

FREEDOM ONLINE CONFERENCE

2021



10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FREEDOM ONLINE COALITION

30 November - 3 December 2021

*Openness, Accessibility and Inclusion -
Human Rights Online in the 2020's*

Freedom Online Coalition Chair's Summary



FREEDOM
ONLINE
COALITION



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

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Letter of the Chair

Distinguished Members of the Freedom Online Coalition and the FOC Advisory Network,

Dear Colleagues,

The year is approaching its end, and it is time to take a look at Finland's Chairship of the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) during 2021. It has been a great honor to chair the Coalition during its 10th Anniversary.

We wish to extend sincere thanks to all FOC member states, the Friends of the Chair, the FOC diplomatic networks, the working groups and task forces, the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) and the FOC Support Unit (SU) for excellent cooperation, support and engagement this year. It has been a pleasure to welcome two new members, Italy and Luxembourg, to the FOC. Together we have succeeded in developing the FOC's work during a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly limited international cooperation.

We have had a busy year advocating for the FOC 2021 priorities including disinformation, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI) and challenges by authoritarian regimes. The FOC's message on these issues have been voiced in numerous events throughout the year, namely at the Alliance for Multilateralism Ministerial Meeting, World Press Freedom Day Conference, Stockholm Internet Forum, RightsCon, Internet Governance Forum and Summit for Democracy. The FOC launched the [Joint Statement on Spread of Disinformation Online](#). The development of the statement was led by Finland and the United Kingdom.

In March, the Coalition members gathered for the [10th Anniversary Roundtable Discussions](#). These consultations provided us with a great opportunity for reflecting on the FOC's achievements during the past 10 years and ways to enhance the Coalition's influence going forward. Some of the solutions identified by the members were further focusing on diplomatic coordination, supporting global South members' engagement in the FOC, increasing the FOC's internal and external visibility, revisiting the FOC policy on not issuing country-specific statements, strengthening engagement with the FOC-AN and easing the administrative burden.

One of Finland's priorities during the Chairship has been to reinvigorate the FOC diplomatic coordination. As a joint effort, we have been able to breathe new life into the FOC diplomatic networks in Geneva, Paris and New York. We have raised awareness of the FOC and its work among relevant stakeholders and facilitated FOC coordination to help shape discussions and outcomes in relevant processes.

We encourage the future network leads to focus on a selected few priorities and processes the FOC can have an impact on. Colleagues at missions are warmly encouraged to continue active engagement through the FOC diplomatic channels.

During the 47th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) we presented a [Joint Statement on Freedom of Expression Online](#), a timely statement joined by all Coalition members. We look forward to continued engagement by the FOC in the HRC and in other relevant UN and regional bodies.

This year Finland organized outreach in Africa through virtual discussions on cybersecurity, digital inclusion and gender-based violence as well as a dialogue with representatives of the African Union (AU). We thank Ghana, Kenya, Tunisia and Germany for their support. We hope the FOC, as a unique, global actor bringing together countries from all continents, will continue advancing regional dialogue in the future.

Following the members' feedback in the 10th Anniversary Roundtable Discussions, we developed a comprehensive communications strategy for the Coalition and hope that it will help the FOC advocacy in the years to come. Progress has already been made in enhancing the FOC's presence on social media. The Coalition's visibility will grow even more as information about its activities are increasingly shared on the member states' own communications channels.

Human rights violations and online harassment are part of the long-term democratic decline and the ascendance of authoritarian alternatives to the open, interoperable, secure Internet, which challenge universal human rights. At the FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM) on 29 November, FOC members agreed to move forward with Finland's proposal on Next Steps Concerning the Freedom Online Coalition's Policy on Country-Specific Statements. The decision's implications for the [Stockholm Terms of Reference](#) (ToR) are now under silence procedure. We hope all members will be able to accept the proposed amendments.

The amendments to the ToR would allow the FOC to raise and react to topical human rights questions in order to better champion human rights online in the 2020s. At the same time, it is important to reserve statements with country-specific mentions to the most critical situations and for specific contexts such as the HRC.

The first ever virtual [Freedom Online Conference](#) celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Coalition with more than 800 registered participants, 13 panel discussions and the launch of the FOC Task Force on Internet Shutdowns. The Conference culminated in the [FOC Ministerial Meeting](#) which brought together Ministers from almost all member states to share their vision for Internet freedom and the FOC in the 2020s. In our view, this demonstrates the member states' continued commitment to the FOC and its increasing significance in the future.

During the Ministerial, we heard from former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Uri Rosenthal, former US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and FOC AN Co-Chair Elonnai Hickok. They reflected on the journey of the FOC and the future of the open Internet and inclusive digitalization. The FOC Ministerial Meeting launched the [FOC 10th Anniversary Helsinki Declaration](#) for a rules-based, democratic and inclusive world and for a free, open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet worldwide. The Declaration and its 10 key commitments will direct the Coalition's work in the 2020s.

