Session 4: The status of online Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: Progress, Challenges and Trends

Moderator: Valeria Betancourt - APC

Panelists:

- Technical Community: Shernon Osepa - ISOC

- Civil Society: Dafne Sabanes Plou - APC

- Private Sector: Otto Rivera, Executive Director of the Costa Rican Chamber of Information and Communication Technologies

- International Organization: Frank la Rue, UNESCO

- Monserrat Solano Carboni – Ombudswoman, Costa Rica

Moderator in charge of remote participation: Agustina Callegari, Argentine Ministry of Modernization

Rapporteur: Fátima Cambronero

This session discussed the status of various Human Rights in the countries of our region and the challenges they must face were discussed.

Identified scenarios:

- The rights that people have offline must also be respected online. When individuals are connected to the Internet, they do not lose any of their other rights. The State must enforce these rights online as it does offline.
- The Internet is broadening the spectrum for the exercise of various rights, especially but not exclusively freedom of expression. It helps maintain peoples' cultural diversity and express their identities, values and languages.
- A lack of Internet access for historically excluded populations, not only by genre but also by disability, language, migrant and refugee status.
- Monopolies in the production of Internet content, which manages to prevail and transform existing individualities and diversities.
- Human Rights that evolve and must be respected.
- Fear of excessive State regulation as they feel tempted to control more than they should.

Identified challenges:

- Defining what the Internet is and what it is not.
- Determining whether further regulation of these Internet related topics is necessary.
- Addressing online gender-based violence from a multistakeholder perspective. Finding effective mechanisms to protect women who are attacked online due to their beliefs, activities, thoughts, affiliation, and more.

- Providing women greater access to information –and therefore greater access to the Internet– so that they may exercise their sexual and reproductive rights.
- Incorporating cross-cutting principles in proposed regulations/legislation: accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, freedom, etc. All Human Rights. Likewise, progressively enforcing these rights.
- Respecting and implementing feminist Internet principles.
- Bringing the existing wealth of language to the Internet (of more than 6000 surveyed languages, only 600 are currently present online).
- Facilitating Internet access as an instrument to facilitate the exercise all the other rights made possible by the Internet.
- Forcing multistakeholder dialogue in each country.
- Working openly on the development of encryption tools in order to achieve safer communications, building on the efforts of the technical community.
- Making the industry commit to respecting Human Rights online and implementing proper mechanisms to do so, including mechanisms for obtaining informed consent and providing remedies for any damages caused.
- Building strategies based on public-private agreements to provide Internet connectivity to rural populations.
- Empowering consumers facing abusive terms and conditions imposed by certain companies.
- How the State can guarantee effective Internet access (moving from plans to reality).
- How to overcome the idea of 'customers' and move on to the idea of 'users' as subjects of Human Rights.
- Developing and respecting accessibility standards.
- Finding a balance between the right to be forgotten and the right to privacy. Peoples' historic responsibility must not be avoided.
- Creating few yet effective regulations that are useful for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Allowing communication surveillance only by order of a competent authority.
- Developing prevention policies for every form of online extremism.
- Promoting certain codes of conduct and ethics within the industry to avoid abusive behavior on the Internet.