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**FOLLOW-UP OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON  
THE HUMAN GENOME AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Division of the Ethics of Science  
and Technology

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In 1993, the Director-General of UNESCO created the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (IBC) to encourage the debate, at a world-wide level, on the ethical, social and human consequences of the rapid development of the life sciences. At its 27th session, by Resolution 27 C/5.15 (15 November 1993), the General Conference of UNESCO approved the establishment of the IBC. The IBC, the only international consultative body in the field of bioethics, gathered together approximately 50 well-known people from all regions of the world acting in their personal capacity. The transdisciplinary composition of the IBC enables it to deal with the diversity of issues that advances in research and their application in the field of the life sciences give rise to.

2. By the same resolution, the General Conference of UNESCO invited the Director-General:

*“to continue in 1994-1995 the preparation of an international instrument on the protection of the human genome and to report to it at its twenty-eighth session on the implementation of this resolution”.*

3. The Director-General therefore gave the IBC a task of primary importance - to make an exploratory study of the conditions for the drafting of an international instrument for the protection of the human genome. The Legal Commission, established within the IBC, was entrusted with the task of making suitable proposals on the form and content of the possible international instrument. The first draft, examined by the IBC at its second session resulted in the drafting of an Outline of a declaration (7 March 1995) based on universally recognized rights and freedoms.

4. On the basis of the Director-General’s Report, the General Conference, at its 28th session, invited the Director-General by Resolution 28 C/2.2 to:

*“draw up a preliminary draft declaration along these lines, which he should communicate to the Member States for their comments, and to convene, in 1997, a committee of governmental experts (category II) to be entrusted with the finalization of this draft declaration, with a view to its adoption by the General Conference at its twenty-ninth session (...)”*  
(paragraph 2).

5. To carry out this resolution and taking into account Decision 150 EX/8.3 of the Executive Board taken during its 150th session (14-31 October 1996), the Director-General invited the Member States to be represented in a meeting of the Committee of Governmental Experts for the drawing up of a declaration on the subject, which was held at the Organization’s Headquarters from 22 to 25 July 1997. On the basis of the work of the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (IBC) carried out between 1993 and 1997, the Committee of Governmental Experts drew up and adopted, by consensus, the text of the “Draft of a Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights”, which was presented to the General Conference at its 29th session.

6. At its 29th session, when adopting, unanimously and by acclamation, the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* (Resolution 29 C/16), the General Conference also adopted Resolution 29 C/17 entitled *“Implementation of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights”* that laid the foundation for the modalities of the follow-up of the implementation of the Declaration.

7. The *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* aims at ensuring the development of human genetics on lines which will fully respect the dignity and human rights of the individual, and be of benefit to humanity as a whole. The progress of research in human genetics, which holds great promise for the health and welfare of humanity, might also be used for harmful purposes contrary to human dignity, human rights, or respect for the integrity of the human race. It is incumbent on the international community to guard humanity against such risks by proclaiming the principles whose universal observance will forestall any departure from them.

8. The Declaration recalls three essential principles which are fundamental to the protection of humanity as regards the implications of biology and genetics: human dignity, freedom of research and human solidarity.

9. It also reaffirms the need for a democratic debate on the progress of genetics so as to enable society to fulfil its responsibilities. From this point of view, it stresses the importance of international co-operation in furthering the dissemination of knowledge, and the advantages of promoting bioethics teaching.

10. As a guide to its implementation, the Declaration stipulates in *Section G*, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration", that in subscribing to the principles set forth in the Declaration: "(...) States should make every effort to promote the principles set out in this Declaration and should, by means of all appropriate measures, promote their implementation". It is therefore incumbent on states to identify the most appropriate measures for the promotion of these principles, whether through the setting of standards or the provision of incentives. By adopting the Declaration, states give solemn recognition to the importance of these principles with respect to the need to promote and protect human rights. In addition, the terms of the Declaration assign to the IBC, *inter alia*, the delicate task to "(...) make recommendations, in accordance with UNESCO's statutory procedures, addressed to the General Conference and give advice concerning the follow-up of this Declaration".

