GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT
FREEDOM ONLINE COALITION SUBMISSION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Details

Please select whether you are answering this survey for yourself or on behalf of an entity or organization. Note: If you are providing information on behalf of an entity or organization, it will be understood to represent a submission from the entire entity or organization and will be reflected on the public site accordingly.

- ”   Individual
- ”   Entity/Organization

Name of entity/organization - Freedom Online Coalition

Type of entity/organization -
- ”   Academia/research institution/think tank
- ”   Civil society or non-governmental organization
- ”   Government
- ”   International, regional or multilateral organization
- ”   Media
- ”   Private sector/Corporation
- ”   Technical community
- ”   Other (please specify)

Description of entity/organization:

The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) is an intergovernmental coalition that was established at the inaugural Freedom Online Conference in The Hague, the Netherlands, December 2011. Since its inception, the FOC has been committed to advancing internet freedom ±free expression, association, assembly, and privacy online ±worldwide. The FOC believes that the human rights that people have offline must also be protected online, and commits to working together, and with all stakeholders who share these views, to support Internet freedom and protect human rights online worldwide.

FOC member states are committed to work together diplomatically to voice concern over measures to restrict Internet Freedom, support those individuals whose human rights online are curtailed, and ensure Internet freedom and issues related to digital technologies are on the international policy agenda as a way to drive concrete solutions and outcomes.

501-1000
More than 1000 (please specify)

III. Inputs to the Global Digital Compact

There are seven areas of the Global Digital Compact mentioned in the Secretary- * H Q H U D O ¶ V
Common Agenda on which you are invited to submit inputs. In addition, if there are any additional
areas that you feel should also be included in the Global Compact, please submit them under the
 F D W H J R U \ R I ³ 2 W K H U $ U H D V ´ E H O R Z

For each area, we ask that you submit your views and inputs, organized along the following two
aspects:
a) Core principles that all governments, companies, civil society organisations and other
stakeholders should adhere to
b) Key commitments, pledges, or actions that in your view should be taken by different
stakeholders ±governments, private sector, civil society, etc. - in order to realize the above-
mentioned principles (please be as specific and action-oriented as possible.)

While submissions in this form are limited to 2500 characters per text box, you may also submit
any additional inputs or elaboration (submission to be made in PDF format) via email to
digitalcompact@un.org. Please note, however, that while your submission will be made available
online subsequently, it will not be part of automated data visualization results which is based on
this form.

Please select the areas on which you would like to submit inputs
    A. Connect all people to the internet, including all schools
    B. Avoid internet fragmentation
    C. Protect data
    D. Apply human rights online
    E. Accountability for discrimination and misleading content
    F. Regulation of artificial intelligence
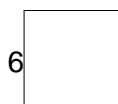   G. Digital commons as a global public good
    H. Other areas

For each area that you selected previously, we ask that you submit your views and inputs,
organized along the following two aspects:
i) Core principles that all governments, companies, civil society organisations and other
stakeholders should adhere to; and

5
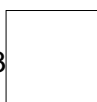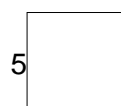
together toward a shared approach - firmly grounded in respect for international human rights law - that aims to evaluate, respond to, and if necessary, remedy state-sponsored efforts to restrict, moderate, or manipulate online content, and that calls for greater transparency of