A vital part of the FOC's work are its multistakeholder task forces and working groups. [The Task Force on AI and Human Rights](#), the [Task Force on Digital Equality](#) and the [Silicon Valley Working Group](#) have actively engaged members and stakeholders in coordinating FOC efforts in the fields of AI, digital inclusion and building new forms of cooperation with the global technology sector. They will all continue their essential work next year.

The support and insight of the FOC-AN are instrumental for the FOC. Through issuing proactive advice, the FOC-AN has an important role in raising critical issues the Coalition should address. This year, Finland as the Chair, started a practice of joining the FOC-AN monthly calls. This has been very useful for enhancing open and direct dialogue between the FOC member states and the FOC-AN. We warmly encourage continuing this practice in the coming years.

The SU plays a key role in ensuring continuity of the Coalition's activities and maintaining its institutional memory. We wish to warmly thank the whole SU: Lea, Zora, Nuša, Nicholas and Tea. Your expert support, assistance and advice in organizing and developing the FOC's activities is greatly valued.

Finland is delighted to pass on the Chairship to Canada. We thank the Government of Canada for effortless cooperation throughout the year and a seamless transition process over the last few months. We are certain that the Coalition will continue to flourish under the Canadian leadership in 2022.

As we all agree, the FOC's mission to promote Internet freedom and to protect human rights online is more vital than ever. In the 2020s, we need a strong and well-functioning Freedom Online Coalition. Finland will continue as an active FOC member in order to carry out our commitments towards a rules-based, democratic and digitally inclusive world with you. We invite all members to join in this effort.

On behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Finland's FOC Team,



Rauno Merisaari

Ambassador at-Large for Human Rights and Democracy

Conference Overview

From 30 November to 3 December 2021, the [10th Anniversary Freedom Online Conference](#) took place under the theme “Openness, Accessibility and Inclusion – Human Rights Online in the 2020’s”. For the first time ever, the Freedom Online Conference was held virtually, and despite challenging circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic, it gathered more than 800 participants from 72 countries over four days across various stakeholder groups.

With the FOC celebrating its 10th anniversary under Finland’s Chairship, 2021 has provided an opportune moment for the Coalition to pave the way forward for the promotion and implementation of a human-rights based approach to Internet governance and digitalization in the coming decade.

Internet freedom continues to be a key enabler for economic and social development, expanding civic participation, access to information, and unlocking the opportunities of emerging technologies. Internet connectivity has become an essential means to access services, participate in society and exercise human rights and fundamental freedoms.

However, persistent digital divides are urgent concerns. A significant part of the world’s population remains offline or unable to participate meaningfully online, further exacerbating existing inequalities. The Covid-19 pandemic has deteriorated the situation further and the world has witnessed a growing number of Internet shutdowns and misuse of emerging technologies. Democracy and human rights in the digital age hinge on meaningful access to and rights-respecting development and use of digital technologies for all.

At this juncture of opportunities and challenges, the FOC’s mission to promote Internet freedom and protect human rights online is more vital than ever. Providing a unique multistakeholder forum, the 2021 Freedom Online Conference brought together governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and others to discuss and share information on the most urgent challenges to Internet freedom and the enjoyment of human rights in the digital space, and advance the FOC’s vision for promoting Internet freedom, human rights and a digitally inclusive world in the 2020s.

The Conference featured more than 70 speakers, outlined in Annex 1, and 13 sessions covering priority issues of the FOC outlined in the [Program of Action 2021](#), including disinformation, digital inclusion, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, challenges by authoritarian regimes, as well as other topics related to Internet freedom raised by the broader community.

The event culminated with a high-level Ministerial Meeting on Friday, 3 December, which featured remarks from more than 30 high-level government representatives, outlined in Annex 2. The Ministerial Meeting provided an opportunity for the FOC to launch its “[Freedom Online Coalition 10th Anniversary Helsinki Declaration - Towards a rules-based, democratic and digitally inclusive world](#)”. The Helsinki Declaration, signed by all FOC members, outlines the Coalition’s vision on stepping up efforts to protect Internet freedom in the coming decade, and reaffirms its commitment to protect and promote human rights for all, both offline and online.

A key takeaway from across all Conference sessions was the notion that tackling issues relating to freedom online must be done in a way that respects international human rights law, and by advocating for the existing universal human rights framework in global forums. The Conference reaffirmed that multistakeholder engagement must be at the heart of FOC’s activities going forward.

