



General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 January 2005

Original: English

Sixth Committee

Summary record of the 12th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 22 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Bennouna (Morocco)
later: Mr. Dhakal (Vice-Chairman). (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 150: International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

04-56671 (E)

* 0456671 *

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 150: International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings (*continued*)
(A/C.6/59/L.2 and 8)

1. **Mr. Smid** (Slovakia) noted that, over the past three years, the Committee had failed to overcome the differences between the two main approaches to the complex and sensitive question of human cloning, although the scientific arguments on either side had become more elaborate and sophisticated.

2. His delegation, which favoured a consensual solution, supported a total ban on human cloning, whether for reproductive or for scientific or therapeutic purposes. That position was based on several principles. First, the Slovakian Constitution provided that human life deserved protection before birth. Secondly, under article 18 of the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, the creation of human embryos for research purposes was prohibited. Embryos subject to in vitro research were adequately protected and in 1998 a total ban on human cloning had been introduced. An amendment to the Penal Code criminalized any intervention seeking to create a human being, at any stage of its development, that was genetically identical to another human being, whether living or dead.

3. The issue of human cloning was relevant to every individual and every State. The approach taken by the international community to the ultimate moral questions would have substantial consequences for humanity and could not be confined within State borders. Thus, while appreciating every effective and constructive proposal towards a compromise solution, his delegation would strongly prefer a comprehensive international legal framework that would ban all kinds of human cloning, as proposed in draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2.

4. **Mr. Tachie-Menson** (Ghana) said that, faced with a highly sensitive and controversial subject involving scientific, legal, ethical, religious and political concerns, the Committee should adopt a dispassionate and objective approach, while remaining mindful of the consequences whichever way it decided. For his delegation, the dignity of human life was not negotiable; human life must be protected from any measure or process that reduced it to the level of an inanimate object. Medical science and research must be

undertaken within the context of the guarantees provided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was therefore gratifying to note the strong consensus against reproductive, as distinct from therapeutic, cloning.

5. The available evidence clearly indicated the exciting possibilities offered by stem cell research. While it was impossible to legislate against knowledge or innovative thinking, it might be possible to draw up a legal and institutional framework to protect society against abuses of knowledge. The international community must therefore consider the crucial question of the point at which an embryo became a human being, entitled to all legal and ethical safeguards.

6. Even if therapeutic cloning did not involve embryos more than seven days old, that cluster of cells might nonetheless be a life form that should be protected. Until practicable guidelines on the viability of a new embryo and its capability of responding to stimuli were developed, progress in the field would continue to be held hostage to the protests of sceptics or zealots. The Committee should adopt a balanced approach that would safeguard the freedom of medical science to continue responsible research.

7. **Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan), after aligning his delegation with the statement made on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, said that the Committee's efforts to fulfil its mandate under General Assembly resolution 56/93 had been hampered by efforts to reverse that mandate and to prevent the reconvening of the Ad Hoc Committee established by the resolution. That approach did not take into consideration the differences in cultures and priorities among nations. Despite the fact that there was a consensus on banning reproductive cloning, some delegations wished to sacrifice that consensus and leave the door open for uncontrolled scientific practices leading to the eventual cloning of human beings.

8. Both sides claimed that "scientific and factual evidence" supported their point of view. That, however, only went to prove that scientific truth was not a monopoly; and the same applied to morality. Fortunately, many of the delegations that would prefer a total ban on all forms of human cloning accepted that other nations could not be compelled to act against their national interests and ban embryonic stem cell

research. They understood that an effective international instrument should be based on consensus. The current state of affairs indicated that such consensus could apply to a legal instrument against reproductive cloning but not to one against all forms of human cloning. Indeed, the latter would lead to unsupervised, uncontrolled scientific research involving practices of which the international community disapproved. The claim that therapeutic cloning as such did not exist and that a total ban was therefore the only solution defied scientific logic, in that it sought to impose its own understanding of the meaning of life and the time at which life started, which was irrelevant to the legal task before the Committee.

9. His delegation therefore supported a total ban on reproductive cloning by means of a legal instrument which also gave States the option to exercise their discretion and decide how to deal with other forms of cloning on the national level. Such an approach would be more effective in banning reproductive cloning, while respecting differences of opinion and allowing States to act in accordance with their national interests. His delegation was also, however, in favour of a consensual solution, otherwise there was a risk of stalemate in the negotiation of the draft convention. His delegation was therefore open to discussing other approaches.

10. **Ms. Thoma** (Cyprus) said that the issue of human cloning, whether for reproductive or therapeutic purposes, raised ethical and scientific as well as legal questions that, as the debate showed, could be approached in a number of divergent ways. Her delegation regretted the division of the Committee on a sensitive issue which prevented it from elaborating an international convention enjoying universal support.

11. Cyprus had adopted binding legislation to implement the first Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, which prohibited the cloning of human beings for reproductive purposes. At the international level, it took into full consideration the legal instruments elaborated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the Council of Europe. It fully supported an international convention banning the reproductive cloning of human beings. Draft resolution

A/C.6/59/L.8 adopted a realistic approach in that, while it provided for a prohibition on the reproductive cloning of human beings, it left to States the decision on whether to ban therapeutic cloning or to regulate it strictly. While her delegation respected the concerns of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2, it believed that an international convention on human cloning should be elaborated as a matter of urgency. Otherwise, there was a risk that unethical and illegal practices would persist. She urged delegations to explore ways of reaching consensus so that a vote could be avoided.

12. **Mr. Awanbor** (Nigeria) said that, although there appeared to be general agreement on the need to ban the reproductive cloning of human beings, strenuous efforts were being made by some delegations to justify therapeutic cloning on the grounds of its potential health benefits. That reasoning was incomplete, since it gave the misleading impression that reproductive and therapeutic cloning were mutually exclusive. In fact, the same techniques were used in both cases, up to the point at which the cloned single-cell embryo was either implanted in the womb or destroyed to harvest its embryonic stem cells for experiments. In both cases, human embryos were used. The arguments about the progress made in biotechnology were skewed, since they continued to ignore the dehumanizing technique of embryonic stem cell extraction. It was morally and ethically wrong to destroy life — that of the living human embryo — in order to save life.

13. The manner in which scientific research was pursued could not be a morally neutral undertaking. In his delegation's view, the thin line separating therapeutic and reproductive human cloning did not support the argument for only a partial ban. There was also a need to be circumspect, because most biotechnology advocates were as much "academic entrepreneurs" as they were objective scientists and their resistance to the regulation of biotechnology might be strongly influenced by personal financial considerations.

14. Developing countries, particularly in Africa, were most likely to be at risk as easy sources of the millions of embryos required for so-called therapeutic cloning. Owing to the prevalent poverty and ignorance, women in developing countries, especially young girls, would be exposed to exploitation, which would compound the problems caused by moral decadence and social and demographic flux in such countries.

15. It was gratifying to note that the arguments in favour of a total ban on all forms of human cloning had gained wider acceptance among delegations and his delegation remained optimistic that efforts would be made to overcome differences. He urged the delegations to support draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 in order to move the negotiation process forward.

16. **Ms. Bahemuka** (Kenya) said that human cloning, for whatever purpose, was totally unacceptable to her delegation. The end result of any cloning process was the creation or reproduction of a human embryo. The only question was what was done with that embryo: whether it was destroyed to harvest its stem cells for experimental purposes or implanted into a womb. The embryo created during the cloning process was a living being, not just a cluster of undefined cells. To create a human embryo with the sole purpose of destroying it in order to harvest tissue was abominable.

17. Not only did the advocates of therapeutic cloning fail to address the complex ethical and moral issues involved but, after several decades of research, all that they had proved was that clones were beset with such severe genetic abnormalities that they should not be allowed to develop into mature human beings. She wondered how such inherently defective cells could be expected to remedy genetic defects in the human body.

18. There were, in any case, viable alternatives to cloning that were less objectionable. Proponents of therapeutic cloning claimed that the choice was between such cloning or letting patients die. Adult stem cell research, however, had considerable potential in regenerative medicine and raised no difficult ethical or moral questions.

19. In order to ensure a supply of the enormous number of human eggs needed, disadvantaged women desperate to earn a living were likely to be targeted. Entrepreneurs had already contacted young women to donate eggs for a small fee. That was an insult not just to women but to the human race as a whole.

20. The compromise proposed in draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.8 was thus no real compromise. The recognition that therapeutic cloning required strict regulation was in itself an acknowledgement of the risk for potential abuse. The cloning of human beings could not be left to the whims of States but must be subordinate to the decision of the United Nations. Her delegation, therefore, sought a total ban on human cloning. Decisive action should be taken on draft

resolution A/C.6/59/L.2, without further prolongation of the debate, for the sake of human dignity and human rights. Should the draft convention be adopted, States that felt strongly could still exercise their sovereign right not to become parties to it.

