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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Sixty-second session  
Intergovernmental Working Group  
on the Effective Implementation of the  
Durban Declaration and Programme of Action  
Fourth session  
Geneva, 16-27 January 2006  
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR**

**Concept paper: Racism and the Internet and complementary  
international standards**

**Introduction**

1. In its resolution 2005/64 the Commission on Human Rights requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to convene a high-level seminar on racism and the Internet and on complementary international standards for combating racism, within the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (IGWG). The seminar will take place from 16 to 20 January 2006, during the first part of the two-week session of the IGWG.
2. The seminar will be divided into two sessions:
  - Racism and the Internet will be examined on 16 and 17 January (two days);
  - Complementary international standards will be examined on 18 to 20 January (three days).

The programme of work of the seminar is contained in document E/CN.4/2006/WG.21/4.

### **Content of the session on Racism and Internet**

3. Having discussed the issue of racism and the Internet during its third session, the IGWG decided that this part of the seminar should be devoted to:

- Considering progress made in the implementation of relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action;
- Assessing the possibilities of and challenges posed by the use of the Internet to propagate or to counter material which incites racial hatred and acts of violence and proposing concrete measures to be taken at the international and national levels to combat the abuse of the Internet for all forms of racist manifestations; and
- Examining the contribution that the Internet can make in fostering social harmony and the fight against racism.

### **Content of the session on complementary international standards**

4. As one of the mandates of the IGWG is to prepare complementary international standards to strengthen and update international legal instruments against racism, the issue has been discussed during all three of its sessions.

5. Based on the recommendations adopted by the IGWG at its third session (see E/CN.4/2005/20), as well as Commission resolution 2005/64, this segment of the seminar will aim to:

- Contribute to the efforts of the IGWG in conducting an in-depth assessment and evaluation of the implementation of existing international instruments, including suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- Identify gaps in international human rights law, with a view to preparing complementary standards to address them; and
- Outline the format of complementary standards to existing instruments, notably the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which will strengthen and update international instruments in all their aspects.

### **Participants for each session**

6. As requested by the Commission a core group of ministers responsible for human rights or participants of equivalent rank from all the regions will participate as panellists. Ideally, a group of five ministers or high-ranking officials is envisaged for each segment of the seminar.

7. Additionally, highly qualified experts on the subject matters of each session will also be invited to join the panel discussions, which will be open to Member States, representatives of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

8. Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) will be part of the group of experts invited for the session on complementary international standards.

#### **Format and programme of each session**

9. Ministers and/or high-ranking officials and experts will each have the opportunity to make 15-minute presentations, to be followed by question-and-answer sessions.

10. Ministers and/or high-ranking officials will address the participants at the beginning of each segment of the seminar, that is, on the morning of Tuesday, 17 January for racism and the Internet and on the morning of Wednesday, 18 January for complementary international standards.

11. A summary of the discussions and conclusions will be reflected in the report of the IGWG to be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-second session.

#### **Documentation**

12. For each of the themes of the seminar, OHCHR will submit papers outlining some of the issues relevant to the discussions and take stock of the state of the debate on each of the issues, including the conclusions reached thus far and remaining challenges.

13. OHCHR encourages ministers to provide advance copies of their presentations, while the experts will be requested to submit written contributions.

14. A detailed list of documents will be made available on the OHCHR website.

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