



# General Assembly

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

## Tribute to the memory of nine United Nations peacekeepers killed in the line of duty

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Before taking up the items on our agenda this morning, I should like, on behalf of the General Assembly, to convey our most heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolences to the Government of Bangladesh and to the families of the nine United Nations peacekeepers from Bangladesh who lost their lives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on Friday, 25 February 2005.

## Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

### Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/59/668/Add.7 to Add.10)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/59/668/Add.7 to Add.10, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of documents A/59/668 and addenda 1 to 6, Afghanistan, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Palau and Solomon Islands have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

*It was so decided.*

## Agenda item 150 (*continued*)

### International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings

#### Report of the Sixth Committee (A/59/516/Add.1)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I request the Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee, Ms. Anna Sotaniemi of Finland, to introduce the report of the Sixth Committee.

**Ms. Sotaniemi** (Finland), Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee: I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 150, entitled "International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings", which is the last item remaining on the Committee's agenda for the current session.

As members will recall, at its 76th plenary meeting, held on 23 December 2004, the General Assembly, by its decision 59/547, decided to establish a Working Group to finalize the text of a United Nations declaration on human cloning and to report to the Sixth Committee during the current session.

Accordingly, the Working Group met on 14, 15 and 18 February, and the Sixth Committee considered the item at its 28th meeting, held on 18 February 2005. The

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report of the Sixth Committee on this agenda item is contained in document A/59/516/Add.1, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 17 thereof.

In accordance with the draft resolution, the General Assembly would approve the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning annexed to it. The Declaration contains eight preambular paragraphs and one operative paragraph containing six subparagraphs.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution by a recorded vote of 71 votes in favour and 35 votes against, with 43 abstentions.

That concludes my introduction of the last report of the Sixth Committee.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank once again the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, Ambassador Mohamed Bennouna, the other members of the Bureau and the secretariat of the Sixth Committee, as well as all representatives and colleagues for their hard work throughout the session.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Sixth Committee which is before the Assembly today.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Sixth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that:

“When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation’s vote is different from its vote in the Committee.”

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Sixth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance. That means that, where a recorded vote was taken, we will do the same.

The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 17 of its report.

We will now take action on the draft resolution entitled “United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning”.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Morocco, Nicaragua, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Suriname, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Zambia

*Against:*

Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Iceland, India, Jamaica, Japan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand,

Norway, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tonga, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, Yemen, Zimbabwe

*Draft resolution A/59/516/Add.1 was adopted by 84 votes to 34, with 37 abstentions (resolution 59/280).*

*[Subsequently, the delegations of Antigua and Barbuda, The Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nigeria, Peru and the Russian Federation informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Greece informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against; the delegations of Botswana and Mali informed the Secretariat that they had intended to abstain.]*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have come to the end of a long process aimed at reaching points of agreement on a very complex topic. In negotiating the draft Declaration that the Assembly has just adopted, we had to take into account the uncertainty to which new scientific advances give rise as well as ethical, cultural and religious considerations, all of which are legitimate in and of themselves.

From the outset, my delegation warned that the creation of a simple and straightforward dichotomy between so-called reproductive cloning and therapeutic cloning was leading us towards an excessive simplification of the question, given all of the unknown factors that science has yet to uncover.

Therefore, throughout the process, Mexico focused its efforts on seeking a consensus, first with respect to the negotiating mandate for a convention, and then in connection with the adoption of the

Declaration. We regret that it was not possible to achieve that objective. It is clear that consensus would have facilitated the process of establishing a universal customary norm. In that connection, we thank, and commend the efforts made by, the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, Ambassador Mohamed Bennouna of Morocco, in endeavouring to reconcile all those differences.

Mexico believes that the Declaration is the result of a genuine effort to reconcile different views, as it reflects inputs provided by delegations representing the two principal positions taken in the debate. Although some delegations chose not to deviate from their original stance, many of their concerns were, in fact, included in the final text, which we have just adopted.

Throughout this process, all delegations without exception kept in mind at all times the fundamental concern of guaranteeing respect for human dignity in the implementation of science. The debates that preceded the adoption of today's important resolution demonstrated clearly that, at this historic time, this is viable only insofar as States adopt their own measures, in keeping with their democratic procedures and bearing in mind at all times that universal objective. We believe that the Declaration reflects this realistic form of compromise, which respects each State's sphere of action in the adoption of concrete measures in that respect.

