



*2nd Freedom Online Conference
Nairobi, Kenya - September 6th and 7th, 2012*

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Kenya is the host country for the 2nd edition of the Freedom Online Conference to be held on the 6th and 7th of September 2012 at the UN complex, Gigiri, Kenya. This follows the highly successful inaugural Freedom Online conference that was initiated and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dutch government on December 8th and 9th 2011 at The Hague.

The Coalition for Freedom Online was launched in The Hague in Dec 2011. It is a movement whose members comprise countries interested in advancing the cause for Internet freedom to enable the exercise of human rights as a critical foreign policy agenda to further development. The Coalition draws its membership from countries that subscribe to the ideology that **keeping the internet open and free is a worldwide endeavor, which requires worldwide efforts**. Almost all continents are represented, and the scope and ambitions are distinctly global.

The ambition of the Coalition is to grow with new members from all continents. Members must be credible, ambitious partners who not only respect internet freedom within their borders (as independently monitored by leading NGOs and other stakeholders), but also commit to advocate, defend and promote human rights online in their foreign policies.

The coalition has 17 member countries: Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Estonia, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, the Republic of Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Sweden.

The key goals of the coalition for Freedom Online include:

Sharing information between the States on potential violations and other measures that undermine Internet freedom, in order to act effectively and efficiently.

Collaborating to support - both politically and through project aid - the ability of individuals, particularly those operating in repressive environments, to exercise their human rights through the Internet and connection technologies.

Promoting Internet freedom in appropriate international, regional organizations and individual countries.

Engaging information and communication technology businesses from across the globe on their responsibility to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms online.

THE NAIROBI FREEDOM ONLINE CONFERENCE

The government of Kenya is delighted to host the follow-up conference on Sept 6th and 7th 2011 in Nairobi Kenya.

This conference is important to Kenya and the coalition members as it not only provides an excellent platform and step forward in fulfilling the ambitions of the coalition, but also gives Kenya the opportunity to offer leadership in Africa on Freedom Online policy discourse with a view to getting

more African populace to leverage the economic and social benefit of the Internet without inhibitions. But while Kenya and Ghana have emerged more active policy makers on ICT and Internet governance and have developed relevant legal frameworks and policies including standards of freedom of expression online, many African nations are still either starting to develop interest in this area, or are yet to get involved.

Kenya has had many firsts in the area of ICT and governance that present useful benchmarks for other nations in Africa and elsewhere. With 4 undersea cables holding more than 2.8 terabytes of bandwidth available to Kenyans, a national Fiber Optic connection to all its neighboring countries and over 5,261,919 Mbps international connectivity (Ref CCK 2-11) there is so much knowledge and opportunity to be shared at the Kenya Freedom Online conference.

According to recent figures from the Kenya Communication Commission, Kenya's Internet adoption is top in Africa with over 17 Million Kenyans (36 percent of the population) accessing the Internet. Approx 6 Million Kenyans access the Internet via mobile devices. Some of the social benefits include mobile money transfer which has transformed lives of Kenyans immensely. Kenya is working on policies and programs that aim to ensure more Kenyans have access to the Internet. The Kenya Freedom Online conference is therefore an excellent opportunity for the coalition's agenda to be fronted in Africa, offer membership growth, and create awareness of its themes.

Kenya's hosting of the second Freedom Online conference is an important step forward for Internet freedom in Africa and for the Coalition's efforts globally. By building stronger support for Internet freedom across Africa and articulating its importance for development, African states can be a model for developing countries around the world. By focusing on the importance of Internet freedom for development and governance, the Coalition will underline the potential of a free and open Internet for people around the world.

The Kenyan conference will have strong representation from African states and other stakeholders who will interrogate the forum's goals and the value that Internet freedom has for development. Delegates will engage in themed discussions that will equip them with the right information to effectively inform and advise their governments. Drawing on the global nature of the Coalition and the model set in The Hague, the conference will have international multi-stakeholder participation, enabling participants to learn from experiences across regions and build a truly global conversation on Internet freedom.

Invitees

Participants will be invited from diverse organizations and bodies involved in shaping Internet policies. These are:

Governments:

Ministers/high-ranking representatives from Coalition member countries, African countries and other potential member countries.that have a good track record on respecting internet freedom and supporting statements and resolutions in this regard in international organizations like the UN.

Civil Society:

Non-governmental organizations active in African countries and elsewhere on promoting freedom of speech and expression on the Internet, technical organizations and tool developers, individual bloggers, and other members of civil society.

Companies:

Representatives of search engines, telecom companies, and other companies with a pronounced interest in Internet governance, legislation, and a free, open and innovative Internet.

International organizations:

Representatives of regional organizations such as the African Union, COMESA, East African Community, European Union, Organization of American States, ASEAN, etc.

Professional bodies:

Including vendors, consumer/user associations

THE NAIROBI CONFERENCE SET-UP

The Nairobi conference will be two days. One day will follow the successful plenary model of the Hague conference. The second day may feature interactive workshops for all stakeholders on important issues.

Day 1: - 6th Sept 2012

Discussing themes in online freedom in the multi-stakeholder setting proved very successful at the Hague conference. The Kenya Freedom Online event format will build on this model and set up three consecutive plenary discussions in a roundtable setting of approximately one hour 30 minutes each, attended by all stakeholders. The three discussions will be introduced and alternated by plenary speeches of ministers, other dignitaries, special representatives, bloggers, and other speakers.

