for specific additions, especially around the rights of the child.
  - Armenia indicated readiness to support further language proposals and noted the draft would benefit from these additions.
- Luxembourg confirmed the EU is generally happy with the draft, and plans to play defense in the negotiations.
  - Luxembourg suggested the FOC to consider playing the role of offense, and proposing new elements to strengthen the text.
  - Luxembourg highlighted the importance of efforts to build bridges with Africa and other regional groups, who hold positive views of the text.
  - Luxembourg also raised the topic of doing opposition research, in terms of how other countries (e.g., Russia, China) are positioning themselves, and possible attempts to water down language.
- Switzerland thanked the Netherlands, FOC Support Unit, and Global Partners Digital for the coordination work around the WSIS+20 process.
  - Switzerland described the Proposals and Annex document as very useful, and the Zero Draft as a good start, while emphasizing that the opening of negotiations is the time to be ambitious and push for improvements.
  - Switzerland recommended FOC Members review national and civil society submissions (e.g., Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon joint input, as well as input from non-governmental organizations).
  - Switzerland noted Russia appeared apprehensive about language on GDC-WSIS alignment, preferring the word "harmonise".
- Sweden welcomed the overall approach to the process, stating it is a good start, and flagged that the EU will present its position during negotiations.
  - Sweden noted their delegation will include civil society and private sector representatives.
- Estonia noted support for the "divide and conquer" approaches, with the EU defending text, and the FOC taking the lead on pushing for stronger language.
  - Estonia stressed the importance of empowering the FOC-AN and stakeholders, and promoting their preferred language and terms.
- Canada reported that their delegation will mainly play defense, considering the draft already strong, especially around human rights language.
  - Canada also confirmed ongoing cooperation with civil society, noting discussions with Access Now on including them in the Canadian delegation.

- SU and the Netherlands concluded the session by noting plans for further engagement and information exchange during the negotiations and incoming drafts of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document.

FOC & FOC-AN Joint Roundtable Meeting

- SU opened the meeting by providing a recap of the government-only morning sessions:
  - On Program of Action (POA) 2026:
    - Governments discussed priorities, including navigating and shaping global digital governance, engaging in AI governance, and operationalising commitments to multistakeholder approaches.
    - Discussions placed emphasis on continuity between Chairships, especially regarding processes like WSIS+20 and GDC implementation, as well as follow-up on digital public infrastructure (DPI).
    - Members highlighted the importance of strengthening outreach and engaging existing Members and governments from the Global Majority.
    - Next steps noted were the confirmation of the incoming 2026 Chair *[please note that the 2026 Chair, Switzerland, has since been confirmed]* and the sharing of the draft POA for consultation with Members and the FOC-AN.
  - On next steps for WSIS+20 negotiations:
    - Netherlands provided an update on negotiations, including the balance between maintaining the Zero draft and advancing stronger human rights language.
    - Members also reaffirmed commitment to multistakeholder engagement in the WSIS+20 and GDC processes.
- FOC-AN Co-Chairs provided a recap of the FOC-AN's internal discussions, including:
  - FOC-AN's readiness to support the development of the POA 2026.
  - FOC-AN Members focused on discussing existing working methods and improving coordination with the FOC.
  - They further discussed ways to strengthen feedback loops between the FOC-AN and the FOC, enhance continuity between Chairships, better engage Global Majority stakeholders, strengthen outreach and reengage existing Members.
- FOC-AN requested feedback from FOC Members on how FOC-AN advice throughout the year has been received and suggestions for how it can be made more useful.
  - FOC-AN also summarised their [advice](#) submitted to the FOC on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), noting key issues that were identified: gender digital divides, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, use of AI and algorithmic bias, and gendered-aspect of state surveillance, as well as relevant recommendations.
  - FOC-AN highlighted the relevance of CSW70 (2026), focused on women's access to justice and participation in public life.
- Estonia, FOC Chair 2025, thanked the FOC-AN for the input and noted the advice on DPI as invaluable in developing the [Rights-Respecting DPI Principles](#).
  - Estonia confirmed plans to hold a learning call on undersea cables incorporating FOC-AN recommendations and welcomed future proactive advice from the FOC-AN, acknowledging governments often find it difficult to know what kind of advice to request.
  - Estonia further noted the advice informs both FOC and national positions, even when not directly reflected in Coalition outputs; thus, making way to international multilateral fora.