The Conference also provided strategic opportunities for the FOC and FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) members to gather in internal virtual meetings, including a Strategy and Coordination Meeting, and a Joint FOC and FOC-AN Roundtable.

Conference Session Summaries

Opening Plenary: Open and Accessible and Internet for All

This session focused on the current challenges and opportunities for achieving an open and accessible Internet for all, directly addressing the topic of the FO Conference - Openness, Accessibility and Inclusion. The multistakeholder panel highlighted the need for access and focused on the economic and social barriers to access which were often reinforced and further exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic. The panel also sought to reflect on the consequences of unequal access globally, such as emerging new challenges like mis- and disinformation, online abuse, particularly against marginalized groups, network disruptions etc.

A key takeaway was that access to information, civic and democratic engagement, economic empowerment, achieving gender equality and eliminating poverty all require meaningful and equitable access to the Internet, digital services and technologies. The panel further emphasized that this can only be achieved through establishing multistakeholder partnerships. They argued that framing access to the Internet as a human rights issue and focusing on increasing investment, infrastructure and digital literacy, can help drive an open, secure and inclusive Internet based on respect for human rights globally.

Session 1: Combatting the Rise of Digital Authoritarianism

This session focused on digital authoritarianism and sought to highlight current global trends and challenges, specific examples and the role of democracies, as well as solutions to address the issue globally. The multistakeholder panel recognized digital authoritarianism as more than just a matter of malign application of technology - but as a competing model of governance that is spreading around the world, sometimes even being replicated within democracies. The panel highlighted the urgency of the issue and called attention to the double-edged sword of digital technologies on societies - while the Internet has provided unprecedented opportunities for empowerment online, it has also degraded the quality of democracies with the Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbating the threat to freedom online.

The panelists, however, agreed that multistakeholder forums like the FOC, can be a vehicle to drive solutions by both offering a platform for open discussions and by setting an example. A key takeaway was that only through a genuine multistakeholder process, whereby all, including voices that are not often represented, jointly participate in the discussion, digital authoritarianism can be successfully addressed. The panel highlighted the need for a bigger commitment to transparency, by both governments and the private sector, and for a bigger focus on increasing funding and prioritizing innovation. An emphasis was also put on the importance of access and meaningful connectivity to address digital divides and build digitally inclusive societies globally.

Session 2: Beyond T-FAIR: Exploring Lessons Learned

The aim of this session was to reflect on the work of the FOC Task Force on Artificial Intelligence (T-FAIR) toward advancing the application of the international human rights framework to the global governance of AI. The panelists recognized AI technology as a geopolitical issue of growing importance and a source of immense benefits but also of potential adverse effects when in the hands of bad actors.

In line with this understanding of AI, panelists suggested ways for the FOC and other task forces to make governance more effective and inclusive, foster international multistakeholderism, and raise

awareness around their priority issues. These included having the FOC focus on a small number of cases of malicious use of AI that raise the greatest number of concerns. Furthermore, the panelists recommended a genuinely multistakeholder approach that involves raising awareness and sharing knowledge among a wide group of stakeholders such as end users, AI technology developers, private actors as both suppliers and deployers of AI, governments as both deployers and regulators, lawmakers, and civil society groups. Finally, the panel highlighted that governance should be about leadership and guidance, and practically feasible at both international and national level. Effective governance should also take ethics and social justice frameworks into consideration, and require regular assessment and revision depending on whether existing laws are sufficient or if further regulation is necessary.

Session 3: Beyond Pegasus: Improving Transparency, Rights Protection and Accountability in the Surveillance Tech Space

Recent reporting from the Pegasus Project has highlighted the extent to which surveillance technology is being used to unlawfully penetrate the private communications of activists, journalists, and political figures. The providers and clients of these technologies both have strong incentives to remain secretive about their relationships, which has made regulation and accountability for abuses difficult to enact. This session explored ways to improve transparency, rights protection, and accountability in the surveillance tech space.

The panelists agreed that multistakeholderism can be a tool for accountability, transparency, and oversight, and discussed regulation and institutional mechanisms that would be effective in preventing, detecting, and providing remedies in surveillance abuse. It was noted that it is the responsibility of states to regulate the surveillance industry, but highlighted the problem of the industry not being susceptible to public pressure due to their business models. When looking at any kind of regulation, transparency will be one core principle that would need to be incorporated in local legislation. The panelists emphasized the need to consider the implications of surveillance technologies on human rights, and translate existing human rights frameworks into principles and clear standards that governments are more comfortable with.

Session 4: International Cybersecurity and Human Rights: A Primer

This session aimed to introduce to the FOC how human rights have been addressed in the context of multilateral cyber processes, in particular on the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), and the norms of responsible state behavior such instruments contain.