In that connection, my delegation hopes that the Mexican legislature will take the steps required to put in place the constitutional procedures necessary so that my country can finally accede to the Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and its Paris Protocol.

The letter and spirit of the Declaration are consistent with Mexican legislation and jurisprudence on the subject. Respect of dignity and the protection of human life are fundamental pillars of the Mexico *corpus juris*. Such respect is ensured under our international obligations, as enshrined in international human rights instruments, and under the individual guarantees contained in the Constitution.

Paragraph (b) of the Declaration solemnly calls on States to prohibit human cloning inasmuch as it is incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life.

The inclusion in the Declaration of the concepts of human dignity and of the protection of human life does

not prejudice their definition, but rather allows national legislations to define them in accordance with the cultural, philosophical and religious criteria that prevail in each society and with the need for respect of human rights recognized by the international community.

There is not the slightest doubt that human cloning has — and will continue in future to have, probably even more intensely — serious implications for the international community.

Therefore, Mexico welcomes the fact that despite the inherent difficulty of the issue, humankind's most representative forum is taking a stance on it and is laying the foundations for regulation at the national level, with the universal objective of ensuring that the interests of humankind will always prevail over the interests of science.

In that context, it may be apt to recall Rabelais's warning that "Science sans conscience n'est que ruine de l'âme": science without conscience is nothing but the ruin of the soul.

**Mr. Zhang Yishan** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Like many other countries, China supports the Assembly's efforts to negotiate an international convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings. However countries vary in their understanding of the moral, ethical and legal questions related to research on therapeutic cloning. The correct option is to let countries adopt at the national level moratoriums, prohibitions or strict regulations and controls in accordance with their moral, ethical and legal beliefs. China regrets that the Declaration fails to reflect the stated positions of many countries.

The Chinese delegation voted against the Declaration because the Declaration's wording is too confusing, and the prohibition it contains could be misunderstood as applying to all research into therapeutic cloning. Thus, we cannot accept it. The Declaration is in no way legally binding on China.

However, it should be stressed that the Chinese Government will maintain its stance against reproductive human cloning and will strengthen its regulation and control of research into therapeutic cloning in order to ensure that human dignity and the internationally shared ethical concept of human life will not be undermined.

**Mr. Gandhi** (India): My delegation deeply regrets that the Sixth Committee was unable to recommend to the

General Assembly a text that was acceptable to all Member States on a matter of paramount importance such as an international convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings. We voted against the political Declaration on Human Cloning because some of its provisions could be interpreted as a call for a total ban on all forms of human cloning.

My delegation remains fully opposed to reproductive cloning owing to the doubtful nature of its safety, success, utility and ethical acceptability. However, we consider the merits of therapeutic cloning on a case-by-case basis, according to the bioethical guidelines laid down with the approval of our National Bioethical Committee. The Declaration voted upon today is non-binding and does not reflect agreement among the wider membership of the General Assembly. Our approach to therapeutic cloning thus remains unchanged.

**Mr. Verbeke** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium regrets that agreement could not be reached on a declaration that would enjoy consensus the General Assembly.

My delegation has always believed that the question of human cloning — which is clearly an ethical question — must be dealt with through a declaration of a universal nature in order for such a declaration to be of value. The results of this morning's vote clearly confirm that the international community is divided on the text submitted to the Assembly. Rather than bringing us together, the text divides us.

Belgium voted against the Declaration because it makes no distinction between reproductive cloning and therapeutic cloning. It is essential that reproductive cloning be categorically prohibited. With respect to therapeutic cloning, we believe that, in the interest of science and the well-being of humankind, it is reasonable to maintain, at the national level, the option of proceeding with that form of cloning, within strictly defined procedures and conditions and under the appropriate controls. That is the objective of the legislation that we have adopted in Belgium, and which we do not intend to modify.

**Sir Emyr Jones Parry** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom voted against the draft Declaration on Human Cloning because of the reference to human life, which we consider can be interpreted as a call for a total ban on all forms of human cloning. We cannot accept such an ambiguous declaration, which may sow

confusion about the acceptability of that important field of research.

The General Assembly has missed another opportunity to adopt a convention prohibiting reproductive cloning. Why is that so? It is because of the intransigence of those that were not prepared to recognize that other sovereign States, after extensive dialogue and due democratic process, may decide to permit strictly controlled applications of therapeutic cloning.

The United Kingdom is a strong supporter of therapeutic cloning research because it has the potential to revolutionize medicine in this century in the way that antibiotics did in the last. The United Kingdom Government announced this week more than \$2 billion in funding over the next three years for biotechnology research, including stem cell research.

The Declaration voted upon today is a weak, non-binding political statement that does not reflect anything approaching consensus within the General Assembly. Nor will it affect the United Kingdom's strong support of stem cell research.

**Mr. Simon** (Hungary): On behalf of the Hungarian delegation, I would like to explain the vote of the Republic of Hungary on the resolution just adopted.

During the discussions in the Sixth Committee, Hungary devoted itself to forging consensus on the highly divisive matter of human cloning. While we regret that a text acceptable to all Member States proved to be unachievable, we recognize that the voting results and the text of the Declaration just adopted clearly show the complex nature of the question of human cloning, which involves differing ethical, philosophical, legal, religious and scientific considerations.

Hungary voted in favour of the Declaration because it attaches utmost importance to sending a strong message that the birth of cloned human beings is not acceptable. Furthermore, we consider that in the conduct of life sciences there is a need for a delicate balance between freedom of scientific research and adequate protection of human life and dignity.

Hungary voted in favour of the Declaration because it is in line with Hungary's existing obligations under international law, namely, the Oviedo Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the

Application of Biology and Medicine, adopted in 1997, and its Additional Protocol on the Prohibition of Cloning Human Beings, adopted in 1998 in Paris. Those international instruments were adopted in the framework of the Council of Europe and were enacted in our national legislation in 2002.

We hope that the present Declaration is only one step — not the final stage — in the consideration of human cloning. Hungary is open to further discussions in the international community at the appropriate time.

**Mr. Ha** (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea voted against the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning because it is not a product of consensus; neither does it reflect the views of Member States. We reaffirm that the Declaration is non-binding and that it will not affect our policy on therapeutic cloning in the future.

Therapeutic cloning research and its application, when conducted under strict regulations, will contribute to the enhancement of human dignity by relieving the pain, suffering and misery of millions of people. The Republic of Korea has already instituted the strictest measures within its domestic laws to regulate cloning-related research. We are firmly committed to protecting human dignity.

**Mr. Boonpracong** (Thailand): Thailand regrets that neither the General Assembly nor the Sixth Committee could adopt by consensus the draft resolution containing the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning.

The Declaration voted upon today is not binding. Moreover, the text of the Declaration is ambiguous in terms of calling upon Member States both to adopt all necessary measures to protect adequately human life in the application of life sciences and to prohibit all forms of human cloning inasmuch as they are incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life.

In the light of that, my delegation voted against the Declaration. We believe that it is left to Member States to interpret it and to decide whether to permit or to prohibit therapeutic cloning. It is also our understanding that the Declaration does not prohibit therapeutic cloning, especially when it is being conducted under the strict supervision of relevant national authorities.

**Mr. De Palacio España** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Spanish delegation believes that the term

“human life”, used in the resolution just adopted, is imprecise and could be subject to various interpretations. Spain has a clear preference for the expression “human beings”, which is usually employed in scientific and political debates on cloning and related subjects. It is also the term that appears in the title of agenda item 150 of the current session of the General Assembly.

We also believe that the text of the resolution does not cover the fundamental and well-known differences that exist between reproductive cloning and therapeutic cloning. The fact that a consensus has not been reached on this matter after almost four years of debate highlights the tenuous support for the text that has been adopted.

The Spanish Government firmly opposes the reproductive cloning of human beings, but its position is different with regard to therapeutic cloning, which will probably be viewed positively in the draft law on biomedical research that is currently being formulated by the Government of Spain and will be submitted for consideration by Parliament in due course.

For all those reasons, the Spanish delegation voted against the text adopted.

**Mr. Tajima** (Japan): Japan voted against the resolution that has just been adopted. The Declaration annexed to the resolution is difficult to interpret as permitting therapeutic cloning and does not respect the differing views of Member States on therapeutic cloning.

We wish to make it clear once again that the adopted resolution will not affect Japan’s domestic policy on human cloning. Japan will go forward with the implementation of therapeutic cloning research under strict conditions, while fully respecting human dignity.

**Mr. Leon** (Brazil): My delegation regrets the lack of consensus on the adoption of the political Declaration on which the Assembly has just voted. Instead of trying to bridge the different views on a complex issue, human cloning, the Declaration has only highlighted the deep divisions in the international community on the issue. My delegation also regrets that the Sixth Committee has deviated from its original mandate to establish a ban on reproductive cloning.

