



Civil Society Information Society Advisory Council (CSISAC)

“The Voice of Civil Society at the OCDE”

STATEMENT OF CSISAC AT OECD MINISTERIAL

- For Immediate Release -

Cancún (México)

23 June 2016

The Civil Society Information Society Advisory Committee provides this brief statement on the conclusion of the OECD Ministerial on the Digital Economy in Cancun, Mexico.

Civil society from OECD member and non-member countries gathered to address the challenges of the digital economy.

Under the auspices of CSISAC, civil society organizations participated in a Forum on “An Inclusive, Equitable, and Accountable Digital Economy.” The CSISAC forum reflected an important diversity of backgrounds, geographic regions, genders, and perspectives. CSISAC wishes to express civil society’s appreciation to the Mexican government and the OECD for the opportunity to organize this event and for the active participation of representative of both the OECD and the Mexican government.

The Civil Society Forum featured remarks of Professor Shoshana Zuboff who warned that “surveillance capitalism” posed a fundamental challenge to democratic institutions that cannot be ignored. Bruce Schneier predicted that increased connectivity will lead to increased vulnerability. Participants in the meeting reviewed the Civil Society Seoul Declaration and the emerging challenges to human rights. They also set out civil society goals for the OECD, and collaborated with the Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC) to explore issues that can be jointly addressed. Civil society experts associated with CSISAC participated in several panels of the Ministerial conference and were provided the opportunity to express their views and to debate with other panel participants.

At the conclusion of the Ministerial, the OECD ministers adopted a declaration. CSISAC thanks

the Ministers for their recognition of the importance of respect for human rights and digital security. CSISAC supports the declaration of the importance to preserve the fundamental openness of the Internet, the development of international arrangements that promote effective privacy and data protection across jurisdictions, and the evidence- and research-based policy work of the OECD.

However, the threat that the digital economy poses to human rights, including privacy and freedom of expression, was insufficiently addressed in the Ministerial Declaration. Particularly with the rise of the Internet of things and the use of artificial intelligence for secretive decisions concerning the rights and freedom of individuals, the OECD must focus on the emerging challenges in the Digital Economy. Specifically:

- The protection of human rights is grounded in the rule of law and democratic institution. This cannot be replaced by "multistakeholderism". To the extent that those who are impacted by policies are asked to provide their viewpoints, there must be a commitment to meaningful participation and concrete outcomes. Genuine multi-stakeholderism must go further than "cooperation" and instead embrace a truly collaborative model that pledges not only to listen to civil society but to actively and genuinely consider the questions and issues that organizations raise.
- It is insufficient to raise the importance of connectivity if that connectivity is not achieved with neutrality, affordability, respect of human rights, and a prohibition of internet shutdowns.
- New metrics are needed to assess the consequences of the digital economy, without such data collection and analysis undermining privacy. The metrics must consider inclusion, equity, and fairness and put the individual in the focus.
- There is an imperative need to systematically assess, whenever data is being processed in any way, whether it may result in discrimination, social exclusion, further inequalities or hitting disproportionately certain groups like the poor, migrants, people with disabilities, the elderly, and children.
- We do not assume the inevitability of technology. We know that there are benefits as well as threats to the wellbeing of individuals and democratic societies with all new technology. The sooner they are understood, the better chance we will have to enable sustainable growth.
- We reject "interoperability" as a basis for international policy frameworks., There must be global safeguards for human rights, privacy and data protection, grounded in human rights norms.
- International data flows, innovation and trade policies must respect human rights.
- CSISAC also expresses its concerns about the recent developments in Oaxaca and reminds all OECD countries of their obligations to comply with human rights.

Regardless of our country affiliation or our “stakeholder” affiliation, we are all participants in the digital economy as consumers, as citizens, as members of families and of communities.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the OECD. We seek an expanded role across all activities that consider the digital economy and the lives of those who will be impacted by technological changes.

References

- Civil Society Information Society Advisory Committee (CSISAC) <http://csisac.org/>
- Seoul Declaration <http://csisac.org/seoul.php>
- CSISAC Forum, “Toward an Inclusive, Equitable, and Accountable Digital Economy” (Cancun 2016) <http://csisac.org/events/cancun16/>

About the CSISAC

The Civil Society Information Society Advisory Council (CSISAC) is the voice of civil society at the OECD Committee on the Digital Economy Policy. We facilitate the exchange of information between the OECD and civil society participants, leading to better-informed and more widely accepted policy frameworks. The formal recognition of this Advisory Committee by the OECD was the result of an effort initiated in the 1990s decade to promote participation parity in the global policy-making.

Today, the CSISAC is the main venue to channel the participation of civil society in the OECD work on the digital economy, joining the efforts of more than 200 organizations, activists and scholars worldwide. You can learn more about the CSISAC in our website ¹, or directly write to the CSISAC Liaison <liaison@csisac.org>.

¹<http://csisac.org/>