## **II. WAYS IN WHICH UNESCO'S STANDARD-SETTING INSTRUMENTS ARE MONITORED**

11. It is interesting to recall here that no declaration adopted by the Member States of UNESCO has yet led to the establishment of a monitoring mechanism. One particular case, however, needs mentioning - that of the *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice*, adopted by the General Conference on 27 November 1978. When adopting this Declaration, the General Conference, in 20 C/Resolution 3/1.1/3, also invited the Director-General to prepare a comprehensive report on the world situation in the fields covered by the Declaration on the basis of information supplied by Member States. In the same Resolution the General Conference also invited the Director-General to submit to it any comments and recommendations deemed necessary to promote the implementation of the Declaration.

12. In general, the procedures for monitoring UNESCO standard-setting instruments or instruments drawn up under its aegis aim to:

- (i) inform States on the way in which the instruments are applied;
- (ii) encourage States to apply these instruments;
- (iii) ensure that they are correctly applied;

- (iv) identify any obstacles to their implementation so as to establish whether measures need to be taken by UNESCO to help Member States overcome these difficulties.
13. These procedures are defined:
- (i) in the *Constitution* adopted by the General Conference at its fifth session (1950) (Articles IV, paragraph 4, and VIII);
  - (ii) in the *Rules regarding recommendations to Member States and international conventions* laid down by Article IV, paragraph 4, of the *Constitution*, which sets out the procedure for presenting and considering reports from Member States under Articles IV and VIII of the *Constitution*;
  - (iii) in UNESCO's standard-setting instruments, some of which make provision for special mechanisms (conventions for the protection of cultural heritage, 1954 and 1972, regional conventions on the recognition of higher education studies, diplomas and degrees, etc.);
  - (iv) in Resolution 15 C/12.2, adopted by the General Conference at its 15th Session, concerning the procedure enabling the application of standard-setting instruments to be monitored, and the resolutions adopted by the General Conference concerning the implementation of certain specific instruments.
14. The mechanisms for monitoring UNESCO instruments are of three kinds:
- (i) mechanisms for which provision is made in the Constitution;
  - (ii) implementation mechanisms for which provision is made in conventions;
  - (iii) implementation mechanisms for which provision is made in specific General Conference resolutions.

### **III. FOLLOW-UP OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON THE HUMAN GENOME AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

15. The follow up of the implementation of the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* comes under the last category mentioned above. According to Resolution 29 C/17:

*"The General Conference,*

*(...)*

*1. Urges Member States:*

*(a) in the light of the provisions of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, to take appropriate steps, including where necessary the introduction of legislation or regulations, to promote the principles set forth in the Declaration, and to promote their implementation;*

*(b) to keep the Director-General regularly informed of all measures they have taken to implement the principles set forth in the Declaration;*

2. *Invites the Director-General:*

(...)

(c) *to prepare for the General Conference a global report on the situation world-wide in the fields relevant to the Declaration, on the basis of information supplied by the Member States and of other demonstrably trustworthy information gathered by whatever methods he may deem appropriate;*

(...)

(e) *to submit his global report to the General Conference, together with whatever general observations and recommendations may be deemed necessary in order to promote the implementation of the Declaration.”*

16. The follow up of the implementation of the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* is at two levels.

**A. AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

17. As indicated above, Article 24 of the Declaration deals with the procedure for its follow-up and stipulates that:

*“The International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO should contribute to the dissemination of the principles set out in this Declaration and to the further examination of issues raised by their applications and by the evolution of the technologies in question. It should organize appropriate consultations with parties concerned, such as vulnerable groups. It should make recommendations, in accordance with UNESCO’s statutory procedures, addressed to the General Conference and give advice concerning the follow-up of this Declaration, in particular regarding the identification of practices that could be contrary to human dignity, such as germ-line interventions.”*

18. In this regard, it is for the IBC to play a role in following-up the implementation of the Declaration. With this objective, the functions of the IBC are clearly laid down in Article 2 of its Statutes adopted, on 7 May 1998, by the Executive Board at its 154th session, which read as follows:

*“1. The Committee shall have the following functions:*

(a) *it shall promote reflection on the ethical and legal issues raised by research in the life sciences and their applications, as well as encourage the exchange of ideas and information, particularly through education;*

(b) *it shall encourage action to heighten awareness among the general public, specialized groups and public and private decision-makers involved in bioethics;*

(c) *it shall co-operate with the international governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned by the issues raised in the field of bioethics as well as with the national and regional bioethics committees and similar bodies;*

- (d) *in accordance with Article 24 of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, hereafter referred to as ‘the Declaration’:*
- (i) *it shall contribute to the dissemination of the principles set out in the Declaration and to the further examination of issues raised by their applications and by the evolution of the technologies in question;*
  - (ii) *it shall organize appropriate consultations with parties concerned, such as vulnerable groups;*
  - (iii) *it shall make recommendations, in accordance with UNESCO’s statutory procedures, addressed to the General Conference and give advice concerning the follow-up of the Declaration, and it shall identify practices that could be contrary to human dignity.(...)”.*

19. In addition, Article 11 of the Statutes of the IBC establishes an Intergovernmental Committee. In the terms of this article:

*“1. An Intergovernmental Committee, hereafter referred to as ‘the Intergovernmental Committee’, is hereby established within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).*

*2. The Intergovernmental Committee shall examine the advice and recommendations of the IBC, including those concerned with the follow-up of the Universal Declaration. The Intergovernmental Committee shall inform the IBC of its opinions. It shall submit its opinions to the Director-General for transmission, together with the advice and recommendations of the IBC, to the Member States, the Executive Board and the General Conference. It may transmit any proposals for the follow-up of the advice and recommendations of the IBC.*

*3. The Intergovernmental Committee shall be composed of 36 representatives of the Member States elected by the General Conference. Associate Members of UNESCO shall be invited to participate. When electing the members of the Intergovernmental Committee, the General Conference shall take into account cultural diversity, balanced geographical representation and the need to ensure appropriate rotation.(...).*

*7. Where the Intergovernmental Committee or the Director-General so decides, a Joint Session of the IBC and the Intergovernmental Committee, hereafter referred to as ‘the Joint Session’, shall be convened. The Joint Session shall foster dialogue between the IBC and the Intergovernmental Committee on matters of mutual concern. Without limiting the generality of such matters, they may include consideration of any proposals to:*

- (a) *amend the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights; or*
- (b) *adopt any further declaration or any other international instrument within the field of competence of the IBC.(...)”.*

20. At its 155th session, on 19 October 1998, the Executive Board of UNESCO elected the following 36 Member States as members of the Intergovernmental Committee:

Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Morocco, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Venezuela.

The Intergovernmental Committee will be renewed at the 30th session of the General Conference (October-November 1999).

21. In addition, the implementation of the Declaration will be followed up regularly by the community of Member States of UNESCO. Indeed, in accordance with the Statutes of the IBC, the Director-General is invited to present an overall report on the implementation of the Declaration at the General Conference of UNESCO.

### **B. AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

22. At its 28th session, in November 1995, the General Conference stressed the importance of ethics committees by adopting Resolution 28 C/2.2 which invited "*the Director-General to provide assistance to those States which may request it for the creation of national bioethics committees to be concerned with the protection of universally recognized rights and freedoms*".

23. The *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*, foresees the creation of bodies for study and counsel which are capable of promoting the principles laid out in the Declaration. Article 16 of the *Universal Declaration* stipulates that: "*States should recognize the value of promoting, at various levels, as appropriate, the establishment of independent, multidisciplinary and pluralist ethics committees to assess the ethical, legal and social issues raised by research on the human genome and its applications*".

24. Furthermore, in Article 23, in the context of the promotion of the principles set out in the Declaration, special emphasis is put on the need to "*encourage exchanges and networks among independent ethics committees, (...) to foster full collaboration*".