S U L Y D W H   , Q W H U Q H W   F R P S D Q L H V ¶   P H G L D W L R Q   D X W R P D W L R Q   D G

Contribution from the FOC Task Force on Digital Equality
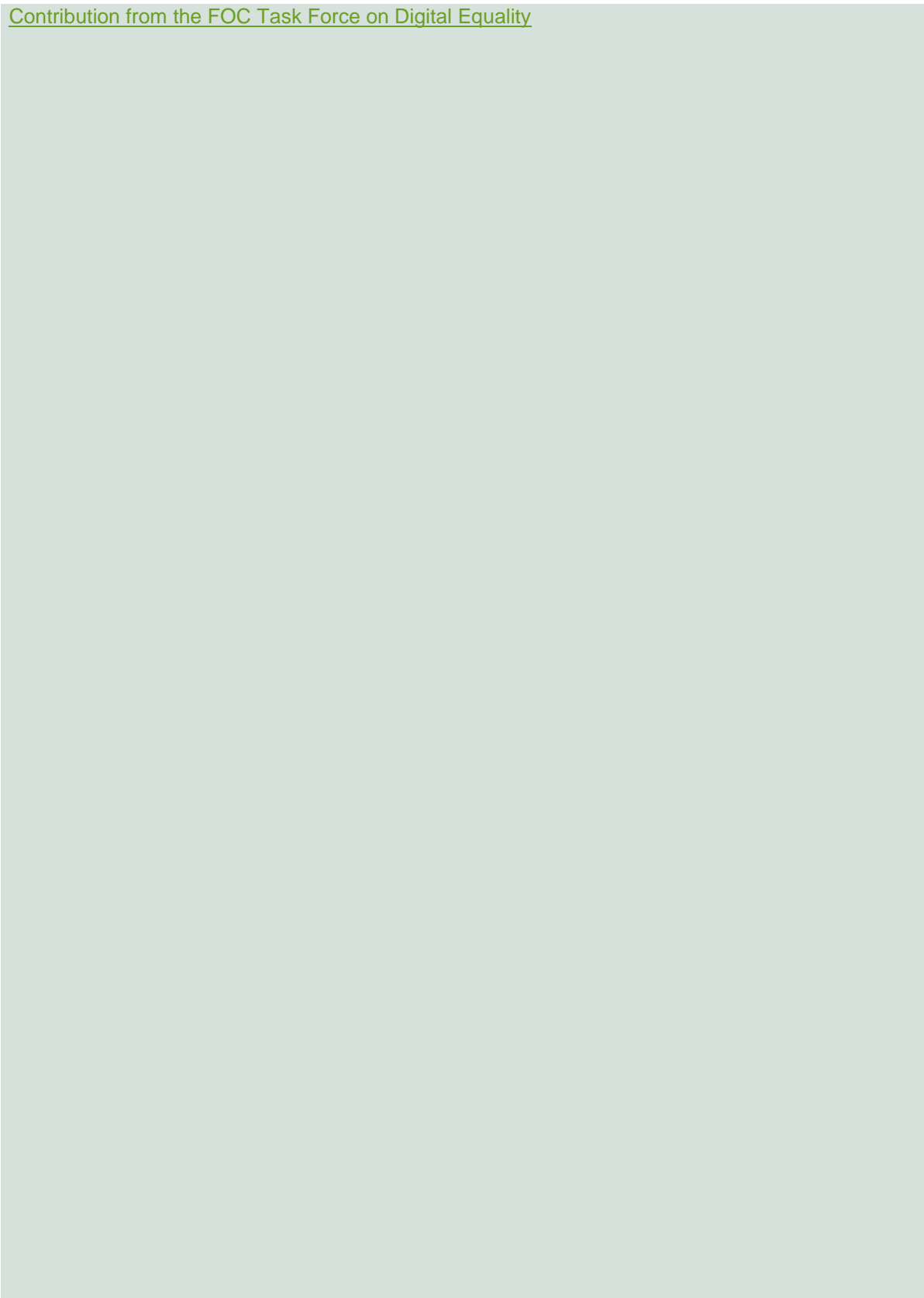
” Addressing underlying causes of digital exclusion and discrimination (economic, social, political and cultural contexts), including gendered causes.
” Ensuring that AI algorithms do not reinforce harmful stereotypes and biases that discriminate on the grounds of sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, origin, language, religion, or any other
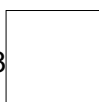
2. Avoid internet fragmentation

> " Free[9], open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet.[10]

KEY COMMITMENTS, PLEDGES, AND ACTIONS

Shutdowns and state-sponsored network disruptions may silence political opposition, limit peaceful protests and prevent human rights defenders from documenting abuses. Moreover, arbitrary network disruptions are inconsistent with the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, undermine the economic benefits of the Internet and disrupt access to essential services such as health care.[11]

Blocking, filtering, or shutting down the Internet suppresses the right of peaceful assembly and freedoms of association and expression; eroding civic space; reinforcing a continued climate of economic uncertainty; disrupting access to healthcare, emergency services, and financial services; preventing payments for salaries, utilities, and education; and limiting the ability of journalists, human rights defenders, and others to report on and document human rights violations or abuses that are taking place during Internet shutdowns, or communications disruptions. [12]
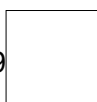
consistent with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in this regard. The members of the Freedom Online Coalition are committed to respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ICCPR, reaffirming that everyone has the right of peaceful assembly and to the freedoms of association, opinion, and expression. This includes the right to hold opinions without interference and the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through D Q \   R W K H U   P H G L D   R I   R Q H ¶ V   F K R L F H

