



A Great Moment for the Internet and Freedom of Expression

A high-level United Nations representative issued a clarion call promoting the freedom of expression. In a recent [report](#), Frank LaRue, the UN Special Rapporteur for the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, argued that Internet access is a human right and that restricting the flow of information through Internet blackouts is a violation of this right.

The [Asia Internet Coalition](#) a new industry association founded by eBay, Google, Nokia, Skype and Yahoo! to promote the understanding and resolution of Internet policy issues in the Asia-Pacific Region welcomes this declaration.

For the developing world, the Special Rapporteur believes that access to the Internet is a crucial tool in the fight against social inequality and spurring economic growth. In order to achieve the Internet's maximum potential, La Rue argues "ensuring universal access to the Internet should be a priority for all states." Governments should strive, "to make the Internet widely available, accessible and affordable to all." At the same time, he urges resistance against attempts by powerful governments to block Internet access, and emphasizes that intermediaries should not be held liable for refusing to take actions that would limit universal access.

Our Coalition agrees that a free, open Internet is key to harnessing its economic potential. The Internet has empowered millions of small and medium enterprises to reach out beyond their borders and engage users throughout the region. Our Coalition aims to continue this trend and promote policies that encourage the unhindered development of the Internet, to the benefit of entire economies, societies and citizens.

The United Nations General Assembly votes on the report in September. The Asia Internet Coalition hopes it will approve this strong and positive document.