

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS: INTERNET IS A HUMAN RIGHT

San Francisco, July 6, 2012—

1. On Friday, the UN Human Rights Council declared freedom of expression on the internet to be a basic human right. They affirmed that “the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, in particular freedom of expression...”.

2. Kosta Grammatidis, Founder and CEO of A Human Right:

“As one of the few NGO’s working to promote internet access as a human right, this is an exciting and important step towards the extension of access to everyone. UN member states Estonia, France, Finland, Greece, and Spain already consider access to the internet a human right, this resolution is an important milestone for other states to consider.”

“The UN’s call for member states to “promote and facilitate access to the internet” is powerful. 68% of the world’s population, some 5 billion people, are still disconnected from the internet. The fight for internet freedom isn’t limited to SOPA, PIPA and ACTA—access is still the most pressing issue we’re facing today.”

“When authoritarian regimes interfere with their citizen’s right to internet access, like Egypt and Syria did during the Arab Spring, it should be easier to hold them accountable for their actions. In the future, we hope the UN will clarify that no one should be denied access to the internet.”

3. Last year, A Human Right signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to work on bringing internet access to relief and development efforts.

4. A Human Right is a San Francisco-based organization working on initiatives to get everyone connected. For more information visit: <http://ahumanright.org/>

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Timeline of Major UN Resolutions and Reports

June 29, 2012 - Resolution A/HRC/20/L.13 passed “The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the internet”

<http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/19/64/51/6999c512.pdf>

February 20, 2012 - Resolution UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/3 H66/184 passed: “Information and communication technologies for development”

“In resolution 66/184, the General Assembly recognized that information and communications technologies had the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and could foster economic growth competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that would help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, into the global economy. The Assembly encouraged the United Nations development system to continue its efforts to promote the use of information and communications technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the

Millennium Development Goals.”

www.unep.org/gc/gcss-xii/docs/download.asp?ID=3569

May 16, 2011 - Release of Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.27_en.pdf

Additional Resources

UN Forum backs Web freedom after Arab Spring:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/05/net-us-rights-internet-idUSBRE8640DE20120705>

UN Declares Internet Access A Human Right:

<http://ahumanright.org/blog/2011/06/un-declares-internet-access-a-human-right/>