"   , P S U R Y H   W U D Q V S D U H Q F \   L Q   Q D W L R Q D O   J R Y H U Q P H Q W V ¶   U H J X O D ...
agencies. Governments can demonstrate their commitment to promoting an

3. Protect data

- " Personal data should be protected by reasonable security safeguards against security and privacy risks.[19]

- " Governments should refrain from restricting transborder flows of personal data between their own and another country where sufficient safeguards exist.[20]

KEY COMMITMENTS, PLEDGES, AND ACTIONS

This section refers to key commitments, pledges, and calls to action outlined in several FOC joint statements and underpinning documents:

Joint Statement on Restrictive Data Localisation Laws[21]

- " The Coalition recognizes that governments may decide that certain data they hold or are responsible for must be stored on servers within their national borders, as one aspect of a comprehensive, secure information management policy.

- " The Freedom N n Co   alition members support an open and intererab.0000e Internet, as U H D I I L U P H G L Q W K H ³ 7 D O O L Q Q $ J H Q G D ´ D V Z H O O D V L Q W K H 1 (7
  Guidelines Governing the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data, and the Coalition calls on all States to do the same.

- " The Coalition invites companies, when required by laws or regulations to store data locally, to conduct appropriate human rights due diligence consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Joint Statement on the Use and Export of Surveillance Technology[22]

- " The Coalition notes that, as reflected in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, companies, including those that market and provide surveillance technology, have human right-related responsibilities. The Coalition recalls the expectation that such companies uphold these responsibilities, including by implementing appropriate systems and policies and conducting human rights due-diligence with regard to the provision of surveillance technology and related services.

---

[19] Cited directly from the) 2 & ¶ V   joint statement on restrictive data localisation laws.
[20] Cited directly from the) 2 & ¶ V   joint statement on restrictive data localisation laws.
[21] In 2015, the FOC issued a joint statement on restrictive data localisation laws. It expresses concern regarding the use of privacy and security considerations by authoritarian governments as a pretext to force Internet companies and service providers to store user data on servers physically located within their domestic borders.
[22] In 2014, the FOC issued a joint statement on the use and export of surveillance technology.

inconsistent with international human rights law.

" States, the private sector, and civil society shall coordinate rights-respecting advocacy on internet shutdowns and monitor ongoing technical, economic, legal, and human rights concerns regarding the use of internet shutdowns by states, especially in the context of elections, protests, and ongoing health and humanitarian crises;[32]

The Ottawa Agenda: Recommendations for Freedom Online[33]

" States, the private sector, and civil society should adopt holistic and interoperable approaches to countering internet fragmentation and work towards overcoming digital divides, advocating for ubiquitous, secure, affordable, equitable, and high-quality connectivity, free from threats such as censorship and State-sponsored internet shutdowns ensuring groups in vulnerable circumstances or who are marginalized or disenfranchised or otherwise discriminated against by the state or others, can fully realize their human rights online.

Joint Statement on State-Sponsored Network Disruptions[34]

"
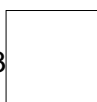
expression, and limit the dissemination and free flow of information, contributing to social and political disorder, and violence and negatively affecting public safety. According to Access Now and the #KeepItOn coalition ² composed of more than 300 organizations from 105 countries ² in 2022 the internet was shut down 187 times in 35 countries. Combating internet shutdowns, therefore, remains a key priority for the international community and has been notably featured in the UN Secretary-*HQHUDO¶V 5RDGPDS IRU [A/75/821](#) Dand &nR fBrSoer UNDH\gh R &RPPLVVLRQHU IRU +XPDQ 5LJKWV¶ +XPDQ 5LJKWV &RXQFL ([A/HRC/50/55](#)). Overall, internet shutdowns interfere with a range of fundamental human rights. As VXFK LQWHUQHW VKXWGRZQV KLQGHU LQWHUQDWLRQDO J DOO´ DQG WR DeaFlizatiOn h of the 2t0h8e0 A\Uge hnh da as captured in the UN Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the UN.

- " States should specifically condemn government use of internet shutdowns, network UHVWULFWLRQV RU RWKHU PHDVXUHV LQWHQGHG WR disseminate information and to communicate safely and securely. This includes arbitrary interference with encryption and anonymity tools.

- " States, the private sector, and civil society shall share information on internet shutdowns rapidly as they occur, and facilitate additional information-sharing between stakeholders.

- " States, the private sector and civil society should support and implement the recommendations in the UN Human Rights Council Report of the UN High Commissioner IRU +XPDQ 5LJKWV ³,QWHUQHW VKXWGRZQV WUHQGV a range of human rights. ´

- " States should avoid shutting down, blocking, or throttling internet, telecommunication, and/or mobile services. Doing so can violate a range of human rights, including freedoms of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly, and association. These actions also disrupt access to essential services such as healthcare and emergency services and harm the economy.
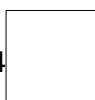
4. Accountability for discrimination and misleading content

CORE PRINCIPLES

- " Advocate for a global, free[38], open, interoperable, secure and reliable Internet.[39]

- " Public access to factual and diverse information, which can make societies more resilient to disinformation.[40]

- " News and media ecosystem where there is access to information and plurality of media; free and independent media has a sustainable future; and public service media and local news outlets are able to thrive.[41]

KEY COMMITMENTS, PLEDGES, AND ACTIONS

This section refers to key commitments, pledges, and calls to action outlined in several FOC joint statements and underpinning documents:

The Ottawa Agenda: Recommendations for Freedom Online

- " Engage in dialogue and cooperation with the private sector to address risks relating to digital transformation, such as disinformation, and committing to developing rules of the road for addressing information integrity online.

10th Anniversary Helsinki Declaration

- " We will foster multi-stakeholder cooperation to address both hate speech, and disinformation in a manner that respects human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

- " We will redouble our efforts in working together for free, open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet worldwide through addressing disinformation and other harmful content online and ensuring that any measures are in accordance with international law, including international human rights law.

Joint Statement on the Spread of Disinformation Online[42]

The FOC calls on governments to:

- " Abstain from conducting and sponsoring disinformation campaigns, and condemn such acts.

- " Address disinformation while ensuring a free, open, interoperable, reliable and secure Internet, and fully respecting human rights.

- " Improve coordination and multi-stakeholder cooperation, including with the private sector and civil society, to address disinformation in a manner that respects human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

- " Implement any measures, including legislation introduced to address disinformation, in a manner that complies with international human rights law and does not lead to restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression inconsistent with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

---

[38] З O H D V H   Q R W H   W K D W   W K H   X V H   R I   W K H   Z R U G   ³I U H H ´ G R H V   Q R W   U H I H U   W R   I U H H   L Q   F R V

[39] Cited directly from the Freedom Online Coalition, The Ottawa Agenda: Recommendations for Freedom Online, 2022.

[40] Freedom Online Coalition, Joint Statement on the Spread of Disinformation, 2020.

[41] Freedom Online Coalition, Joint Statement on the Spread of Disinformation, 2020.

[42] In 2020, the FOC issued a joint statement expressing deep concern about the growing scope and sophistication of
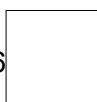
- " Respect, protect and fulfill the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information regardless of frontiers, taking into account the important and valuable guidance of human rights treaty bodies

- " Refrain from discrediting criticism of their policies and stifling freedom of opinion and expression under the guise of countering disinformation, including blocking access to the Internet, intimidating journalists and interfering with their ability to operate freely.

- " Support initiatives to empower individuals through online media and digital literacy education to think critically about the information they are consuming and sharing, and take steps to keep themselves and others safe online.

- " Take active steps to address disinformation targeted at vulnerable groups, acknowledging, in particular the specific targeting of and impact on women and persons belonging to minorities.

- " Support international cooperation and partnerships to promote digital inclusion, including universal and affordable access to the Internet for all.

The FOC urges social media platforms and the private sector to:

- " Address disinformation in a manner that is guided by respect for human rights and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

- " Increase transparency into the factors considered by algorithms to curate content feeds and search query results, formulate targeted advertising, and establish policies around political advertising, so that researchers and civil society can identify related implications.

- " Increase transparency around measures taken to address the problems algorithms can cause in the context of disinformation, including content take down, account deactivation and other restrictions and algorithmic alterations. This may include building appropriate mechanisms for reporting, designed in a multi-stakeholder process and without compromising effectiveness or trade secrets.

- " 3URPRWH XVHUV¶ DFFHVV WR PHDQLQJIXO DQG WLPHO\ DSSHDO regard to the removal of accounts or content.

- " Respect the rule of law across the societies in which they operate, while ensuring not to contribute to violations or abuses of human rights.

- " Use independent and impartial fact-checking services to help identify and highlight disinformation, and take measures to strengthen the provision of independent news sources and content on their platforms.