25. To give effect to the principles set out, and in addition to possible standard-setting action, the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* stresses the importance of undertaking measures which would heighten the awareness of individuals that life sciences do not in themselves guarantee social and human progress, though they are called on to contribute to it, and that this is a matter to be ensured by States.

26. Apart from the setting up of national bioethics committees, the implementation of the Declaration should be accompanied by actions for training and information. Under the terms of Articles 20 and 23 of the Declaration, States undertake to promote, *inter alia*, education in bioethics and research associated with it, and encourage training in interdisciplinary fields. In addition to the professionals concerned (for example biologists, doctors and jurists), education in bioethics is intended for each one of us and its purpose is to make bioethics an intrinsic component of general knowledge of the future. Bioethics, as a multidisciplinary approach to the relations between man and the life sciences, should include the necessary scientific and technological bases to make it possible to raise fundamental questions and promote an ethic of freedom and

responsibility. Teaching should therefore be developed at all appropriate levels according to specific features of national education systems.

27. The choices that advances in biology and genetics call for necessarily relate to a concept of the individual and his or her rights and duties. Far from being a matter for experts, they involve genuine choices of society in which all members of the community should be involved. In addition to bioethics teaching, States should support all research, information or training activities which can foster public debate on these issues. For example, it would be useful to encourage nationally, theses, conferences and publications on bioethics.

#### **IV. UNESCO'S ACTION**

28. The adoption of the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*, a moral commitment by States, is a starting point and not an end in itself. If the Declaration encourages the Member States of UNESCO to take steps that can put the Declaration into practice and thus ensure its continued existence, it entrusts to UNESCO the tasks that have been set out to support the action by States, as stipulated, in particular, in Article 19, paragraph b) of the Declaration or in paragraph 2 of Resolution 29 C/17 UNESCO's action appears in various fields.

##### **A. DISSEMINATION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON THE HUMAN GENOME AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

29. Upon adoption, the Declaration and the Resolution 29 C/17 for the "Implementation of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights" were widely distributed. On 11 November 1997, the Director-General addressed them to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Executive Heads of Specialized Agencies of the United Nations system, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Rector of the United Nations University, members of the International Committee of Bioethics (IBC), thanking the latter for their valuable contribution to the drafting of the Declaration, and to all the Permanent Delegations. The Declaration and the Resolution for the implementation were also sent to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned.

30. In addition, the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*, accompanied by the Resolution for its implementation and preceded by a preface signed by the Director-General, was published as a brochure in the six working languages of the General Conference. More than 60,000 copies were sent to Permanent Delegations, National Commissions, Parliaments, ethics committees and similar institutes, academies and universities, ombudsmen and numerous specialists. The Declaration was also distributed to specialized agencies of the United Nations, numerous intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, UNESCO offices, Associated Schools and UNESCO Associations, Centres and Clubs. It was also reproduced in specialized reviews such as: "The UNESCO Courier", "Diogenès", the "Dictionnaire permanent de la bioéthique" (France), "Derecho y Genoma Humano" (Spain), the Chilean medical review, several Catholic reviews, etc.. The Declaration, which has been mentioned in a number of periodicals such as the "International Law Journal"; the "American Medical Association Journal", etc., has also been translated into Catalan, German and Polish, and the brochure is now also available in Greek and



in Italian. The text of the Declaration has also been produced as a poster - in English, French and Spanish - and has been widely distributed.

**B. PROMOTION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DECLARATION THROUGH EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION**

31. Again to encourage the dissemination of the principles laid out in the Declaration, various tools have been conceived and thus the text of the Declaration together with the Resolution for its implementation can be found on the Internet site (<http://www.unesco.org/ethics>). It should be noted that many of the numerous sites devoted to biology and genetics (universities, centres and specialised institutes, etc.) refer back to the UNESCO site. In the framework of Article 11 of the Declaration, a kit entitled “*No to Human Cloning*” was prepared in English and in French making a statement on the debate on the problem of human cloning, at both the international and national level. This aid to the dissemination of the principles of the Declaration has been widely distributed, in particular to the Permanent Delegations, the National Commissions for UNESCO and to more than 600 journalists. The first publication in UNESCO’s new Collection *Ethics*, entitled “Ethics of Life” has been published in English and in French.