Each plenary discussion will be kicked off by panels of 4 people representing different organizations or fields (for example: an MP, an academic, a blogger and a company representative) that can all provide a short opening statement. Based on these opening statements, the discussion will then roll out to the whole conference. Besides the live questions and discussions, participation will be drawn from Twitter, Facebook and other social media users while watching the live-stream from Twitter-feed.

Day 2: - Workshops:

Potential themes for interactive workshops providing concrete skills may include:

1. Capacity building for involvement in Internet governance: Upcoming Internet governance events (IGF, WCIT) may have significant implications for Internet freedom. It is important that civil society organizations, states, and all stakeholders have the expertise and resources to participate in these debates. This workshop, possibly led by leading NGOs and technical organizations, could provide concrete knowledge and skills for more actors to engage in these debates and express their implications for Internet freedom to their governments.
2. Corporate social responsibility workshop for companies: Drawing on the expertise of groups such as the GNI and work done under the European Commission, this workshop may include concrete case studies on tough situations ICT companies face and how they may responsibly address them.

CONFERENCE THEMES

Plenary Day: 6th Sept 2012 Morning Session

1) ICT, entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility

The use of mobile entrepreneurship for economic and social development in East Africa is a good example of the need for accessible, fast and open Internet. Discussing the potential of

best practices in this regard from Kenya and other countries, regulatory issues they face, adherence to codes of conduct for corporate social responsibility and related themes would be part of this topic discussion.

2) Censorship vs freedom of expression, assembly and association

There are numerous examples of countries censoring the Internet, by blocking websites, demanding that Internet Service Providers remove certain content, forcing users to practice self-censorship by exerting pressure, and fining, arresting, convicting, or otherwise obstructing bloggers, netizens, journalists and other users, thus breaching their legitimate right to the freedom of expression to the Internet.

3) Access to the Internet: challenges and opportunities

Providing access to the Internet in the first place is a key issue not only for Africa, but also for countries in other continents where access and usage of the Internet varies sharply between urban and rural areas. The developments in this field, including regulation facing providers of the Internet (ISP, ICT companies, and other intermediaries), infrastructure, innovation, regional and international structures, and how governments could facilitate better access will be part of the discussion.

More Information on the Inaugural Freedom Online Conference, December 8th and 9th, 2011

Promoting Internet freedom is an important priority for the Dutch government. Considering the lack of coordination between countries working on this agenda globally, the Netherlands organized a two-day conference about the subject in The Hague. The goal of the event - named the Freedom Online conference - was to discuss with a wide variety of stakeholders the role of governments in advocating Internet freedom, and to have governments commit to work together on this theme in the future. Twenty-two countries, four international organizations, nine companies and seventeen NGO's from around the world [participated](#) in the inaugural event in Dec 2011 in Hague.

Deliberations

Day 1: Thursday December 8, 2011

The conference - that was co-organized with Google the Netherlands and Free Press Unlimited, a leading Dutch NGO on free media - was opened by minister Rosenthal of Foreign Affairs. Minister Rosenthal spoke about Internet freedom as the driver of democracy, stressing that freedom of expression online is just as important as freedom of expression offline. He discussed the application of Internet censorship and surveillance in certain countries, the importance of corporate social responsibility, export restrictions for dual use technologies, and his intention to build a coalition of states for cooperation with civil society, ICT companies, academics and other like-minded partners to guarantee human rights online.

In her [keynote speech](#), US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton consequently called Internet freedom one of the defining problems of the modern era, calling the guarantee for human rights in cyberspace a 'global responsibility'. Clinton identified three important challenges in this regard:

- that the private sector must embrace its role in the protection of Internet freedom,
- that governments must resist the temptation to enlarge their own role, and
- that all stakeholders - governments, the private sector and civil society - must do more to build a global coalition for keeping the Internet open and free.

Day 2: Friday December 9, 2012

On the second day of the conference, minister Rosenthal reopened the event with a speech underlining what governments can do to promote Internet freedom, and an announcement that a total of 6 million

Euros will be spent until 2015 by the Dutch government to support projects for freedom online, including 1 million Euros specifically earmarked to research support for mesh networks and emergency Internet solutions. Consequently, three plenary panel discussions took place. Besides an interactive dialogue between the participants, questions posed via Twitter and Facebook were also introduced by the moderator.

Panels:

1. The first panel discussion was about the **role of governments** in promoting Internet freedom. Discussions included the eroding power of the Internet for dictatorships and the need to build a new network of freedom alliances based on the premise that all rights offline are also valid online. The role of governments in data protection and fighting cybercrime was also debated, as was the role of the Internet for development.
2. The second panel discussed how bloggers and cyber dissidents can be protected and supported. Technical aspects such as circumvention by bloggers of illegitimate control, regulation to ensure security and human rights online, and pressure and advocacy to make governments realize they cannot limit online rights unpunished were central themes. Concrete suggestions for action to support bloggers included support in as many languages as possible, protection for journalists working online, source protection, and decriminalizing blasphemy online. Some NGO's advocated that governments should refrain from any Internet legislation at all
3. The third panel discussion was about **the responsibility of companies** for ensuring Internet freedom. Many participants stressed the important role of codes of conduct for companies that have an equal responsibility for human rights online as governments. Companies present underlined that their customers and their rights were to be put first and some politicians pleaded for the need to strictly regulate the export of technology that can be abused by governments for human rights violations.

In his closing speech, minister Rosenthal announced the initiation of the Freedom Online Coalition and its outcome [declaration](#).