Steering Committee Meeting #4
Wednesday, 8 May 2024

Attended: Netherlands (Chair 2024); Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States; FOC Support Unit.

Welcome
- The SU welcomed members to the fourth Steering Committee call in 2024 under the Netherlands' Chairship.
- The next SC meeting will be held on Day 1 (30 May) of the FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM) in Geneva.

Housekeeping Updates

- SC Members were asked to fill out the SCM registration form as soon as possible - please note the Support Unit will not be able to accept registrations after **Friday, 24 May**.
- As per Goal 4 (*Strengthening internal mechanisms*), activity 4.1 (*Facilitate and support capacity-building efforts of diplomats*), SC Members were asked to fill out the capacity building needs assessment ahead of the FOC SCM.
- The SU is working on finalising summaries and reports from recent events, which will be available on the FOC website and/or the Digital Hub.

Program of Action 2024 Updates

- The Netherlands provided updates related to the Chairship and PoA 2024 implementation:
  - **Past activities:**
    - **PoA Goal 1 / Goal 3 / Goal 4**
      - The FOC held a multistakeholder meeting on the GDC in **Geneva** on 22 April, as part of its series on Internet governance workshops hosted throughout March and April in the Geneva and New York diplomatic networks
      - The FOC hosted multistakeholder regional dialogues *[report forthcoming]* at:
        - The **Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) 2024** in **Accra** with African stakeholders on 23 April;
        - **NETmundial+10 in São Paulo** with LATAM stakeholders on 28 April.
      - The FOC also hosted a panel session at **DRIF** on 24 April on advancing a human rights-based and multistakeholder approach to Internet and digital technology governance.
    - **PoA Goal 2**
      - The Netherlands, with support from the FOC Task Forces on Internet Shutdowns and Information Integrity Online, hosted a panel session at **World Press Freedom Day** in **Santiago, Chile**, on shaping a positive and inclusive vision for the online information ecosystem.

  - **Relevant meetings and events:**
    - **22 May:** FOC Workshop on the GDC (*New York*)
    - **27 - 31 May**: WSIS+20 High-Level Forum (*Geneva, Switzerland*)
      - **29 May:** FOC WSIS Session: The potential of technical standards to either strengthen or undermine human rights and fundamental freedoms in emerging technologies
      - **30 - 31 May**: Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM)
        - Please register for the SCM here.
    - **30 - 31 May:** AI Summit for Global Good (*Geneva, Switzerland*)

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    - **18-19 June**: UNESCO International Conference on digital platforms governance: Building a Network of Networks *(Dubrovnik, Croatia)*.
    - **21 - 23 August**: Asia Pacific Regional IGF (APrIGF) 2024 *(Taipei, Taiwan)*
      - The FOC will be looking to host a regional dialogue with Asia-Pacific stakeholders, in addition to a panel session on information integrity and elections.
    - **15 - 19 December:** Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2024 *(Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)*
      - The FOC has submitted 3 session proposals:
        - **Ensuring an Inclusive and Rights-Respecting Digital Future** *(led by the Netherlands)* - The session will explore the role of the multistakeholder community in the implementation of the UN Global Digital Compact (GDC).
        - **A Rights-Respecting Approach to Emerging Tech Development** *(led by the Netherlands)* - This session will explore the role of the private sector in ensuring a rights-respecting approach in developing emerging technologies, including generative AI tools and systems, as well as the role of governments in ensuring that the development and implementation of technical standards around these technologies are conducted in alignment with states' obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.
        - **Human Rights Impacts of AI on Marginalized Populations** *(led by the US)* - The session will explore salient human rights risks posed by AI systems to marginalized populations in various cultural, geographic and economic contexts, taking stock of the steps that governments, industry, and civil society have take to address them.
          - FOC engagement in the IGF 2024 will be discussed at the upcoming SCM.
  - **FOC Sub-Entities**
    - The UK, co-Chair of the Task Force on Internet Shutdowns along with Access Now and GNI, noted it has submitted a session proposal for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2024 on shutdowns and the multistakeholder approach.
      - The UK also noted the Task Force co-Chairs are working on a statement on conflict and shutdowns, an initial draft of which will be shared soon.
    - Germany, co-Chair of the Task Force on Human Rights and AI along with ICNL, noted the Task Force's work plan for the remainder of the year should be finalised by next month.

Discussion

Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM) Agenda
- The Netherlands presented the draft SCM agenda, highlighting coordination around relevant Internet and AI governance processes as one of the main objectives of the meeting.
  - SC Members discussed the possibilities around structuring the "Strategic Discussion on Key Internet and Digital Tech Processes" on the morning of Day 2, including breaking out into groups according to the identified Objectives or Clusters from the GDC.
  - Members supported discussion to focus on human rights online, AI, digital divide, and follow up and review.
    - The US noted it is important to ensure the conversation is structured around coordinating support for language on human rights online.
- The Netherlands and SU will be finalising the agenda and sharing with the FOC ahead of the meeting, along with supporting documents for the discussions.

FOC-AN Election
- The SU noted that the election committee tasked with reviewing new member applications has selected 6 candidates to join the 2024-26 FOC-AN cohort *[Please note the nominees were shared*

with the Steering Committee following the call, along with the process outline, rationale, and scorings of all the applications, with which silence was initiated among the SC].
- ○ Out of the 6 candidates, 4 organisations are based in the Global North.
  - ■ 1 representative is from the private sector, 3 civil society, 1 academia, and 1 from the technical community.
- ○ Out of the 83 applications received, about 70% were from civil society, and 80% were from the global South.
- The SU noted that following the call, SC Members will be asked via email to consider the nominees under an expedited silence procedure of 5 business days.
  - ○ Should there be objections, SC Members were encouraged to provide a rationale and suggested way forward.
- The SU pointed to the FOC-AN Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, which outline the criteria and process for the selection, and upon queries, clarified that even though balancing was encouraged, there was not necessarily clear guidance that the outcome of the selection should prioritise balanced representation versus the quality of the application.
- SC Members flagged concerns around the stakeholder and geographic diversity of the FOC-AN, with some Members suggesting holding a broader conversation with the FOC-AN on how to address this and achieve balance in representation before accepting the new members.
  - ○ The Netherlands will be continuing to reach out to the FOC-AN co-Chairs to facilitate discussions and explore possible options on engaging applicants who have not passed the selection process.
  - ○ SC Members agreed this issue should be on the agenda at the SCM Joint FOC and FOC-AN Roundtable.

[Please note that since the call, silence was broken on the nominee list, after which the Netherlands and SC Members, including the US, UK, Estonia, Germany, and Canada, held a meeting with the FOC-AN co-Chairs to discuss the way forward, the outcomes of which will be shared shortly.]

Action>> FOC Members to fill out the SCM registration as soon as possible.

Action>> FOC Members to fill out the capacity building assessment needs form ahead of the SCM.

Action>> SU to initiate silence procedure on the FOC-AN 2024-2026 cohort nominees. *[Please note that silence was initiated on 9 May following the SC call, with silence broken on the same day. Next steps are being discussed between the Chair, the SC, and the FOC-AN].*