32. In the framework of the promotion of the ethical debate, UNESCO has participated or collaborated in a number of national and international events, in particular in Colombia, Ecuador, France, Hungary, India, Italy, and the United Arab Emirates.

33. For the promotion of education and training in bioethics, a UNESCO Chair of Bioethics was created at the Egerton University at Njoro, Kenya. With a view to the creation of similar Chairs negotiations are underway in Madrid (Spain) and in Oran (Algeria). It is of interest to note that in the framework of the UNESCO Chair at the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina) a meeting of bioethics specialists in Latin America took place on 6 and 7 November 1998. Also, still in the field of education, UNESCO’s assistance has been requested for the setting up of a pilot project for teaching bioethics in training schools for secondary-school teachers. Finally, UNESCO participated in teaching and lectures at university level in France, Lebanon and Spain.

**C. NATIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEES**

34. Society is now measuring the consequences of these advances which lie midway between hope and fear. The decision-makers, in both the public and the private sectors, are becoming increasingly aware of the potential impact of this new form of power. All over the world, they are realizing that there is a need for ethical reflection to accompany scientific research and foresee its applications. The world of scientific research now considers ethical reflection to be an integral part of the development of this field. Similarly, the consortiums of the pharmaceutical industry recognize the fact that ethics has become an essential factor in their strategies for development, and are readily setting up ethics committees.

35. UNESCO’s experience in this field has led it to emphasize the threefold vocation of national bioethics committees:

- (i) First of all, they must carry out *ethical reflection* on progress in the life and health sciences, and must take account of the arguments that might

be put forward by research workers and practitioners as well as the various demands made by society. This reflection, which goes together with scientific progress, must also look ahead to issues that may arise in the future.

- (ii) It is then up to them to fulfill an *advisory role*. Indeed, ethical reflection leads to the formulation of directive principles drawing inspiration from universally recognized rights and freedoms, and detailed advisory opinions. In this way, bioethics committees will enlighten the legislator and, in general, public and private sector managers in the decision-making process. Furthermore, by defining rules of conduct, they may also guide research workers and practitioners in their actions.
- (iii) Finally, national bioethics committees should foster *education, training and information* in this field for specialist groups as well as for the public at large. They must encourage a broad public debate, with the participation of scientists. Thus they will reinforce the process by which society as a whole as well as its members individually become aware of the responsibilities incumbent on them in the face of issues raised by research in biology, genetics and medicine and their applications. This action is indispensable in order to enable informed participation by all the actors in the choices that society will have to make in these fields.

36. The establishment of bioethics commissions, councils and committees unquestionably marks the rise of ethical reflection which is now at the centre of the social concerns of our age. In general, these bodies are established at four different levels. The following typology could be established:

- *at the local level*: a committee attached for example to a hospital, which is consulted about questions raised in connection with hospital practices;
- *at the institutional level*: an ethics research review board, connected for example to a research funding institution, which is expected to examine research protocols from an ethical point of view;
- *at the professional level*: an ethics committee attached to a professional association expected to examine, for example at the request of the medical association, issues related to medical ethics;
- *at the national level*: an ethics committee or commission, which gives its opinion or formulates recommendations on topics which have been submitted to it by various governmental bodies or by non-governmental organizations.

37. In the framework of the last category, there are several long-established national commissions, councils and committees. UNESCO encouraged the creation of many of them, in particular in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Poland and Tunisia, to mention but a few.

38. The structure, organization and functioning of these committees may differ greatly. Some of them were set up by presidential or ministerial order, others by parliamentary decision. At times they were created following national conferences or on the initiative of non-governmental organizations or even private institutions. Sometimes, they come under a medical council or are attached to a para-governmental institution.

39. The characteristic common to all these committees is their consultative nature. They furnish advice and opinions to the institutions that approach them. Their standpoints, even when they are non-governmental committees, have a definite influence on government and parliamentary decision-making bodies. Very often, they are empowered to take up and examine issues that they consider likely to raise ethical questions.

