

Minutes of the Friends of the Chair Call #2

24 February 2021 at 2pm UTC

Attendance: Canada, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, US; Support Unit [SU]

Housekeeping

- Recap of outstanding action items from the January monthly call:
 - Finland to confirm dates for the high-level ministerial meeting.
- In accordance with the Internal PoA, the SU has liaised with website developers regarding a revamp of the FOC website. The work will begin shortly and the plan is to finalise the new website before June.
- Outlook for the month ahead:
 - The Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (T-FAIR) is hosting two learning calls in March:
 - Learning Call on Gender and AI, taking place on Thursday, 4 March.
 - Learning Call on the Rome Call for AI ethics, taking place on Thursday, 11 March.
 - The Silicon Valley Initiative's first Monthly Call is taking place on Wednesday, 10 March.
 - The next FOC-Advisory Network (AN) call will be scheduled in March.
 - The next Strategy and Coordination Meeting will take place at the end of March.

Action>> SU to circulate a doodle poll to identify a suitable time for the March Strategy and Coordination Meeting.

Program of Action 2021

- **10th Anniversary of the FOC**
 - High-level ministerial meeting
 - Finland noted plans to organise an in-person meeting during UNGA in September with high-level representatives
 - Should there be COVID-19 complications, plan B is to hold the meeting on the margins of the FO Conference in Helsinki in December.
 - Political Declaration
 - Finland shared a concept paper on the declaration with the Friends of the Chair.
 - Finland highlighted the three envisioned general themes of the Declaration:
 1. Protecting open and democratic societies;
 2. Opportunities and threats of new digital technologies;
 3. Strong support to the normative human rights system and multi-stakeholder co-operation.
 - Finland will lead the drafting process and consult Members on the development of the Declaration.
 - Drafting to start in April, and the FOC and FOC-AN will be asked to provide input in spring. The aim is to finalise content by summer.
 - Maximising FOC effectiveness
 - Roundtable discussions
 - Finland, Canada, US and the SU are to host a series of roundtable discussions to explore the future of the FOC and entail transparent discussions on what Members expect from the FOC membership, as well as identify ways of making the FOC a priority platform for relevant issues. The sessions would take place on the following dates:

- **Roundtable #1: Wednesday, 10 March**
- **Roundtable #2: Thursday, 18 March**
- **Roundtable #3: to be held during the March SCM**
- Canada and US are assisting with outreach to Members.
- FOC Members will be encouraged to share background materials ahead of the discussions.
- Following the roundtable discussions, an outcome document would be shared with the Members and revisited after the ministerial meeting.
- Finland noted that the roundtable discussions can be an opportunity to inform the political Declaration.

Action>> SU to schedule the roundtable sessions.

- **Diplomatic Coordination**

- Geneva
 - Finland, supported by the SU, held a virtual kick-off meeting with the Geneva diplomatic network to raise awareness of the FOC and its priorities and facilitate discussions on topical issues.
 - 19 Members attended. Finland noted the presence of FOC Members who are not active through capital level coordination.
 - Next steps include:
 - Setting up a distribution list for the Members, including experts in relevant fields.
 - Hosting virtual events on AI and digital inclusion.
- New York
 - Finland expressed interest in leading the New York network.
- Paris (UNESCO)
 - Canada will provide further updates with regards to the Paris UNESCO network.

- **Shaping Global Norms**

- Finland provided an update on the virtual launch of the [Joint Statement on Spread of Disinformation](#).
 - The launch featured the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression Irene Khan, as one of the main speakers, and counted 74 attendees.
 - More information on the launch, including a recording and a summary, can be found on the [FOC website](#).
- Canada provided an update on the Task Force on AI and Human Rights (T-FAIR)
 - The next monthly meeting will take place in March, where initiatives such as the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) resolutions impacting digital rights and the Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) [feasibility study](#) online survey will be raised.
 - Upcoming learning calls:
 - Gender and AI, 4 March
 - The Rome Call for AI Ethics, 11 March
- Germany provided an update on the Task Force on Digital Equality.
 - The Task Force shared the Terms of Reference with the Friends for review.
- FOC Stock Language on Privacy
 - Canada shared a draft document and welcomed Members to provide feedback.

- Canada noted the possibility of utilising the proposed stock language for developing the political Declaration.

Action>> SU to set up a distribution list for the Geneva diplomatic network.

Action>> Friends of the Chair to provide feedback to the Digital Equality Terms of Reference by **Wednesday, 3 March COB.**

Action>> FOC to provide feedback on FOC Stock Language on Privacy draft by **Wednesday, 24 March COB.**

- **Stakeholder Engagement**

- Africa Outreach project: n/a
- San Francisco/Silicon Valley Initiative.
 - The next monthly meeting will take place on 10 March.
 - The group shared a revised concept note with the Friends and is expecting sign-off before their next monthly meeting.

Action>> Members to provide feedback on the Silicon Valley Initiative Concept Note by **Wednesday, 3 March COB.**

Advisory Network (AN)

- AN held their monthly call on Monday, 22 February, and will hold its next meeting in March.
- AN proactive advice on UN resolution “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes” was submitted to FOC Members on 17 December.
 - Finland noted that the advice has been shared internally.
 - Members noted that reacting to the advice might be premature, and could potentially be something that can be addressed via the New York or the Vienna diplomatic networks.
- AN proactive advice on FOC-AN Priorities for 2021 and beyond was submitted to FOC Members on Wednesday, 3 February.
 - US noted a demand for more clarification on how to engage with the AN on the priorities, and the prospect of exploring how to incorporate them into existing workstreams of the FOC.
 - Germany noted that the Task Force on Digital Equality is addressing the overlap it might have with the AN Connectivity priority team.
- AN proactive advice on the Situation Regarding Digital Rights in Myanmar was submitted to FOC Members on 22 February.
 - Finland emphasised the gravity of the situation and the importance of an FOC response.
 - Members noted the need for further discussions on identifying an FOC approach to country-specific situations and expressed concerns about issuing a Joint Statement at this point, given time-constraints and risk of setting a precedent.
 - Members highlighted the importance of developing a standard policy on responding to country-specific situations.
 - Members welcomed the possibility of these discussions being held at the roundtable sessions.

FOC Membership

- Updates on FOC Member engagement
 - Update on FOC Chairship 2022: n/a
- Updates on enlargement of FOC membership
- US raised a query about FOC enlargement strategy.

- The SU noted the Friends can put forward potential members that are interested in joining.
 - The SU noted a previous outreach strategy of the FOC that included Friends reaching out to designated countries.
- Switzerland proposed the possibility of developing a list of priority countries for outreach.

AOB

- n/a