Brazil has traditionally emphasized the need to protect human life and human dignity, and our vote

against the political Declaration is consistent with that position. The text just adopted did not contain language that could favour the engagement of my delegation, in view of the incipient scientific knowledge regarding human cloning. In addition, Brazil has always maintained that a political declaration, as a non-binding instrument, should be reached only by consensus.

**Mr. Menon** (Singapore): Singapore cast its vote against this resolution because, in our view, it does not capture the diversity of the views that have been expressed on this important issue.

Four years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/93, endorsing the noble initiative put forward by France and Germany to begin work on an international convention to ban the reproductive cloning of human beings. There was then — and there still is today — unanimity in this House that reproductive cloning is an abhorrent prospect and must be banned unequivocally. It is therefore unfortunate that that worthy objective was hijacked in a misguided bid to widen the ban to include important research that holds the potential to discover effective remedies for hitherto incurable ailments.

That bid culminated in today’s vote on this resolution, which seeks to impose a single set of values and beliefs upon the international community. As a result, the resolution enjoys the support of only a minority of Member States. In fact, my delegation recalls that a key amendment proposed in the Sixth Committee by Belgium to make it clear that subparagraph (b) is aimed at outlawing reproductive cloning was narrowly defeated by a vote of 55 against, to 52 in favour, with 42 abstentions. The upshot of all that is that the value of such a document is highly questionable.

Notwithstanding our vote, Singapore remains committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical practice in life sciences research, which includes having due regard and consideration for the sanctity of human life. For example, Singapore has not only consistently advocated the move to ban reproductive cloning, but we have gone ahead and introduced our own legislation to ban reproductive cloning and to strictly regulate all activities that might result in it.

To support valuable research efforts, Singapore has been putting in place a proper legal and ethical framework for stem cell research. The foundation of

that framework has been established in the form of the national ethical guidelines issued by Singapore's Bioethics Advisory Committee, whose members include representatives from Singapore's many ethnic and religious groups. The Committee's guidelines address, inter alia, the ethical use of human subjects and the need to respect human dignity in research, in particular the need to ensure that women are not exploited in any attempt to broaden scientific knowledge and applications. The guidelines have been published, and they have been adopted by our hospitals and research institutes. Singapore intends to reinforce compliance with the guidelines by making them mandatory through legislation that will be introduced in the near future.

**Mr. Siv** (United States of America): The United States welcomes the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning. During the consideration of the item by the Sixth Committee, we explained our position on the draft resolution. Consistent with the recommendation contained in paragraph 76 of annex V of the rules of the procedure of the General Assembly and its practice, we will not repeat that statement in the plenary. The full text of the United States explanation of vote is available on the United States mission website.

**Mr. Zyman** (Poland): I should like to explain the position of the Government of Poland with respect to the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning.

The Declaration calls upon all Member States to

“prohibit all forms of human cloning inasmuch as they are incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life” (*resolution 59/280*).

That is a position which the whole international community should unequivocally adopt. Consequently, the Polish delegation decided to vote in favour of the Declaration.

At the same time, on account of the apparent doubts expressed during the discussion as to the interpretation of some of the provisions of the Declaration, my delegation would like to declare that Poland unequivocally and firmly opposes reproductive cloning of human embryos. Poland permits the possibility of performing scientific research in the field of human embryonic stem cells only for the purpose of saving human life or for protecting humans from serious diseases.

Poland is of the opinion that any use of human embryonic stem cells, including for the purposes I have mentioned, should be permitted only if the following conditions are met: stem cells and stem cell lines are obtained from reliable and documented sources; human embryos used to obtain human stem cells or to create stem cells lines are supernumerary cells, meaning embryos which were created in the process of in vitro fertilization aimed at initiating a pregnancy but are no longer aimed at achieving the said goal; the donors of embryos have expressed in a written form their free and unequivocal will for their embryos to be used in a particular way; anonymous donors of embryos are excluded and the personal data of donors, including their genetic data, is subject to full protection; the donors of embryos were not given or promised any pecuniary or material benefit.

If any of the aforementioned conditions are not met, Poland is opposed to any kind of use of embryonic stem cells.

**Mr. Maqungo** (South Africa): We abstained in the voting on the Declaration and take this opportunity to explain our vote.

We are grateful for the efforts made by the Chairman of the Sixth Committee to ensure that the different sides of the debate over human cloning should agree on a compromise language. We believe that the language arrived at in the Declaration that has just now been adopted is deliberately ambiguous so as not to infringe on the positions of those who will want to continue with research into therapeutic cloning, whilst at the same time it allows for those who want to prohibit all forms of human cloning to do so in their own national jurisdictions.