21. **Mr. Acosta Bonilla** (Honduras) said that science could not fly in the face of the fundamental moral principles of human society. While it was imperative to alleviate human suffering, morality should not be sacrificed to financial considerations. In many respects, technological advances had become dissociated from human well-being, as was evidenced by the number of children still dying from hunger.

22. The law protected human rights and so it was wrong to destroy embryos or to use them for scientific research. The subject should be reconsidered in the light of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights and indeed more thought should be given to the whole topic. In the meantime, human cloning should be completely prohibited until all countries could agree on a common set of values. His Government would therefore vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2.

23. **Mr. Navoti** (Fiji) endorsed draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 introduced by Costa Rica. There was good reason to fear that if a convention banning all forms of cloning were not adopted in the very near future, given the rapidity of scientific advances, it would not be long before a cloned human baby made its appearance. Since consensus was proving elusive, there appeared to be no alternative to holding a vote, which would further polarize the issue.

24. **Mr. Spatafora** (Italy) said that his Government was seeking a total ban on human cloning and therefore supported the draft resolution introduced by Costa Rica (A/C.6/59/L.2). The line drawn between reproductive and therapeutic cloning was a false distinction. "Therapeutic" cloning normally meant that human embryos were created for the express purpose of scientific experimentation, after which they were discarded and thus denied the possibility of becoming human beings. On the other hand, the use of adult stem cells had proved successful in the fight against many diseases.

25. The failure of experiments using human embryos suggested that the supporters of therapeutic cloning should adopt a more cautious approach. There was no reason why scientific progress should be made at the

expense of human dignity. Another element for consideration was European Parliament resolution 2003/2049 on relations between the European Union and the United Nations, which had been passed with a huge majority and which called for a worldwide ban on human cloning.

26. **Mr. Eriksen** (Norway) said that respect for the inviolability of life and for principles based on the equal value of all human beings motivated his Government's opposition to reproductive and therapeutic cloning and its support for the draft resolution introduced by Costa Rica (A/C.6/59/L.2).

27. **Mr. Abdelsalam** (Sudan) said that although consensus was hampered by a plethora of interrelated issues, he was optimistic that political, legal and scientific divergences could be overcome. His Government was opposed to both reproductive and therapeutic cloning. Although the use of therapeutic cloning might be motivated by good intentions, science should be based on faith and ethics as well as utility and bounded by moral restrictions. A cautious dialogue should therefore be initiated with a view to arriving at a consensus.

28. **Mr. Haji Dollah** (Malaysia) said that a distinction must be drawn between therapeutic and reproductive cloning. Reproductive cloning should be banned on moral and ethical grounds and also for practical reasons, since animal clones had been malformed or unhealthy. Therapeutic cloning, on the other hand, could potentially solve many medical problems and might significantly reduce the risks inherent in other stem cell therapies. It must, however, be regulated and the results of therapeutic cloning research must not be allowed to advance reproductive cloning. While caution over therapeutic cloning was warranted, a promising avenue of scientific inquiry should not be closed because of justified fears regarding reproductive cloning. The whole issue needed to be addressed in a calm and rational manner with all due consideration being given to scientific, moral, ethical, political and legal aspects. It was to be hoped that the Committee would one day reach consensus allowing it to make progress on the subject.

29. **Mr. Lidén** (Sweden) said that reproductive cloning must be banned because it was contrary to the dignity of human beings, but other forms of human cloning should be regulated nationally. The draft resolution on an international convention against the

reproductive cloning of human beings (A/C.6/59/L.8) therefore represented the common denominator on which all States could agree. Although stem cell research was still at an early stage of development, it offered great potential as a source of new treatments for serious and hitherto incurable diseases. That quest for knowledge must be promoted, not prevented. The international research community agreed on the whole that scientific research was valuable per se and served a vital purpose in society, but that it must always be carried out within ethical boundaries.

30. An ethical discussion of stem cell research must therefore strike the right balance between different values, principles and interests. One way of ensuring that was done was to require that research projects in ethically sensitive areas be scrutinized at the national level by independent ethical committees, an approach that many countries had adopted.

