
THE SAN JOSE STATEMENT OF THE FREEDOM ONLINE COALITION REGARDING THE OUTCOME OF THE 2016 STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Freedom Online Coalition (“the Coalition”) welcomes the conclusions and recommendations of the Strategic Review Working Group (“the Working Group”) and expresses appreciation to the members of the Working Group, the Support Unit, the author and editors of the External Assessment, and all those who participated in related interviews and surveys. The information gathered and presented by the Working Group reminds us that the motivations and objectives expressed upon the Coalition’s founding remain just as, if not more, pertinent today. The development of the Coalition over the last five years reflects and underscores the many and evolving challenges related to Internet freedom, and the important and unique roles that the Coalition can play in promoting and protecting human rights online. The willingness of members and external stakeholders to contribute their time, energy, and expertise to this exercise demonstrates an enduring commitment to the Coalition and strong desire to improve its effectiveness and impact.

After considering the information presented by the Working Group in the Overview Memorandum and its accompanying reports (the Stocktaking Report, the External Assessment, and the Members’ Survey), the members of the Coalition hereby:

- Reaffirm their individual and collective commitments to the Founding Declaration from The Hague in December 2011 and the Tallinn Recommendations for Freedom Online of April 2014, and clarify that the goal of the Coalition is to serve as a multilateral coordinating body that advances cross-regional diplomacy and multi-stakeholder engagement to promote and protect human rights online globally;
- Emphasize the importance of remaining flexible and nimble both in structure and strategy, while recognizing and committing to address where necessary the limits that informal arrangements can have on effectiveness, impact, and internal coherence;
- Prioritize strengthening coordination and cooperation among members, as well as with outside stakeholders who share the Coalition’s objectives, with added focus on fostering cross-regional diplomacy through activating local networks, on shaping global norms on human rights online through joint statements, and on holding the annual conference with members and other stakeholders.

The Working Group’s efforts have created a foundation that allows for informed and considered deliberation and decision-making about how best to focus and strengthen the work of the Coalition. The Coalition welcomes the completion of the latest leg of our collective journey toward enhancing Internet freedom across the world, and especially in places where human rights are severely threatened. The first five years of this journey have been marked by productive work and impactful deliverables, such as the Coalition’s joint statements and the outputs from the Working Groups. This period has also seen steady growth in membership, albeit with an uneven degree of member engagement, and an increase in external stakeholder involvement. Although further consideration is needed to decide a number of issues and diverse views exist about how best to utilize the Coalition’s potential, it is clear that increased member participation and continued collaboration with outside stakeholders will be necessary to realize this potential more fully. With this in mind, the Coalition invites all members and engaged stakeholders to continue to contribute to the Coalition’s existing work and further evolution in order to better promote and protect human rights online.

In support of these decisions and in order to strengthen the Coalition’s ability to achieve its commitments, the members of the Coalition agree and commit to working together toward the goals and objectives set forth in the following work plan for 2016-17.

FOC STRATEGIC REVIEW OUTCOME WORK PLAN

Objective 1: Increasing effectiveness, coherence and credibility while sustainably and strategically expanding Coalition membership

- Goal 1.1: Revise and clarify membership criteria and procedures to ensure that new members are committed to the Coalition's objectives and commitments;
- Goal 1.2: Develop and achieve Coalition agreement on an outreach plan based on these reviewed criteria;
- Goal 1.3: Clarify member responsibilities, including vis-a-vis engagement with domestic stakeholders and international bodies, as well as participation in Coalition conferences, strategic meetings, and other activities;
- Goal 1.4: Establish internal procedures to promote adherence to these commitments and responsibilities

Objective 2: Improve the Coalition's ability to cooperate strategically and cross-regionally among members to develop and promote norms and coordinate activities

- Goal 2.1: Clarify the roles of the Chair, Friends of the Chair, and Support Unit;
- Goal 2.2: Develop a plan to formalize and strengthen networks among FOC member missions in key multilateral forums
- Goal 2.3: Develop a consistent structure and operating procedure to improve planning for and enhance the value of the Coalition's Annual Conference;
- Goal 2.4: Develop clear procedures for the development and promotion of Coalition statements;
- Goal 2.5: Form a standing funding coordination group to help ensure the financial sustainability of the Coalition and coordinate donor activity to support Coalition aims and objectives

Objective 3: Clarify and enhance external relationships

- Goal 3.1: Produce options and recommendations on how best to structure engagement with non-state stakeholders. In the interim, co-chairs of the existing multi-stakeholder Working Groups should extend their mandates with a view to conclude their current workplan deliverables;
- Goal 3.2: Explore opportunities to maximize the impact of local FOC networks and coordinate and collaborate with similar organizations that share the Coalition's objectives

In order to achieve these goals and objectives, the Coalition hereby renews the mandate of the Support Unit, establishes a Terms of Reference Working Group and a Funding Coordination Group¹, to operate in an inclusive and transparent manner, and assigns the above efforts as follows:

- Terms of Reference Working Group - Goals: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, and 3.1
- Support Unit - Goals: 2.2, 2.3, 3.2
- Friends of the Chair - Goal 1.2
- Standing Funding Coordination Group - Goal 2.5

1. Membership in these entities will be established at the Freedom Online Conference in San Jose and periodically modified as necessary.