The report notes some key issues that must be addressed in order to build the capacity of user communities who are marginalized by mainstream Internet developments, including, *inter alia*: the need for policy makers at the national and international levels to address the lack and underdevelopment of basic infrastructure in many regions, especially in Africa; the prevalence of gender inequality in terms of access to and control of the Internet; the need to see the issues of race, racism and racial discrimination on the Internet in a broader social context; the resources that would be required to monitor and regulate the Internet should instead be channelled into building capacity in those regions which are lagging behind in information technology infrastructure; states must address the imbalance in the access to information technology between the North and the South; and the Internet should be used as a tool to combat racism, which will only be eradicated through education and the empowerment of disenfranchised communities.

The benefits of the Internet were identified as being that it: is fast, cheap and simple to use; has potential for new kinds of electronic commerce and consumption; is a unique mechanism providing access to information and blurring the distinction between information providers and receivers; is a vehicle for the promotion of and respect for cultural diversity; enables people from all over the world to communicate instantaneously; has great potential for long-term benefits in education, health care, job creation and other areas; and, is seen by some as the "equalizer" since it allows individuals, small businesses and NGOs to operate on the same level as larger entities.

In its conclusion, the report notes that participants agreed to a statement expressing deep regret and strongly condemning the use of the Internet by some groups and persons to promote racist and hate speech in violation of international law. The seminar recommended, *inter alia*, that:

- an open-ended intergovernmental working group be established to draft guidelines for the ethical use of the Internet, leading to the establishment, by the Commission on Human Rights, of an intergovernmental group of experts that would use the working group's findings as the basis for establishing a set of guidelines for the Internet;

- bearing in mind the complexity of the role of Internet, the Commission on Human Rights consider the creation of a consultative group, working in consultation with non-governmental organizations, to prepare a report for the World Conference on Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;

- with regard to a code of conduct, a number of points be clarified, including who would establish the code (e.g., private industry, a drafting committee under the auspices of the UN and with representatives of states as members) and how the code itself would be established;

- the UN Websites, particularly that of the OHCHR, be used as a vehicle for aiding under-resourced populations (usually non-white populations) through education in human rights, bearing in mind the need for funding for additional activities;

- all Internet communications indicate their source so that users cannot anonymously distribute racist propaganda, bearing in mind the potential risks posed with regard to privacy, free expression and human rights activity;

- CERD, in examining states parties' reports, include references to the Internet;

- the Internet be used as an educative tool to combat racist propaganda, prevent racist doctrines and practices and promote mutual understanding;

- existing national criminal laws established to fight racism and racial discrimination be amended where necessary so as to apply to the Internet and include, where possible, provisions for the prosecution of Internet service providers; and

- states cooperatively establish international juridical measures in compliance with their obligations under international law to prohibit racism on the Internet while respecting individual rights such as freedom of expression.

Resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights

Under agenda item 12 the Commission adopted by consensus an omnibus resolution (1998/26) dealing with a range of issues related to racism and racial discrimination.

In general observations, the Commission, *inter alia*: unequivocally condemned all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including racially motivated violence and propaganda activities and organizations; declared that racism and racial discrimination must be combatted by all available means; expressed deep concern at and condemned acts and manifestations against migrant workers and members of their families and members of other vulnerable groups; called on states to review and revise where necessary immigration policies in order to eliminate all discriminatory policies and practices against migrants; condemned all forms of discrimination and xenophobia in such areas as housing, employment, vocational training, education, health and access to social services; categorically condemned any role played by some print, audio-visual or electronic media in inciting acts of violence based on racial hatred; encouraged the mass media to promote ideas of tolerance and understanding among peoples and between different cultures; and noted general recommendation XV of March 1993 by CERD related to freedom of opinion and expression and the prohibition on dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or racial hatred.