- " Support research by working with governments, civil society and academia and, where appropriate, enabling access to relevant data on reporting, appeal and approval processes, while ensuring respect for international human rights law.

The FOC urges civil society and academia to:

- " Continue research into the nature, scale and impact of online disinformation, as well as strategic level analysis to inform public debate and government action.

- " Adequately consider the impact of disinformation on women and marginalized groups who are targeted by disinformation campaigns in this research.

- " Engage with the private sector and governments to share findings and collaborate on research, whilst ensuring appropriate privacy protections are in place.
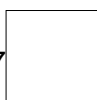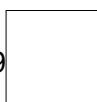
" Actively participate in public debate and in multi-stakeholder initiatives looking to address disinformation and emphasize the necessity of evidence-based discussion.
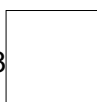
6. Regulation of artificial intelligence

CORE PRINCIPLES

" Promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in the design,

value chains, in a consistent manner and across all contexts.[49]

" States should consider how domestic legislation, regulation and policies can identify, prevent, and mitigate risks to human rights posed by the design, development and use of AI systems, and take action where appropriate.[50]

" States should promote and, where appropriate, support efforts by the private sector, civil society, and all other relevant stakeholders to increase transparency and accountability related to the use of AI systems on topics such as the following:
  o user privacy, including the use of user data to refine AI systems, the sharing of data collected through AI systems with third parties, and if reasonable, how to opt-out of the collection, sharing, or use of user-generated data;
  o the automated moderation of user generated content including, but not limited to, the removal, downranking, flagging, and demonetization of content;
  o recourse or appeal mechanisms, when content is removed as the result of an automated decision;
  o oversight mechanisms, such as human monitoring for potential human rights impact.

" States, as well as the private sector, should work towards increased transparency while safeguarding privacy and intellectual property rights, in order to facilitate collaborative and independent research into AI systems and their potential impacts on human rights.

" States should foster education about AI systems and possible impacts on human rights among the public and stakeholders, including product developers and policy-makers.

10th Anniversary Helsinki Declaration

" The application of digital technologies that involve facial recognition and massive collection of personal data have been used for political repression and economic exploitation. State and non-state actors should immediately cease actions incompatible with international human rights. We encourage the private sector to promote and increase non-discrimination, transparency, traceability, and accountability in the design, development, procurement, dissemination and use of digital technologies, with appropriate protections for intellectual property.

Contribution from the FOC Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights
Please note that the views of the Task Force on AI and Human Rights do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the full FOC membership.

 7 K H) U H H G R P 2 Q O L Q H & R D O L W L R Q ¶ V 7 D V N) R U F H R Q $ U W L
following key recommendations:

  " The private sector should increase exchange among each other and with academia and independent experts on how algorithms in search engines are designed, and should make efforts to streamline their criteria in content moderation of search engines also abiding by
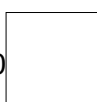
" The private sector should develop mechanisms in order to avoid that new and emerging technologies rely, throughout their entire life cycle, on datasets, algorithms-based programming and machine learning processes that can reproduce and exacerbate existing patterns of structural discrimination, marginalization, social inequalities, stereotypes and biases.

" Civil society stakeholders should put efforts into raising awareness and increasing understanding among the general public about the potential impact of AI technologies on Human rights, and support civil societies in strengthening their resilience in that regard. Companies and governments should ensure that civil society and non-company

Any other comments on the Global Digital Compact?

Meaningful Multi-Stakeholder Engagement
"We the members of the Freedom Online Coalition... multi-stakeholder co-operation, including governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector, academia, media, the technical community, and other relevant stakeholders, advocating for the development and use of digital technologies in ways that protect and reinforce democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We commit to inclusive and open multi-stakeholder governance of digital technologies, including the Internet, and to sustained dialogue with external stakeholders to share knowledge and expertise. [52]

From the Joint Statement of the FOC Presented at the 29th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council:

"The Coalition recognizes the need to actively engage governments, businesses, civil society, academics and other experts, in protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms online, and underlines its commitment to continuously work together in a multi- stakeholder process to further Internet...

Would you like to be included on the email list for updates on future developments on the Global Digital Compact? If so, please include the specific emails to be added.
No
Yes (supportunit@freedomonlinecoalition.com)

Would you like to submit additional documentation in support of the information you have provided in this survey?
Yes
No

---

[52] Cited directly from the Freedom Online Coalition, The Ottawa Agenda: Recommendations for Freedom Online, 2022.