The panel gathered speakers from different stakeholder groups who brought diverse perspectives on these issues. The speakers highlighted how these UN processes and its commitments to human rights have evolved throughout the years, from initial recognition of the link between human rights and cybersecurity, to the adoption of a specific norm focused on human rights. The panelists shared the following recommendations for the upcoming OEWG: continue raising awareness of existing commitments to human rights, sensitization, awareness raising and capacity building should happen at all levels and across stakeholder groups, states should be encouraged to develop and implement cybersecurity frameworks in a human rights respecting way, ensure complementarity between cybersecurity processes and other UN goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and continue recognizing the value of multistakeholder discussions.

Session 5: Multistakeholder Approach to Develop Guiding Principles on Diversity of Content Online

This panel addressed the importance of using a multistakeholder approach in developing best practices in digital policy through the example of the Canadian government's "Diversity of Content in the Digital Age" initiative. This initiative aims to ensure that citizens are able to access diversity of content online in a way that bolsters resilience to disinformation and encourages social inclusion and cohesion.

The panelists emphasized how no single entity within the public, civil society, or private sector has the solution for this issue, which is why a multistakeholder processes is necessary. They also discussed challenges to such an approach, including the difficulties larger entities (such as governments and multinational companies) face in presenting a unified position, the need for more data to inform such processes, the complexity of coming to a consensus when each stakeholder has different incentives, and the need to establish common definitions for key terms (particularly, the meaning of diversity in this context) before the process can even begin. The panelists concluded that such processes require a steady stream of data to ensure their outcomes are as up-to-date and diverse as possible.

Session 6: Promoting Meaningful, Equitable Internet Access

This session brought together panelists in a discussion on digital divides and inclusion efforts. The discussion emphasized on the definition of meaningful access, which extends beyond the physical devices people use to connect to the Internet and beyond their ability to connect in the first place. Rather, meaningful access relates to users' technical know-how as well as their capacity to participate and have a say online and in policy processes. In the course of the discussion, that capacity was in turn related to questions of agency and empowering users. Finally, the panelists considered accessibility as closely tied to the legal and economic frameworks users are set in. Taking these features into consideration, the panelists concluded that meaningful access is a layered concept that varies across contexts and as such requires a holistic understanding. The speakers also called for understanding how meaningful access could be ensured in practice and taking action to that end.

Session 7: Civil Society Briefing for AHC-FOC Membership: Digital Rights, Human Rights, and a UN Cybercrime Treaty

This session aimed to gather stakeholder perspectives on a new process underway at the UN to develop a cybercrime treaty, the Ad-Hoc Committee on Cybercrime. The panel explained the logistics agreed so far, including the commitment to work by consensus, the timeline for drafting the convention, number and location of sessions. The panelists emphasized concerns around stakeholder access to the meetings, reiterating the importance of open and inclusive modalities with clarity on opportunities to engage and transparency and access to meeting documents and discussions. It was also noted however that non-governmental stakeholders can and should take advantage of informal opportunities to engage (e.g. track 1.5 dialogues, informal convenings).

One major concern noted by all panelists is the use by countries of cybercrime as a lever to exert control over legitimate activities online and the importance of ensuring that any new treaty doesn't undermine existing efforts, such as the Budapest convention. It was noted that in the 26 submissions on the scope of the convention so far from member states, a number of countries did not make reference to human rights or only made reference to particular rights. Therefore, it was suggested that the treaty reaffirm international human rights law, maintain a narrow scope with regards to what is criminalized, and not seek to negotiate procedural standards. Finally, the panelists highlighted that the FOC has real potential to bring together strong and diverse views to advocate for human rights at the AHC.

Session 8: Data and Human Rights: Striving for Meaningful Transparency and a Fair Data Economy

The increasing volume and types of data being collected by companies and governments over the last decade, compounded by the rise of automated data processing and AI systems, have led to challenges and placed an even greater burden on both information and communications technology companies and governments to increase transparency to the public about how their personal data is used and shared.

The session looked at these issues around transparency and accountability from an angle of human agency, human rights and freedom online. It explored the concept of a fair data economy - one where there is added value and where companies understand the value of sharing data; where there is balance, sovereignty, and which unlocks the use of data to thrive. The panel also explored solutions and good practices such as developing data protection legislation, accountability frameworks, and mandatory transparency reporting. In addition to specific examples of measures, speakers highlighted the value of bottom-up approaches and multistakeholder processes to develop frameworks and initiatives to foster transparency and accountability.

