

## **Report of the Freedom Online Coalition Open Forum at IGF 2014**

### **Protecting Human Rights Online**

As part of the official IGF program, the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) held an Open Forum at the 2014 IGF in Istanbul. The aim of the Open Forum was to inform the IGF community of the FOC's work and efforts in promoting online freedoms, and to raise issues related to social media restrictions in the context of the Forum being held in Turkey.

The first portion of the Open Forum was devoted to giving an update of the previous FOC high level conference in Tallinn and the release of the Tallinn Agenda for Freedom Online, and to preview the upcoming conference in Ulaanbaatar in May 2015. In addition, Fieke Jansen from Hivos provided an update on the work of the Digital Defenders Partnership, a joint initiative of several FOC members.

The second portion focused on the FOC's substantive agenda. The leads for each of the FOC's three working groups gave presentations on the status of the groups. The first working group is chaired by the Netherlands and addresses rights-based approaches to cybersecurity. The second working group is chaired by Sweden and will explore the economic and development benefits of increasing access to an open Internet. The third working group is chaired by the U.K. and focuses on the relationship between companies and governments around privacy and transparency. The Netherlands discussed Working Group 1, Sweden discussed Working Group 2, and Katharine Kendrick from New York University discussed Working Group 3.

The final portion was a discussion of social media restrictions. Sweden and the United States discussed the recent FOC statement on the topic while Ahmet Sabancı from the Turkish Alternative Informatics Association and Marco Pancini from Google discussed the situation in Turkey.

The Forum was well attended and the audience engaged in a lively debate with the panelists. The FOC benefited from the constructive feedback from the multistakeholder IGF community and invited the community to continue these conversations at the next Freedom Online Conference, to be held 4-5 May, 2015 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Reported by: Seth Bouvier, U.S. Department of State