Although South Africa would have preferred much clearer language that would clearly permit therapeutic cloning, we remain sensitive to the views of those who would not have been able to live with such language. To that end, we abstained in the voting on the Declaration.

South Africa, for its part, is against reproductive human cloning. South Africa will continue to strictly regulate therapeutic cloning. We consider the research into therapeutic cloning to be aimed at protecting human life and therefore not inconsistent with the Declaration that has just been adopted.

**Mr. Laurin** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada's position on cloning is clear. All forms of human cloning, for whatever purpose and by whatever technique, are prohibited in Canada under the law relating to assisted reproduction. Although certain elements of the Declaration are in line with Canadian national law, such as the prohibition of reproductive cloning, the ambiguity of the Declaration's language could give rise to certain legal and political concerns. Nevertheless, the Declaration represents a further step towards the adoption of a truly universal approach to regulating human cloning. Canada's vote against the resolution, as submitted, in no way diminishes its commitment at the international level or to national legislation that prohibits all forms of cloning.

**Mr. Lovald** (Norway): The Norwegian Government opposes both reproductive cloning of human beings and cloning for therapeutic purposes. That position is reflected in our domestic legislation, which prohibits both forms of cloning.

Throughout this process, Norway's priority has been to contribute to the elaboration of an effective, legally binding instrument in the form of a convention on human cloning. We have, however, been willing to go along with proposals for a declaration on human cloning on the condition that such a declaration would be adopted by consensus. We are, unfortunately, not able to see merit in a voted, non-binding political declaration, as such a text will not be the expression of the will of the world community as a whole. We therefore felt compelled to vote against the Declaration.

**Mr. Stagno Ugarte** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): This morning's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning represents a historic step in the international community's efforts to promote human rights and to guarantee respect for human dignity in all circumstances. Indeed, in calling upon States to prohibit all forms of human cloning, the new Declaration encourages the scientific community to advance decisively in the development of science, bearing continually in mind the need scrupulously to respect human dignity and the inherent value of human life.

The adoption of the text was the result of a lengthy negotiation process in which all parties made important concessions. Unfortunately, it ultimately proved impossible to reach a consensus because a small group of delegations rejected all reference to human life in the draft declaration. In reality, it is

surprising and sad that, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, certain delegations should object to a text that calls on States adequately to protect human life. Basically, their rejection of the text is a recognition that the poorly-named "therapeutic" cloning requires the creation of a new human life for the explicit purpose of destroying it for scientific research.

I must emphasize in that context that the Declaration that has just been adopted seeks to promote the progress of science within a clear framework of ethical and legal norms. It thus permits and encourages research on adult and umbilical cord stem cells, which has already obtained many positive results without raising any of the ethical issues related to cloning.

Furthermore, we have listened with concern as some delegations have understated the value of the new Declaration. The text enjoys the majority support of the international community and the General Assembly. Today, as we seek to strengthen and revitalize this organ, we must recognize, despite our differences, the undeniable moral and political authority of its recommendations.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all delegations, from all continents and of all beliefs, that have firmly supported us over the past three years in this protracted effort to protect the dignity of human life.

**Mrs. Collet** (France) (*spoke in French*): France regrets the failure of attempts to reach consensus on this item. We are convinced that there is a clear consensus in favour of the prohibition of the reproductive cloning of human beings. The debate over the past three years, however, has highlighted key differences between States as regards therapeutic cloning and embryo research. Those differences justify, retrospectively, the spirit of the Franco-German initiative.

My country remains convinced that, given the threat of dangerous experimentation that would represent an assault on human dignity, it is essential urgently to prohibit reproductive cloning. We cannot, however, support attempts aimed at viewing all forms of cloning as equivalent. The very restrictive legislation that we have recently adopted provides for separate regimes for the various kinds of cloning and research.

France therefore voted against the draft Declaration. We regret the inability of the Assembly to

send a universal message on such a vital issue. France, however, remains determined to contribute to progress on issues of bioethics and human rights. We have tried to play an active role in support of an instrument on universal norms relating to bioethics.