Session 9: How to Avoid Digital ID Systems That Put People at Risk: Lessons from Afghanistan

The panel discussed the proliferation of Digital Identity Systems across the world, and highlighted risks, lessons and guidance for the creation and implementation of digital ID systems by drawing on their own research, policy engagement and advocacy experience. The panel did so by looking at recent events unfolding in Afghanistan, where the risks of implementing a digital ID system have been overlooked - with potentially devastating and widespread consequences. The panel challenged the narrative around the digital ID systems and the assumption that these programs enhance the efficiency of government services and empower marginalized users, showing that these systems also bring risk and could violate their human rights.

As a key takeaway, the panel highlighted that robust human rights risks assessments and appropriate human rights safeguards are crucial to prevent abuse of the systems. When evaluating digital ID systems, assessments should therefore include three elements - a rule of law test, a rights based test, and a risk test.

The panel also highlighted the importance of the unique national context, and urged authorities to not take a “one size fits all” approach. While there is a proliferation of ID systems across the world, panelists presented research that showed that most systems are designed similarly and still rely on centralized databases and systems that are primarily biometrics-based. The panel encouraged the international community who advocate for and support digital ID systems to ensure that risks to human rights are appropriately assessed and to put appropriate safeguards in place to prioritize people from the very beginning of the design phase.

Session 10: FOC Task Force on Internet Shutdowns and Defending Democracy Online

Co-chaired by the US State Department, and members of the FOC Advisory Network, the Global Network Initiative and Access Now, the new FOC Task Force on Internet Shutdowns will aim to address Internet shutdowns trends and to respond to network disruptions in real time. This session served as the launching point of the Task Force and aimed to further define its role and focus. The multistakeholder panel called attention to the FOC’s responsibility to advance Internet freedom and

emphasized the importance of sharing and developing resources, issuing targeted statements as well as creating and leveraging trusted channels of communication among all stakeholders to facilitate collaboration.

Following the panel discussion, the session split into three breakout rooms, each focusing on a different topic where participants had been allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis.

- The first breakout room centered around the topic of documenting and measuring Internet shutdowns, where the Task Force can act as a point of contact for those on the ground. Participants discussed the importance of working together to cross-validate data in order to address network disruptions in real time.
- The second breakout room focused on communication gaps, opportunities for engagement between the Task Force and broader communities looking to curb the rise of Internet shutdowns around the world, and taking stock of existing resources. The participants emphasized the importance of digital literacy training with the Task Force providing appropriate tools, resources, best practices, and means of engagement for the actors affected by Internet shutdowns.
- The third breakout room focused on advocacy strategy and response. The panelists highlighted challenges they have encountered when advocating against Internet shutdowns. Participants also underscored the importance of targeted statements by governments and multilateral institutions, as well as of collaboration among the end users, non-governmental and governmental stakeholders.

Session 11: Regulating (Dis)Content: How Human Rights Can Help Shape Government Content Regulation Efforts

In this session, stakeholders came together to take a closer look at three important considerations for developing content regulation - transparency, scope of application, and cross-border impacts - and examine different approaches to each, in particular with respect to the implementation of the State duty to protect human rights in preventing possible infringements of the freedom of expression online.

Touching on the UNESCO transparency principles, the panelists noted that transparency which creates meaningful information and enables more effective multistakeholder engagement is critical to any approach to public policy. It was noted that transparency is an essential precondition to effective regulation. The speakers also highlighted the concern around legislation that treats all content moderation as top down, which can interfere with content moderation systems that are already effective, and discussed business models that incentivize amplification of harmful content. When addressing these models, the speakers noted that regulators should focus on provisions that are more about how platforms operate, including on transparency of Terms of Service and how content moderation is being done, and emphasized the necessity of human rights impact assessments in legislation.

The panelists concluded that a multistakeholder approach grounded in human rights and open Internet is needed to ensure effective content regulation. It was noted that focus on systems and processes at the highest level is the appropriate approach, and the speakers cited regulatory efforts such as the Digital Services Act as good starting points modeling what that approach could look like in practice.

Session 12: Tech for Democracy and Ways to Jointly, Responsibly, and Proactively Take Action

The aim of the session was to discuss key takeaways from the discussions that took place during the Tech for Democracy conference, which identified 2022 as a year of action for governments, civil society, international organizations and tech companies to further engage in strengthening and promoting democracy and civic space online. The panel gathered speakers to explore ways to jointly, responsibly and proactively take action and promote the use of digital technologies for democracy and human rights going forward.

The panelists emphasized the importance of advancing multistakeholder engagement in defining policies that promote and protect free, global and open internet. They shared a number of ways for the governments to improve intergovernmental mechanisms to support democratic dialogue and define a shared democratic vision for the future use of technology. The panelists highlighted how supporting digital inclusion as a primarily political matter helps to expand civic space. To encourage digital inclusion, they pointed to the need to enable access of marginalized societies to digital services and support media literacy. The speakers further emphasized the importance of developing technologies that give people choice and control over algorithms.

