Friends of the Chair Meeting #6
Wednesday, 28 June 2023

Attended: US (Chair 2023); Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Netherlands, Switzerland, and UK; Support Unit (SU)

Housekeeping
- Support Unit (SU) confirmed the Netherlands as Chair of the FOC in 2024, noting they are working with the SU to develop a public announcement.
- SU noted upcoming events and deadlines:
    - 29 June: Deadline to express interest to join the Funding Coordination Group's "Donor Principles for the Digital Age" Drafting Group; a multistakeholder group led by the co-chairs of the FCG composed of FOC and FOC-AN members.
    - 30 June: Deadline to submit input into the First Draft of the revised Terms of Reference.
    - SU noted the upcoming launch of the Language Mapping Tool, which is meant to ease navigation of FOC language, on the [FOC Digital Hub](#).
        - Following the tool's deployment, the SU will be reaching out via email to encourage Members to explore the tool and provide feedback.

Action>> Members are invited to express interest to join the FOC Funding Coordination Group's "Donor Principles for the Digital Age" Drafting Group by emailing USAID and IDRC, with CC to the SU by **COB Thursday, 29 June**. *[please note this deadline has passed]*

Action>> Members are invited to provide comments and suggested edits on the First Draft of the FOC Terms of Reference by emailing the US with CC to the SU by **COB Friday, 30 June**. *[please note this deadline has passed]*

Discussion Items
Engaging with Supranational and Regional Organisations
- SU noted an overview of previous discussions on the topic, including:
    - during the March SCM in D.C. where Members identified the need to strengthen coordination and collaboration with supranational and regional organisations;
    - during the June SCM in Costa Rica [June SCM mins - forthcoming], where FOC and FOC-AN Members continued these conversations, with the US, FOC Chair 2023, proposing the creation of an FOC Liaison.
- SU noted since the June SCM, Luxembourg expressed interest in serving as an FOC Liaison with the Council of Europe (CoE), and piloting the activities proposed in the FOC Liaison Activities discussion paper.
- Upon Switzerland's query on whether the FOC will be engaging in all of the suggested organisations listed in the paper, SU noted that in the first instance, Luxembourg could pilot the activity with CoE before any other fora is identified.
    - SU suggested using the Geneva SCM as an opportunity for Members to evaluate and reassess, if needed, the activities undertaken by the FOC Liaison.
- Upon Denmark's question around the reasoning for choosing the CoE as the pilot organisation, and how Luxembourg is expected to engage, SU noted the CoE was the only forum an FOC Member volunteered to engage with as an FOC Liaison, while the US noted the purpose of the suggested Liaison activities is to facilitate two-way information sharing.
    - US noted exploring FOC engagement with supranational or regional organisations is included in the Program of Action (PoA) 2023 (Goal 3/Objective 3D/ Activity 2), and

highlighted that engagement with the CoE was suggested due to the work of the [Committee on Artificial Intelligence](#) (CAI).
- ○ Denmark and the Netherlands suggested developing objectives for CoE engagement.
- US and UK suggested piloting the activities suggested in the FOC Liaison paper with Luxembourg and the CoE, after which the exercise will be evaluated.
- Netherlands suggested reviewing interregional organisations where the Coalition could strengthen engagement.

Action>> Members agreed to have the US, FOC Chair 2023, and the SU liaise with Luxembourg and discuss the implementation of the FOC Liaison activities.