31. **Mr. Boonpracong** (Thailand) said that reproductive cloning must be banned since it was a practice that violated human dignity. If, however, embryonic stem cell research were closely regulated to prevent misuse, therapeutic cloning might offer significant potential for curing diseases.

32. While his Government had not adopted any legislation dealing with the matter, the Medical Council had issued a regulation which prohibited the reproductive cloning of human beings, and the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology and the National Public Health Foundation had published guidelines which imposed certain conditions on researchers who wished to obtain a grant to conduct human stem cell research.

33. Conflicting religious, moral or ethical views should not hinder international efforts to prohibit reproductive cloning, but any international convention should leave it to each Member State to decide whether therapeutic cloning should be allowed or forbidden in its territory. If permitted, however, therapeutic cloning should be regulated in such a way as to prevent its results from being used to advance reproductive cloning.

34. In view of the evident lack of knowledge about the issue of human cloning, it would be useful if the Secretariat were to compile information about national laws and regulations on human cloning and distribute it to all Member States.

35. **Mr. Kanu** (Sierra Leone) said that his delegation was one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 and endorsed the statement made by Costa Rica when introducing it. The issue was urgent, because what was at stake was the integrity and dignity of human beings, a principle on which the foundations of the United Nations rested. His delegation was in total agreement on the need to ban the reproductive cloning of human beings but strongly believed that other forms of cloning should not be encouraged or supported. In essence, all cloning was reproductive, since it created a human embryo, which could potentially result in a live birth or could be destroyed for its stem cells. Sierra Leone was not against the advancement of scientific research to find cures for serious illnesses, but surely that could be done in other ways than through the destruction of human embryos.

36. The developed world might be able to put in place mechanisms that would ensure that therapeutic cloning was not misused, but in poor countries without that capacity there was a risk that women would be exploited to satisfy the intellectual curiosity and scientific whims of richer States.

37. Another valuable feature of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 was that it encouraged States, in paragraph 5, to direct funds that might have been used for human cloning technologies to pressing global issues in developing countries, such as poverty eradication.

38. **Mr. Much** (Germany) said that his country's position was clear: its laws prohibited all forms of cloning, and his delegation would prefer that that should become the worldwide standard. Recent developments had shown that international regulations on human cloning were urgently needed. However, Germany was committed to the idea that consensus was the only way to achieve a universally binding instrument on a key question of international bioethics and of human rights and human dignity. For that reason his delegation believed that it would not be right to seek a solution by voting, and it appealed to the Committee, its Bureau and the sponsors of the two opposing draft resolutions to make every effort to reach consensus.

39. **Mr. Abebe** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation, a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2, fully endorsed the statement made by Costa Rica when introducing it. Destroying human embryos, even for

research and medical purposes, was nonetheless destroying human life and was a crime. Those who supported the opposing draft resolution (A/C.6/59/L.8) were in favour of the mass cloning and killing of human embryos and would ban only the implantation of such embryos in a woman's womb. His delegation could not support a norm that made the very basis of human life an object of experimentation. The international community had two choices: it could allow science to regulate life, or it could regulate science to better human life, while ensuring respect for the inherent dignity and worth of human beings. His delegation also strongly supported paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2, which encouraged States to direct money that would otherwise be spent on cloning research to other pressing global issues.

40. **Ms. Sarne** (Philippines) said that her delegation fully supported draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 and reaffirmed its position that a comprehensive ban on human cloning was the only viable approach for the United Nations. Therapeutic cloning might be pursued for altruistic aims, in order to find cures for debilitating diseases, but it did so at the expense of human life, since the process involved the destruction of the cloned human embryo once the stem cells had been harvested. She wished to underscore that the technology for therapeutic cloning was the same as for reproductive cloning. The proposed solution under draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.8 would have the undesirable result of perfecting the very same cloning technology that could be used to produce cloned babies. Moreover, if research cloning were permitted, it would be merely a matter of time before millions of cloned human embryos were produced in laboratories, and no amount of regulation would be able to prevent at least one of those cloned embryos from being implanted in a woman's womb and developing into a baby.

41. In the past year a number of countries had passed laws regulating the practice of therapeutic cloning, and the world was being asked to respect the sovereign will of States in that regard. However, her delegation was unwilling to subordinate human dignity to the unproven medical benefits that might be derived from therapeutic cloning. The difference between the two draft resolutions proposed was evident: A/C.6/59/L.2 sought to ban human cloning, whereas A/C.6/59/L.8 allowed it to be practiced.