Closing Plenary: FOC 10th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting

Former United States Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered the meeting's keynote address, emphasizing the need for FOC member states to focus on the new challenges to Internet freedom in today's world. She drew attention to how authoritarian regimes are using online content and social media platforms to manipulate their citizens and called for the Coalition to help lead the way for real reform in Internet governance. The panelists, including Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland Pekka Haavisto, former Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Uri Rosenthal, and FOC Advisory Network co-Chair and Scholar at the Technology and International Affairs Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Elonnai Hickok, went on to discuss the rise of hate groups, online terrorist chat groups, and the oppressive abuse of citizens by authoritarian regimes. When asked about potential ways to ensure human rights are fully respected, panelists emphasized the following: ensuring that technological solutions are catered to specific needs and are developed with an emphasis on user rights and control; digital literacy and media education efforts; focusing on harmonization of regulations to create a comprehensive and interoperable internet digital ecosystem; fostering dialogue with countries that are just adopting digital technologies and committing to continuing a multistakeholder approach based on openness, accessibility, and inclusion. The panelists highlighted the continued importance of the Freedom Online Coalition in advancing these issues and beyond.

During the Ministerial Meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland Pekka Haavisto introduced the "Freedom Online Coalition 10th Anniversary Helsinki Declaration - Towards a Rules-based, Democratic and Digitally Inclusive World", which reaffirms the FOC's commitment to protect and promote human rights for all, both offline and online in the 2020s.

Finland welcomed the Canadian FOC Chairship beginning on 1 January 2022. Deputy Foreign Minister Marta Morgan speaking on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Mélanie Joly, from Canada spoke about Canada's plans to concentrate next year on digital inclusion through four key pillars: greater connectivity, better digital literacy, civic participation free from hate speech and a safe online ecosystem for all.

Ministerial Roundtable Session Summaries

Following the panel discussion, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other state representatives from 30 FOC member states participated in a Ministerial Roundtable, which was divided into four thematic blocks:

1. Equal Access to and Use of Internet

The speakers noted that equal and meaningful access to and use of the Internet is vital for both social and economic development and for political and civic participation. It was stressed that the Internet is a powerful tool that can support democracy. The importance of national legislation to promote freedom of expression was also highlighted, as were efforts to strengthen infrastructure to work towards overcoming digital divides including the gender digital divide. Furthermore, speakers stressed the importance of media literacy as a means of combating disinformation and misinformation, and of the FOC in preventing efforts to block a free, open and interoperable internet.

2. Secure Internet: Disinformation, Online Violence and Content Moderation

Disinformation, harmful content and online violence can erode trust in digital spaces. Building that trust is crucial for bridging digital divides and connecting those who are not online. However, speakers also noted the potential human rights consequences of regulatory efforts to moderate disinformation and hate speech, and the importance of developing regulations that are human rights-respecting. Some of the solutions that recurred in the discussion were media and digital literacy initiatives and investments in education that develop critical thinking as well as efforts to promote diversity of online content and media pluralism. Speakers also highlighted that civil society, and the public and private sectors must work closer together for a more secure Internet.

3. Human Rights Based Digitalization

Speakers explored how digital policy and tech development go hand-in-hand with existing social and government processes to ensure that digitalization serves the public. States' responsibility to respect human rights in their territory must extend to the digital sphere and to the underlying core technologies that form the foundation for future digital societies and economies. Companies, on the other hand, have a central role in promoting and increasing transparency, traceability, and accountability in the design, development and use of digital technologies. Ensuring equal access to digital tools and the internet, including across generations and borders, was also a recurring theme. Speakers also emphasized the necessity of ensuring content moderation efforts do not stifle freedom of expression.

4. Rules Based World and Multistakeholderism

As existing technologies develop and new ones emerge, there is an increasing need for international dialogue and cooperation – at national, regional and multinational level – between governments, businesses and civil society from North and South in order to build an open, democratic and inclusive future where digital technologies strengthen human rights and improve all lives, including the most vulnerable. Speakers in this block also highlighted that multilateralism is an effective means of democratizing the Internet, and noted that efforts to surmount the digital divides must be meaningful and include all relevant stakeholders.

