

## FoE Online Dynamic Coalition Progress Report: August 2009

The Freedom of Expression and the Media Online Dynamic Coalition (FoE DC) meeting at the 2008 IGF in Hyderabad was well attended by a range of stakeholders. All expressed commitment to building an internet that supports open communication and to battling against violations of the human right to freedom of expression online. The workshop report can be found here: <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/2008-igf-hyderabad/event-reports/74-dynamic-coalitions/327-freedom-of-expression-and-the-media-online-dynamic-coalition-meeting>

### Current progress

Throughout the year, several interesting projects addressing challenges of freedom of expression online have been pursued by various members of the dynamic coalition. These projects include:

- The continued expansion of the Open Net Initiative's research into internet filtering and censorship.
- The ARTICLE 19 *Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality*
- The ongoing *Freedom of Expression Project*, coordinated by Global Partners and Associates.
- Consumers International (CI) are in the early stages of a project on communications rights including FoE
- Monitoring, policy and advocacy work by IP Justice and the Internet Governance Project.
- The *Global Network Initiative's* principles to uphold freedom of expression and privacy online.
- Academic publications and papers.

It is reasonable to suggest that greater involvement from these individual members could reinvigorate the coalition as a whole, as it was noticeable that there are many more 'passive' than 'active' members in the coalition. The goal should then be to broaden the base of the coalition while activating the individual members.

In regards to broadening the base of the coalition, there are ongoing discussions with various civil society groups that been contacted, including Global Voices Online, GetUP! and Index on Censorship. However considering the scope and purpose of the IGF, both state and corporate actors should also be engaged. There have been several preliminary discussions to this effect, however these discussions are still at a very early stage.

The leadership issue is still one of the key questions for the coalition. Lisa Horner (Global Partners) and Ben Wagner (Universities of Munich and Leiden) have agreed to coordinate the coalition in the near future. However much work remains to be done in order to allow the coalition to regain momentum and value for its members.

### The FoE DC at the 2009 IGF, Sharm El Sheikh

The coalition requests confirmation of a slot in the programme for the dynamic coalition meeting at the 2009 IGF in meet in Sharm El Sheikh. In 2008 the coalition was granted a slot that was

quite late in the programme, resulting in lower levels of attendance. To avoid this happening again, we would like to request a slot on the first or second day of the IGF. This will allow more participants to attend the meeting, and will help to give the critical issue of freedom of expression the attention that it deserves within the IGF.

We have started planning for the meeting and, whilst the exact agenda is yet to be confirmed, there are several important goals that will be pursued:

- 1) **Building and rebuilding the FoE coalition:** getting more stakeholders involved in the activity of the coalition is key in ensuring its future success
- 2) **Integrating concrete tangible examples which speak to stakeholders:** There have been several suggestions to give the meeting in Egypt a strong Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) slant, in order to be able to better discuss tangible FoE issues relevant to the region in which the IGF is hosted.
- 3) **Making the outcomes relevant at an international level:** At the same time it is not sufficient to have discussions at a purely MENA level. The lessons and ideas from these discussions need to be integrated into an international discourse which goes beyond the MENA region.

From these points we have developed a tentative working title for the meeting:

### **Obstacles for Freedom of Expression: the MENA region and beyond**

We are currently reaching out and engaging with stakeholders so that the meeting can take a more precise shape. However this will still take a certain amount of time and we will be happy to pass further information on as soon as it is available.