42. **Ms. Katungye** (Uganda) said that her delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Costa Rica in

introducing draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2. There appeared to be no doubt that therapeutic cloning involved the same technical process as reproductive cloning. If it were permitted, there would be no guarantee that scientists would not perfect the art to the point that they could clone human beings with relative ease. Moreover, embryonic stem cell research for therapeutic purposes entailed the creation of human embryos to be killed in order to better another person's life. That sacrifice was unconscionable, because one life was not worth more than another. An embryo was a human being in the earliest stages of formation, it was not an object and should not be used or destroyed for scientific experiments or traded as a commodity. Furthermore, embryonic stem cell research and use was contrary to the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. Therefore, out of respect for the sanctity of life and the dignity of mankind, her delegation supported a ban on all forms of cloning based on embryonic stem cells.

43. Some had said that those calling for a total ban were standing in the way of science. However, draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 called for the promotion of scientific and technical progress in the fields of biology and genetics in a manner respectful of human rights. Moreover, not a single human being had yet benefited from embryonic stem cell research, whereas thousands had already benefited from the use of adult stem cells, which raised no ethical or moral difficulties.

44. The members of the Committee could not afford to walk away without some kind of outcome to prove their commitment to ending the existing deadlock. However, a call for a vote was not the solution. They must reach a compromise that could serve as a stepping stone to a convention that would ban all forms of cloning inconsistent with the dignity of mankind.

45. **Ms. Moore** (United States of America) said that her delegation was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 introduced by Costa Rica, because it strongly supported a ban on all cloning to create human embryos, whether for reproductive, therapeutic, research or experimental purposes. The process of somatic cell nuclear transfer, or cloning, involved the laboratory production of a human embryo with the precise genetic makeup of another individual. In reproductive cloning, the embryo would be implanted into a woman's womb. In therapeutic or experimental cloning, the embryo would be destroyed for research purposes. A ban differentiating between the two would

essentially authorize the creation of a human embryo for the purpose of destroying it, thus elevating the value of research and experimentation above that of a human life and turning nascent human life into a commodity to be exploited. For that reason, a partial ban was unacceptable to the United States and many other countries. Furthermore, experimental cloning had the potential to cause exploitation of women, particularly poor women, because it might create an incentive to donate eggs for financial gain.

46. There were many routes to developing therapies and cures that did not pose the same threat to human dignity as cloning of human embryos. Her delegation therefore fully supported the proposal in draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 for an ad hoc committee to prepare a convention banning all cloning of human embryos. The international community must act immediately to send a clear message that human cloning was an affront to human dignity that could not be tolerated.

47. **Mr. Meléndez-Barahona** (El Salvador) said that his delegation was by no means opposed to scientific progress intended to improve the human condition, particularly medical research aimed at finding cures or treatments for disease, but such research must be conducted in a manner consistent with human dignity. El Salvador agreed with those countries that had expressed concerns about human cloning for either reproductive or therapeutic purposes. For that reason, his delegation was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.6/59/L.2 and aligned itself with the introductory statement made by Costa Rica, which called as a matter of urgency for the preparation of the draft text of an international convention against human cloning. Until such time as an international convention existed, his delegation would urge all States to take their own measures to prohibit all activities aimed at human cloning.

48. *Mr. Dhakal (Nepal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

49. **Ms. Nguyen Thi Van Anh** (Viet Nam) said that there was an urgent need to ban reproductive cloning through an international legally binding instrument. However, while her delegation respected the opinions of both groups, it believed that the future international instrument should not close the door to therapeutic cloning if States wished to engage in it, provided that strict controls were in place to prevent abuses. The

Committee should make every effort to reach consensus on its recommendation to the General Assembly.

50. **Mr. Grey-Johnson** (Gambia) stressed that while the ultimate aim of all science was the well-being of mankind, the pursuit of science must be based on absolute respect for human life. Despite efforts to blur the line between reproductive and therapeutic cloning, both led to the deliberate interruption of the natural development of one life for the sake of saving another. Adult stem cell research, on the other hand, was ethical and had great and proven potential.

51. His delegation supported the elaboration of a convention that would comprehensively ban human cloning; however, he cautioned against hasty action that might divide the world on such an important and sensitive issue or lead to an agreement that would prove unenforceable. Dialogue should be continued until a wider consensus could be reached.