- Netherlands echoed Estonia's appreciation and confirmed that FOC-AN advice has been used to inform coordination on WSIS+20 and related FOC documents.
  - Netherlands further highlighted the capacity-building value of FOC-AN inputs and noted that advice is also shared internally across relevant ministries, even if not all recommendations can be implemented.
- Switzerland suggested looking into FOC Members' utilisation of FOC-AN advice.
- FOC-AN observed increasing difficulty in reaching consensus among governments and suggested that even when advice cannot form an FOC consensus position, supportive governments could still reference or elevate it in other fora in their individual capacity.
  - They also noted the possibility to publish FOC-AN advice publicly to improve transparency and visibility, and proposed that feedback from governments on how advice is used would help tailor future input and capacity-building support.
  - They further highlighted the importance of informal collaboration and suggested regular exchanges between FOC-AN Members and government missions (e.g. in New York, Geneva), including encouraging continuation of joint initiatives, such as participation of FOC-AN experts in FOC delegations.
- Luxembourg noted the importance of FOC-AN recommendations and suggested the possibility of holding joint FOC & FOC-AN exercises to strengthen consensus-building and prevent fragmentation among Members.
  - Luxembourg also noted the importance of building more principled partnerships with Partnership on Information and Democracy or International IDEA, for example, to ensure there is no duplication of efforts.
- On outreach and Global Majority engagement FOC-AN proposed:
  - Joint engagement between FOC and FOC-AN in outreach to prospective and existing Members.
  - Development of country-specific engagement plans led jointly with the FOC-AN.
  - Possibility of establishing a travel fund to enable Global Majority stakeholders to attend FOC meetings and other fora and processes.
  - Creating an open mechanism for governments interested in including FOC-AN experts in delegations, noting their appreciation of the practice of including FOC-AN in consultations on outputs.
  - Possibility for engaging with the European Commission.
- Estonia noted:
  - The idea for a travel fund is valuable and noted a similar effort was made for IGF attendance.
  - The engagement with the European Commission should be looked into by FOC Members who are in the EU and mentioned the possibility of exploring EU observer status to support that engagement.
  - Noted the successful multistakeholder consultation model used for the DPI Principles and suggested that FOC-AN can further assist in reviewing public consultation feedback to reduce capacity burdens on the Chair.
- Estonia further reported that outreach efforts this year included dialogues with governments outside the Coalition to promote FOC priorities and encouraged FOC-AN to share suggestions for prospective Members.
- Switzerland asked whether the FOC-AN could leverage its networks to facilitate outreach and engagement, and asked for suggestions.
- FOC-AN supported developing targeted outreach strategies informed by local priorities and political contexts, and emphasized that understanding each country's motivations would improve effectiveness of outreach efforts.

- ○ They also suggested conducting a review to identify reasons for disengagement among inactive Members, proposing outreach to determine if challenges were due to resourcing, coordination or turnover of focal points.
    - ■ Estonia suggested checking with the larger countries, assuming small countries have capacity resources.
  - ○ FOC-AN Members proposed Belgium as a potential new FOC Member.
- Estonia welcomed the suggestion and encouraged similar inputs, recognizing that reengaging existing Coalition Members depends also on the Member itself and their openness to engage.
- Armenia shared reflections on joining the FOC, including highlighting the learning value of FOC activities and capacity-building exercises.
  - ○ Armenia further noted challenges for smaller states in sustaining engagement due to limited resources and expertise.
- SU noted active engagement by ⅔ of FOC Members in joint statements development, while event participation rates vary by event and region.
  - ○ Attendance was higher when events were held alongside larger fora (e.g. WSIS, IGF).
  - ○ Travel support for Global Majority Members has increased participation. SCM attendance remains variable, with the Geneva SCMs tending to have highest participation due to the location and access to Members' missions.
- Furthermore, FOC-AN underlined the importance of maintaining continuity between Chairships and priority areas, suggesting continued focus on WSIS+20 implementation, GDC implementation, DPI Principles and the UN Cybercrime Treaty process.
  - ○ They highlighted implementation of international processes at national level would be critical and emphasized the need for continued advocacy for rights-based approaches in Member and non-Member States.
- Estonia confirmed that these themes would form the foundation of the upcoming POA 2026 discussions.
- Switzerland expressed interest in leading work on WSIS+20 implementation and continuing engagement on DPI, noting that the POA 2026 focus is a joint FOC decision.
  - ○ Switzerland requested further clarity from the FOC-AN on suggested next steps for the Cybercrime Convention.
    - ■ FOC-AN noted concerns, such as transnational repression and misuse of tools.
- FOC-AN further raised concerns about UN budget cuts and their potential impact on WSIS and GDC implementation, and asked governments how they plan to respond to reduced UN funding for human rights and digital governance initiatives.
  - ○ They called for governments to sustain investment in digital rights and inclusion efforts despite global funding shortfalls, and encouraged Members to view digital rights funding as an investment in democracy and security.
- Estonia acknowledged the challenge of reduced UN resources and stated that Estonia would continue to prioritise human rights funding at the national level.
- Netherlands reiterated Estonia's point and noted that resource constraints could also drive efficiencies and more targeted engagement within the UN system.
- Sweden highlighted that ongoing UN reforms will reshape funding mechanisms and priorities, stressing the need to protect human rights and digital rights agendas.
- SU noted that these developments will be reflected in the draft POA 2026 and encouraged Members to stay engaged.
  - ○ SU the leadership of Estonia as 2025 Chair and expressed appreciation to the FOC-AN and SU team.
- Estonia thanked Members and FOC-AN representatives for their contributions and support throughout the year.