Approach to FOC Rapid Response
- SU provided a background on the process to identify FOC rapid response tools, noting the topic was discussed at the March and June SCMs, is in line with the PoA 2023 (Goal 1, Objective 1B), and is referenced in the revised ToR under Section II - Working Methods, method 2.: 'Diplomatic Coordination' (Section II, p.1).
- SU noted a working group, consisting of the US, FOC Chair 2023, and FOC-AN Members, is producing a menu of options that the FOC may consider to rapidly respond to urgent Internet freedom crises. The document will be based on the feedback from previous FotC discussions, as well as feedback received from the wider FOC Membership during the June SCM.
  - ○ The working group will produce a draft over the summer, which will be presented for consideration to theFriends of the Chair (FotC).
  - ○ US welcomed FotC to join the working group, encouraging Members to share their perspectives during the drafting process.
  - ○ US noted current drafting discussions are considering FOC rapid response options in regards to timing, with recommendations for FOC responses based on whether crises are immediate or long-term.
  - ○ Denmark noted they would like to join the working group meetings, pending schedule alignment.
- Denmark highlighted discussions during the June SCM Joint Roundtable meeting, noting the need to explore key ways for the FOC to engage rapidly in situations requiring immediate attention.
  - ○ US noted the FOC rapid response tools will further explore how FOC governments can use their diplomatic influence to respond to human rights violations, e.g. issuing demarches.
  - ○ US highlighted the conversations around FOC rapid response will shape how FOC governments operate as a Coalition.

Action>> US invited the Friends of the Chair to join the rapid response working group and drafting process by emailing the SU.

Upcoming Strategy and Coordination Meetings
- SU noted the next confirmed FOC SCM will take place in Geneva, 14-15 November, with a potential FotC dinner taking place on 13 November, flagging there may be an opportunity for the FOC to convene for an SCM in September on the margins of the [Tallinn Digital Summit](#) *[Please note that an FOC convening in Tallinn is yet to be confirmed]*.
- SU also noted a potential FOC session related to surveillance and artificial intelligence at the Africa Internet Governance Forum, highlighting feedback from previous SCMs about increasing global South engagement through travel support, and invited Members to provide suggestions about how to secure greater participation.

- - UK inquired about available options to fund SCM travel for global majority representatives, and how they would work in practice, specifically highlighting questions around defining eligibility.
    - US noted they are exploring internally, encouraging FotC Members to do the same, and inquired whether there is interest among Members to discuss establishing an FOC fund to support FOC Member travel.
      - SU noted eligibility criteria could be developed for government Members, similar to the ones used to determine travel funding for the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN).
      - UK highlighted potential difficulties related to authorising government funding, but noted the importance of continuing the discussion for the sake of access and participation.
    - SU noted some government representatives were previously funded to attend the FO conference through funding from Global Partners Digital that supported global majority participation in the event.
    - Netherlands and SU noted the [Women in International Security and Cyberspace Fellowship](#) as a potential option to support global South FOC Member representative travel.
      - Women in Cyber Fellowship aims to ensure equal and effective representation of women diplomats from all regions in United Nations cyber negotiations, and develop cyber governance capacities.
- US noted they are in the process of developing agendas in collaboration with the SU for the upcoming SCMs, and invited Members to share their input on format and topics for consideration.
    - Denmark suggested making the SCMs more interactive and providing opportunities to have more in-depth discussions.

Action>> The US invited Friends of the Chair to revert internally and collect information about what funding sources are available to support global majority government attendance at FOC in-person meetings by emailing the US and the SU, or sharing at the next FotC monthly.

Program of Action 2023 Updates
- US noted the following FOC events are still to be confirmed:
    - 1st week of September: Potential convening on the sideline of the Tallinn Digital Summit (5 September);
    - 19-21 September: Potential FOC session at Africa IGF in Nigeria;
    - 20-22 September: Potential Ministerial event on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York;
      - US noted a proposal to hold a Ministerial event on the sidelines of UNGA has been internally submitted. An update is expected w/c 3 July.
    - 8-12 October: Potential FOC sessions at IGF in Kyoto, Japan.
- FOC Advisory Network
    - SU noted the FOC-AN held their June monthly meeting, and flagged that they are preparing Reactive Advice on the zero draft of the UN Cybercrime Treaty, produced by the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes.
- Diplomatic networks

- US noted the New York diplomatic network will be engaging in the UN Cybercrime Treaty negotiations, and suggested Members reach out to their relevant points of contact and flag the incoming FOC-AN Reactive Advice.

AOB
- Denmark noted the updated concept note for the Task Force in Trustworthy Information Online has been shared with the US, FOC Chair 2023.