52. **Mr. de Câmara** (Timor-Leste) said that his delegation was among the sponsors of the draft resolution introduced by Costa Rica (A/C.6/59/L.2). His Government fully supported adult stem cell and umbilical stem cell research, which had yielded promising benefits, but it was opposed to all forms of human cloning; while that process created one life in order to save or prolong the life of another, it also destroyed life. The process was the same for both reproductive and therapeutic cloning and it was the process itself that his delegation challenged on ethical grounds.

53. Having acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as one of its first acts on attaining statehood, Timor-Leste was deeply concerned about the status and advancement of women. Like all forms of exploitation, human cloning would have a more negative impact on women in the developing world. It was, however, important not to overstate the need for protection, which would border on the patronizing.

54. While it was important to achieve consensus on issues of fundamental importance to humankind, consensus on human cloning was unlikely. Moreover, both developed and developing countries, encompassing different religions and faiths, supported the draft resolution on the prohibition of all forms of human cloning (A/C.6/59/L.2). He appealed to all delegations to decide the matter on its merits.

55. **Mr. Gómez-Robledo** (Mexico) said that decisions on such a sensitive topic should be based on scientific evidence and respect for human dignity and should be aimed at developing an effective, universal legal regime. There appeared to be a consensus on banning reproductive cloning; his delegation therefore supported the preparation of a convention that would prohibit that practice and establish internationally agreed criteria to be used by States in regulating or prohibiting therapeutic cloning.

56. It was important to avoid creating a legal vacuum as well as the proliferation of competing or contradictory instruments. He therefore urged States to continue to seek consensus, which could not be achieved by asking the other party to abandon its convictions, but only through mutual respect and the effort to find common ground. A hasty decision taken through a vote would not achieve results acceptable to all delegations and would greatly reduce the possibility of adopting a realistic, universal convention. Moreover, the scientific, moral, ethical and legal aspects of the problem must be considered.

57. His delegation therefore proposed that the Ad Hoc Committee should be convened with an initial mandate to establish a multidisciplinary expert group that would consider all aspects of human cloning and submit its results within a certain time period. On the basis of those results, the Ad Hoc Committee should make proposals to the General Assembly regarding the terms of reference for its own negotiating mandate. Negotiations leading to a comprehensive convention should then begin immediately.

58. **Mr. Thiam** (Senegal) said that while there was no need to choose between science and ethics, a legitimate concern for human dignity must accompany scientific progress. A decision to permit cloning while regulating it would place a heavy burden on legislators. Despite rapid progress in some fields of science, biomedical research was not yet able to achieve results without the large-scale destruction of human embryos. It would be a mistake to respond to that problem, no doubt a temporary one, by authorizing a practice that would cause great harm to humankind; it would be preferable to encourage research into other, more promising therapies. For those reasons, his delegation supported only cloning techniques which in no way involved the creation and destruction of human embryos and was in favour of banning all forms of human cloning, whatever their purpose. Senegal

nonetheless believed that every effort should be made to reach consensus on the matter in the long-standing tradition of the Committee.

59. **Ms. Matsuo de Claverol** (Paraguay) associated herself with the statements made by the other sponsors of the Costa Rican draft resolution (A/C.6/59/L.2). Paraguay's Constitution enshrined the right to life, beginning at conception, and she hoped that it would soon be possible to adopt an effective international instrument protecting that right. Human cloning, whatever its purpose, was unethical and incompatible with respect for human dignity. Further efforts should be made to arrive at a consensus on preventing scientific experimentation conducted at the expense of human lives.

60. **Mr. Solórzano** (Nicaragua) said that his delegation was in favour of a total ban on all forms of human cloning as a violation of the right to human conception by a man and a woman. Even therapeutic cloning, however promising as a contribution to medicine, was too likely to be used for other purposes that would raise ethical, moral and religious concerns. His delegation was not opposed to progress in science, including in the field of genetics, but human cloning was not the only form of biogenetic research.

61. **Ms. Barnes** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that her Order had served others for many centuries, particularly in the areas of health care and humanitarian aid, and was thus well qualified to understand the concerns raised by the issues of cloning. In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Order was committed to the right to life, including the right to be born, the right to proper health care and the right to a dignified death. It was keenly interested in the great potential of accelerated adult stem cell research and treatment, but it supported Costa Rica in calling for an international convention against human cloning.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.