ANNEX 1 - List of Session Panelists

Opening Plenary - Open and Accessible Internet for all

- Keynote by Timo Harakka, Minister of Transport and Communications, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Government of Finland
- Moderated by Jason Pielemeier, Global Network Initiative Deputy Director
- Matti Anttonen, Permanent State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Government of Finland
- Emilar Gandhi, Head of Inclusivity in Policy Development, Meta
- Marianne Díaz Hernández, #KeepItOn Fellow, AccessNow
- Kennedy Kachwanya, Founder and Chairman, Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE); Digital Trainer, Deutsche Welle Akademie
- Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Opinion and Expression, United Nations
- Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe

Session 1: Combatting the Rise of Digital Authoritarianism

- Moderated by Eileen Donahoe, Executive Director, Global Digital Policy Incubator, Stanford University's Cyber Policy Center
- Steve Crown, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel of Human Rights, Microsoft
- Gallit Dobner, Director, Center for International Digital Policy, Global Affairs Canada
- Anne Marie Engtoft Larsen, Tech Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Denmark
- Alina Polyakova, President and CEO, Center for European Policy Analysis
- Halimah Delaine Prado, General Counsel, Google
- Trisha Ray, Fellow, Center for Security, Strategy & Technology, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)

Session 2: Beyond T-FAIR: Exploring Lessons Learned

- Moderated by Philippe-André Rodriguez, Deputy Director, Center for International Digital Policy, Global Affairs Canada
- Dr. Albert Antwi-Boasiako, National Cybersecurity Advisor, Republic of Ghana
- Florence M. Chee, Director, Center for Digital Ethics and Policy, Loyola University Chicago
- Kyle Matthews, Executive Director, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies
- Bernard Shen, Assistant General Counsel on Human Rights, Microsoft

Session 3: Beyond Pegasus: Improving Transparency, Rights Protection and Accountability in the Surveillance Tech Space

- Moderated by David Kaye, Independent Chair, Global Network Initiative
- Anne-Marie Buzatu, Vice President and Chief Operations Officer, ICT4Peace Foundation
- Luis Fernando García, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales (R3D)
- Apar Gupta, Executive Director, Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF)
- Sarah McKune, U.S. Lawyer and Independent Consultant
- Vivek Krishnamurthy, Director, Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC)

Session 4: International Cybersecurity and Human Rights: A Primer

- Moderated by Dr. Cécile Aptel, Deputy Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, (UNIDIR)
- Enrico Calandro, Co-Director, Cybersecurity Capacity Centre for Southern Africa, University of Cape Town
- Kaja Ciglic, Director, Digital Diplomacy, Microsoft
- Sheetal Kumar, Head of Global Engagement and Advocacy, Global Partners Digital
- Nadine Olivieri Lozano, Ambassador, Head of International Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Government of Switzerland
- Moses Owiny, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Multilateral Affairs (CfMA)
- Carmen Valeria Solis Rivera, Head of Digital and Cultural Diplomacy of Mexico in Japan; Former Director for Cybersecurity, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Mexico

Session 5: Multistakeholder Approach to Develop Guiding Principles on Diversity of Content Online

- Moderated by Charles Vallerand, Program Optimization Specialist, Telefilm Canada
- Laura Mäkelä, Ministerial Advisor, Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of Finland
- Madona Radi, Director General of International Trade, Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada
- Michel Sabbagh, Director General of Broadcasting, Copyright, and Creative Marketplace, Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada
- Tessa Sproule, Co-founder and CEO, Vubble
- Maria Luisa Stasi, Senior Legal Officer, Article 19

Session 6: Promoting Meaningful, Equitable Internet Access

- Moderated by Edetaen Ojo, Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda
- Emmanuella Darkwah, International Cooperation Officer, Cyber Security Authority, Government of Ghana
- Verónica Ferrari, Global Policy Advocacy Coordinator, Association for Progressive Communications
- Emilar Gandhi, Head of Inclusivity in Policy Development, Meta
- Silja Leinonen, Senior Advisor, Innovation and Digital Development, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Government of Finland
- Philippe-André Rodriguez, Deputy Director, Center for International Digital Policy, Global Affairs Canada
- Amalia Toledo, Public Policy Specialist for Latin America and the Caribbean, Wikimedia Foundation

Session 7: Civil Society Briefing for AHC-FOC Membership: Digital Rights, Human Rights, and a UN Cybercrime Treaty

- Moderated by Madeline Murphy Hall, Senior Multilateral Advisor, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, United States Department of State
- Deborah Brown, Senior Researcher and Advocate on Digital Rights, Human Rights Watch
- Joyce Hakmeh, Senior Research Fellow, International Cyber Programme; Co-Editor, Journal of Cyber Policy, Chatham House
- John Hering, Senior Government Affairs Manager, Digital Diplomacy Team, Microsoft
- James Walsh, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, United States Department of State

Session 8: Data and Human Rights: Striving For Meaningful Transparency and a Fair Data Economy

- Moderated by Chris Sheehy, Policy Officer, Global Network Initiative
- Paul-Olivier Dehaye, CEO, Hestia.ai; Personal Data Expert; Board Member, Treasurer, MyData Global Network
- Jhalak M. Kakkar, Executive Director, Centre for Communication Governance (CCG), National Law University, Delhi
- Juhani Luoma-Kyyny, Senior Lead, Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra
- Alexandria Walden, Global Head of Human Rights, Google
- Nicolo Zingales, Professor, Information Law and Regulation, Law School, Fundação Getulio Vargas