**Mr. Isong** (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation has always been in favour of the Declaration; there is no alternative to it at this point in time. Nigeria's position on this issue remains very clear: human life is sacrosanct. No reason or excuse can ever be strong enough for the violation of that principle. The United Nations was set up primarily to stop all acts that could violate the sanctity and dignity of human life — including the self-serving application of science and technology. It is, indeed, an inconceivable paradox that the proponents of human cloning for therapeutic purposes would opt to destroy or sacrifice human life — for the human embryo is a human life, a human being in its formative stages — so as to save the life of another.

It is a fact that in Nigeria, in the rest of Africa and, indeed, in all parts of the world and in all cultures, the primacy, sanctity and dignity of human life are not taken for granted. It is the most ardent desire of the older generations to see, with pride, the younger ones grow up so as to take over the affairs of the community. Human cloning for therapeutic purposes would seek to reverse that natural order of things. It would lead us to kill — to destroy — children at the formative stages of life in order to serve others, in most cases parents and elderly people whose life spans are almost over.

In conclusion, the Nigerian delegation would like to stress again that human cloning is unethical and a direct assault on human dignity. It is ethically and morally wrong and offensive to human dignity to create and then destroy human beings for the sole purpose of fostering the well-being of other human beings. That gives the impression that some human lives are much more important than others. It is for this reason that, while Nigeria welcomes the Declaration for now, it cannot help but see it as only a stepping stone to a comprehensive convention on the total banning of human cloning. The Nigerian delegation therefore urges all States Members of the United Nations to set aside their differences on this issue and work together towards the adoption of such a universal instrument.

**Mr. Lobach** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The issue of cloning involves complex

scientific and ethical questions. We have always been in favour of a consensus solution to this issue. To our great regret, the General Assembly has not managed to achieve consensus and unity on this question. The Russian Federation voted in favour of the draft resolution before us today, guided by the need to send a clear signal to the international community on the impermissibility of reproductive cloning. In that context, we believe that the Declaration that has been adopted maintains a true balance between permitting and prohibiting human cloning. In accordance with the Declaration, States will adopt relevant legislation which prohibits reproductive cloning but which allows, within the relevant legal framework, the development of therapeutic cloning.

**Ms. Katungye** (Uganda): Uganda voted in favour of the draft Declaration on Human Cloning because, as a nation, we are firmly opposed to all forms of cloning that involve the destruction of embryonic stem cells and erode respect for and the protection of human dignity. The language of the Declaration reflects both the values and the ethics of the Ugandan people and is consistent with our highest laws, enshrined in Uganda's constitution and in other relevant domestic legislation. It is also consistent with humanity's responsibility to protect the sanctity of human life. Uganda therefore welcomes the timely adoption of the Declaration.

**Mr. Peersman** (Netherlands): The Netherlands voted against the draft Declaration on Human Cloning because it can be interpreted as a call for a total ban on all forms of human cloning. Fully aware of the ethical questions concerned, we simply cannot, and will not, go that far. Therapeutic cloning research may well open up important avenues for the advancement of medicine that otherwise would remain closed. We therefore see a need for oversight and strict legislation, but not for an outright ban.

The Declaration voted upon today is a non-binding political statement. As much as we favour a convention against reproductive cloning, from the four years of discussion of the issue in the Sixth Committee, we have, alas, concluded that the issue is not ripe for speedy codification.

**Mr. Abebe** (Ethiopia): Ethiopia voted in favour of the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning, which has just been adopted. We believe that the Declaration will send a clear message against unethical

and inhumane research and researchers that belittle the value of human life and make human life the object of experimentation. We hope that the moral and legal value of the Declaration to protect human life will prevail against those voices that reject the Declaration. We also hope that funding and research that would have been devoted to human cloning will be directed towards research aimed at finding cures to save the millions of lives that are lost in developing countries due to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as indicated in paragraph (f) of the Declaration just adopted.

**Mr. Alakhder** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya): It is indeed a pleasure for my delegation to take this opportunity to congratulate the international community on its adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning. This is a step forward towards a future convention that would prohibit all forms of human cloning. My country believes that the Declaration is a starting point towards taking major steps to protect human dignity and prevent its violation under any kind of interpretation. We firmly believe that we should not destroy human life for the sake of some other human beings.

My country supports the Declaration. We have voted in favour of it in the hope that we, as the international community, will be able to draft a future convention that will stop all forms of human cloning once and for all.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 150?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Sixth Committee.

### **International Women's Day**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Lastly, I would like to sincerely congratulate all women on the occasion of International Women's Day, especially my colleagues, the members of delegations and all women working in the Secretariat and other United Nations bodies.

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*