



BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL VI COMITATO DELLA 58a ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SULLA CONVENZIONE INTERNAZIONALE CONTRO LA CLONAZIONE UMANA

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento sul punto 172 dell'agenda della 58a Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite "*International convention against the cloning of human beings*", che il Capo della Delegazione della Santa Sede, S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha rivolto il 21 ottobre scorso nell'ambito dei lavori del VI Comitato dell'Assemblea Generale:

● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. Chairman,

After only a short time since my delegation's intervention last September 29th, I am taking the floor again, with pleasure, in this current debate on human cloning.

It is indeed encouraging to note that this debate in the Sixth Committee is attracting increased attention and gaining factual contributions from delegations and from various sectors of the civil society represented at the United Nations.

My delegation has presented its views in a position paper, circulated by the Working Group on the occasion of the first session of this debate, a couple weeks ago. During that meeting, my delegation reaffirmed the conviction that only a comprehensive convention on human cloning can address all the related issues and respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century on this topic. Situations that pose grave dangers to human dignity can only be effectively addressed by international agreements that are comprehensive, not partial. While a partial convention might address temporarily some issues related to human cloning, it could generate subsequently greater problems, even more difficult to solve. The most durable solution should therefore be an all-inclusive legal instrument. Moreover, an all-inclusive convention can provide a binding legal instrument that could guide and enable States to formulate appropriate domestic legislation on human cloning.

My delegation has noticed with satisfaction that the time of reflection and meeting of minds of the past two weeks has yielded an increase of co-sponsorships and support for the proposal put forward by Costa Rica. Also in light of this, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its view that the matter before us can be resolved through the earliest ban on human embryonic cloning.

It must be clear that the position my delegation takes is not, in the first instance, a religious one. It is a position informed by the process of reason that is in turn informed by scientific knowledge.

We have heard a number of statements from a variety of delegations that this is a "complex" issue. We have also heard pleas that we must avoid divisiveness, that we must not impose views, and that we must strive toward a consensus on this item for time is running short. We have also been reminded that the matter of research cloning must be sensitive to diverse belief systems and religious perspectives, cultures, and personal circumstances. It has been stated on several occasions that whilst we must move quickly to ban human reproductive cloning we must, on the contrary, move slowly on human research cloning.

Some delegations have put forward proposals with a view to promote freedom from certain regulation—the freedom from the imposition of a universal obligation against research or therapeutic cloning. The very juridical instrument of a Convention, which can be acceded to or not, I believe, does guarantee such a freedom. However, I would like to mention another important freedom. This, Mr. Chairman, is the freedom for life itself which is the core norm of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To be free for the protection of human life is the reality underpinning our work here in this Committee.

Mr. Chairman, the science may be complex, but the issue for us is simple and straightforward. The matter of human cloning that involves the creation of human embryos is the story of the beginning of human life—a life that is not just a local issue, not a national issue, not a regional issue. It is above all a universal issue, because an embryo is a human being regardless of its geography. If reproductive cloning of human beings contravenes the law of nature—a principle with which all delegations appear to agree—so does the cloning of the same human embryo that is slated for research purposes. A cloned embryo, which is not destined for implantation into a womb but is created for the sole purpose of extraction of stem cells and other materials, is destined for pre-programmed destruction.

Some would argue, Mr. Chairman, that whilst we must act quickly to ban human reproductive cloning, we must take more time to study all aspects of research cloning—a procedure that intentionally destroys human life. How many human lives are we willing to take in this process? Since the process is unnecessary and would require more than one embryo per patient treated, hundreds of millions of cloned human embryos would be required to treat even one disease, such as diabetes, in any developed nation.

In closing, my delegation wants to remind this distinguished assembly that one of the fundamental missions of the United Nations is to uphold the rights of all human beings. If the United Nations were to ban reproductive cloning without banning cloning for research, this would, for the first time, involve this body in legitimizing something extraordinary: the creation of human beings for the express purpose of destroying them. If human rights are to mean anything, at any time, anywhere in the world, then surely no one can have the right to do such a thing. Human rights flow from the recognition that human beings have an intrinsic dignity that is based on the fact that they are human. Human embryos are human, even if they are cloned. If the rest of us are to have the rights that flow from the recognition of this dignity, then we must act to ban cloning in all its forms.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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