Session 9: How to Avoid Digital ID Systems That Put People at Risk: Lessons from Afghanistan

- Laura Bingham, Executive Director, Institute on Law, Innovation, and Technology, Temple University
- Verónica Arroyo, Digital ID Policy Lead, Access Now
- Tomaso Falchetta, Global Policy Engagement Lead, Privacy International
- Amber Sinha, Executive Director, Centre for Internet and Society, India

Session 10: FOC Task Force on Internet Shutdowns and Defending Democracy Online

- Moderated by Niki Masghati, Foreign Affairs Officer, Democracy, Rights and Labor, United States Department of State
- Felicia Anthonio, Campaigner, #KeepItOn Lead, Access Now
- Laura O'Brien, UN Advocacy Officer, Access Now
- David Kaye, Independent Chair, Global Network Initiative
- Peter Micek, General Counsel and UN Policy Manager, Access Now
- Nicola Oldham, Adviser, Digital Democracy and Open Governance, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- Chris Sheehy, Policy Officer, Global Network Initiative
- Paul Williams, Director, Open Societies and Human Rights, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- Uzra Zeya, Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, United States Department of State

Session 11: Regulating (Dis)Content: How Human Rights Can Help Shape Government Content Regulation Efforts

- Moderated by Jason Pielemeier, Deputy Director, Global Network Initiative
- Paul Ash, Prime Minister's Special Representative on Cyber and Digital, Christchurch Call & Cyber Coordinator, Government of New Zealand
- Allison Davenport, Senior Public Policy Counsel, Wikimedia Foundation
- Rémy Friedmann, Senior Advisor, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Government of Switzerland
- Peggy Hicks, Director, Thematic Engagement, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations
- Jan Penfrat, Senior Policy Advisor, European Digital Rights (EDRi)
- Eliška Pírková, Europe Policy Analyst and the Global Freedom of Expression Lead, AccessNow
- Andrew Puddephatt, Internet Policy Expert; UNESCO Consultant
- Martin Rauchbauer, Tech Ambassador in Silicon Valley, Government of Austria; Co-Director of Open Austria; Austrian Consul in San Francisco
- Idan Ben Yakir, Operations Associate, Global Network Initiative

Session 12: Tech for Democracy and Ways to Jointly, Responsibly, and Proactively Take Action

- Moderated by Anne Marie Engtoft Larsen, Tech Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Denmark
- Sarah Lister, Head of Governance, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme (UDDP)
- Nick Pickles, Senior Director of Global Public Policy Strategy, Twitter
- Nanjira Sambuli, Fellow, Technology and International Affairs Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

ANNEX 2 - Ministerial Meeting Speakers

- Moderated by Nina Rahkola, Journalist
- Keynote Address by Hillary Clinton, Former United States Secretary of State
- Panel:
 - Pekka Haavisto, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland
 - Elonnai Hickok, Non-resident Scholar, Technology and International Affairs Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
 - Uri Rosenthal, Emeritus Professor of Political Science and Public Policy
- Ministers and State Representatives:
 - Michael Linhart, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Austria
 - Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada
 - Christian Guillermet-Fernández, Deputy Minister, Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Costa Rica
 - Jakub Kulháněk, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic
 - Jeppe Kofod, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Denmark
 - Eva-Maria Liimets, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Estonia
 - David Zalkaliani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgia
 - Miguel Berger, State Secretary, Federal Foreign Office, Germany
 - Dr. Albert Antwi-Boasiako, Ag. Director-General, Cyber Security Authority, Ghana
 - Simon Coveney T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Ireland
 - Luigi di Maio, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy
 - Raychelle Omamo, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Kenya
 - Edgars Rinkēvičs, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Latvia
 - Gabrielius Landsbergis, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania
 - Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Minister of Immigration and Asylum, Luxembourg
 - Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed, Foreign Secretary, Maldives
 - Veaceslav Dobîndă, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Moldova
 - Battsetseg Batmunkh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mongolia
 - Hubertus Petrus Maria Knapen, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
 - David Clark, Minister for the Digital Economy and Communications, New Zealand
 - Anniken Huitfeldt, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway
 - Prof. Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland
 - José Manuel Albares Bueno, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation, Spain
 - Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
 - Ignazio Cassis, Head, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland
 - Othman Jerandi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad, Tunisia
 - Tariq Mahmood Ahmad, Lord of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, the United Nations and the Commonwealth, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom
 - Antony J. Blinken, United States Secretary of State