UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS — OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER   opennet   KOREA UNIVERSITY — International Human Rights Center   HUMAN ASIA 휴먼아시아

Convening of Regional Civil Society Organizations in East Asia on Digital Rights
Digital rights landscape in East Asia: current state of play, challenges, and best practices

Friday, August 16, 2024, 2:00 – 4:00 PM KST
(link to join the discussion online will be provided separately to participants joining remotely)
Venue: College of International Studies/ Graduate School of International Studies
Room 115, International Studies Hall, Korea University
145, Anam-ro, Seongbuk-gu Seoul 02841, Republic of Korea

The UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) is organizing a regional convening to engage civil society organizations (CSOs) in discussing digital rights in the East Asia region. A particular emphasis will be placed on recent regulatory and policy developments in the region to understand current challenges and opportunities in advancing digital rights. The conversation will discuss the role of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the international human rights framework more broadly to inform discussion about technology governance, as well as the role of human rights in technical standard setting relating to digital products and services. This convening aims to gather perspectives from regional CSOs, share best practices, and address emerging challenges in the digital rights landscape in the region and identify future areas for potential cooperation.

The convening will be conducted under Chatham House Rule to encourage open and trustworthy discussions.

Objectives

With a dedicated regional focus on East Asia, this discussion, coordinated by UN Human Rights (OHCHR), Open Net, Human Asia, and the International Human Rights Center at Korea University, aims to:

- Facilitate a meaningful and open exchange among OHCHR and civil society organizations – centering on civil society in the East Asia region – to discuss thematic priorities regarding human rights in the digital space (digital rights);
- Delve into pressing issues in relation to technology and human rights and address challenges faced by CSOs in the region at the country, regional, and global levels;
- Explore avenues for civil society collaboration, including with OHCHR, as well as other relevant UN agencies, bodies, and mechanisms.

Questions for discussion:

- Which are the key trends of policy and regulatory approaches affecting human rights in the technology sector?
- What is the status quo of company practice in the region regarding responsible technology governance and the uptake of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?
- How can digital rights inform technical standard-setting processes for digital products and services?
- What is the current regulatory environment as well as key issues regarding platform governance in East Asia and how can governments best uphold human rights while regulating online platforms to combat issues such as hate speech and disinformation?

Agenda

14:00-14:10: Introduction and opening remarks by co-organizers (Korea University International Human Rights Center, OpenNet, Human Asia)
14:10-14:20: Introduction, UN Human Rights Office
14:20-15:45: Roundtable discussion (each CSO representative is invited to speak for ~5 minutes on main challenges, opportunities, and key issues in regard to the discussion questions above).
15:45: Wrap-up and concluding remarks

Background on the B-Tech Project

The B-Tech Project provides authoritative guidance and resources for implementing the UNGPs in the technology sector. In 2019, UN Human Rights launched the project after consultations with civil society, business, States, and other experts about the scope of the B-Tech Project, including consultations hosted in Seoul. The engagement this year will build on these initial conversations and deepen the exchange about responsible business conduct in the technology sector.

Background on OHCHR's work on technical standards and human rights:

Mandated by the Human Rights Council Resolution 47/23, OHCHR organized an expert consultation at the Human Rights Council (HRC) followed by a report examining the relationship between technical standards and human rights (A/HRC/53/42) presented to the HRC in 2023. It explores how human rights considerations can be integrated into technical standard-setting processes.

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