40. It is the charters constituting these committees that set their composition and the modalities of their functioning. In most cases, their composition is multidisciplinary, ensuring that they include at least doctors, researchers, jurists and philosophers. Some of them provide for the participation of representatives of different currents of thought, religious beliefs and forms of spiritual sensibility while others have a place for representatives of civil society. The way in which their members are appointed varies to a very great extent. It is related to the composition of the committee which may be mixed (for example with one third of the members being appointed by parliamentary decision, one-third by a Medical Council and one-third by a Bar Association) or it may stipulate statutory consultations. It may be of interest to note that the Division of the Ethics of Science and Technology is presently creating a database of the existing national committees.

41. It is important to recall that several international institutions have declared their support for the creation of bioethics committees. Thus, on UNESCO's initiative, the 93rd Inter-parliamentary Conference in March 1995, attended by parliamentarians from more than a hundred countries, adopted a resolution asking States to establish national committees in order "*to monitor protection and respect for the dignity, freedom, identity and integrity of the individual in biomedical research*", if they so wish, in co-operation with UNESCO.

42. Similarly, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at its 32nd ordinary session (Yaoundé, Cameroon, 8-10 July 1996), adopted Resolution AHG/Res. 254 (XXXII) on bioethics, in which it "*pledges to set up consultative bodies at both country and inter-African levels to promote the exchange of experience obtained, among such bodies*".

43. The United Nations Human Rights Commission, at its 53rd session in April 1997, adopted Resolution 1997/71 on "*Human Rights and Bioethics*" inviting "*Governments to consider establishing independent, multidisciplinary and pluralist committees of ethics*", in co-operation with UNESCO.

44. More recently, the VIIth Iberian-American Summit of Heads of State and Government (at Isla Margarita, Venezuela, 7-9 November 1997) supported the creation of national ethics committees, depending on the context and needs of each country and in co-ordination with UNESCO.

## **V. INFORMATION COMMUNICATED BY MEMBER STATES RELATIVE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON THE HUMAN GENOME AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

45. By circular letter CL/3478 of 13 March 1998, the Director-General transmitted to the Member States of the Organization the text of the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*, together with *Resolution 29 C/17* adopted for the implementation of the Declaration. Furthermore, the Director-General drew the attention of Member States in particular to paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution in which

the General Conference urges them to take appropriate steps including where necessary the introduction of legislation or regulations, to promote the principles set forth in the Declaration, and to promote their implementation. In his letter, the Director-General invited Member States to inform him, no later than 30 June 1998, of the texts of any legislation or regulations already adopted, or in preparation in the fields of bioethics, in particular genetics and biotechnology.

46. By 15 October 1998, the Secretariat had received contributions from the following 23 Member States:

Austria, Benin, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ecuador, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

47. A letter was therefore sent, on 3 November 1998, to States which had not replied to the Director-General's letter, to remind them that it was important that pertinent information be transmitted to the Secretariat. In fact, the Director-General's Report to the General Conference will reflect all the information that he will have received.

48. The IBC members will find in the Annex elements of information communicated by Member States as well as other information already at hand in the Secretariat.

## VI. CONCLUSION

49. To give effect to the above orientations, in addition to an eventual action at the normative level, the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* underlines the importance of actions for education, training and information. These should help to strengthen individual awareness of the fact that life sciences do not in themselves guarantee social and human progress even if their vocation is to contribute to it.

50. The success of any strategy for the follow-up of the Declaration will depend mainly on the firm commitment by States to implement it and their ability to mobilize the resources needed. With this in view, the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO, through the intermediary of its members, has a role of paramount importance to play to promote the principles laid out in the Declaration and to assure the pertinence and the effectiveness of any action undertaken to this effect. For example, the members of the IBC could be the relay for action taken by UNESCO in the States of which they are a national, and, if needed, counsel their national authorities on the steps likely to be taken in the framework of the implementation of the Declaration, in particular by way of legislative or regulatory measures taken in the field of bioethics.