## The Internet and Human Rights

19 June 2014

Joint Oral Statement

Delivered by Andrew Smith, ARTICLE 19

Thank you Mr. President,

ARTICLE 19 delivers this statement on behalf of 63 NGOs.*

Two years ago this Council affirmed by consensus that "the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, in particular freedom of expression".

In 2014, at **Net-Mundial** in Brazil the Internet was recognised as vital to the full realisation of sustainable development goals. 31 UN Special Rapporteurs recently **affirmed that** guaranteeing the free flow of information online ensures transparency and participation in decision-making, enhancing accountability and the effectiveness of development outcomes.

Development and social inclusion relies on the Internet remaining a global resource, managed in the public interest as a democratic, free and pluralistic platform. States must promote and facilitate universal, equitable, affordable and high-quality Internet access on the basis of human rights, the rule of law, and net-neutrality, including during times of unrest.

The blocking of communications, including of social media, in Egypt, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Venezuela is a violation of freedom of expression, association and assembly and must be condemned. Dissent online must be protected. We deplore the detention of Sombat Boonngamanong in Thailand, who faces up to 14 years imprisonment for urging peaceful resistance to the recent military coup via social media in the form of a three-finger salute.

One year after the Snowden revelations, this Council must recognise that trust in the Internet is conditional on respect for the rights to freedom of expression and privacy, regardless of users' nationality or location. Any mass (or dragnet) surveillance, which comprises collection, processing and interception of all forms of communication is inherently disproportionate and a violation of human rights.

The targeted interception and collection of personal data must be conducted in accordance with international human rights law, as set out in the "**Necessary and Proportionate Principles**". Critical and intermediate infrastructure must not be tampered with, nor should any system, protocol or standard be weakened to facilitate interception or decryption of data.

We urge this Council to take action to comprehensively address these challenges.

Thank you.

*ARTICLE 19
Access
Africa Freedom of Information Centre
Albanian Media Institute
Alternative Informatics
Arabic Network for Human Rights Information
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
Bahrain Center for Human Rights
Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum
Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)
Barys Zvozskau Belarusian Human Rights House
Big Brother Watch
Bir Duino (Kyrgyzstan)
Bits of Freedom
Bolo Bhi Pakistan
Bytes For All
Cambodia Center for Human Rights
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
Canadian Journalists for Free Expression
Center for e-parliament Research
Center for Independent Journalism, Romania
Centre for Internet & Society
Centre for Media Freedom & Responsibility
Center for National and International Studies, Azerbaijan
Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Russia
Chaos Computer Club
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Electronic Privacy Information Center

English Pen
European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL)
Foro de Periodismo Argentino
Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, Colombia
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly - Vanadzor
Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Lithuania
Human Rights Watch
Index on Censorship
International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
International Press Institute (IPI)
Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law
Kenya Human Rights Commission
Liberty
Media Rights Agenda
Norwegian PEN
OpenMedia.org
Open Net Korea
Open Rights Group
Pakistan Press Foundation
Panos Institute West Africa
PEN Canada
PEN International
Privacy International
Reporters Without Borders
Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy & Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC)
Simon Davies, publisher of "Privacy Surgeon"
South East Asian Press Alliance
South East European Network for Professionalisation of the Media
Thai Netizen Network
World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum