

## UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics

### Terms of Reference of the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics

#### I. Introduction

Noting the increasing need for international engagement and dialogue in the field of bioethics between different inter-governmental organizations within and outside the United Nations system,

Taking into account the initiative of the executive heads of the operational and specialized agencies of the United Nations to improve the coordination of activities carried out by these bodies in the field of bioethics,

Bearing in mind Resolution 2001/71 of the Commission on Human Rights, and

Also bearing in mind the call for inter-agency cooperation in the Guidelines for the Implementation of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights adopted in 1997 (paragraph 3.7.1),

Recalling that further to a consultative meeting convened by UNESCO on 17 September 2001, the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee" or "UNIACB") was established in March 2003.

Bearing in mind the adoption of its terms of reference on 25 November 2003,

The Committee decides to revise the terms of reference as follows:

#### II. Composition and Representation

A. Membership in the Committee is open to the Secretariat of intergovernmental organizations and to institutions as follows:

**Members:** The United Nations and those specialized agencies that have developed programmes in, or carry out specific activities focusing on bioethics, including its human rights aspects and other related issues;

**Associate Members:** Other international and regional intergovernmental organizations and institutions outside the United Nations system, particularly regional agencies of developing countries, engaged in activities relating to bioethics, including its human rights aspect and other related issues.

B. Members and Associate Members shall nominate a focal point and be represented at meetings of the Committee by a delegation headed by a senior official responsible for these issues.

- C. The Committee may extend membership and associate membership to intergovernmental organizations and institutions that have requested such membership.
- D. Members and Associate Members may withdraw at any time by written notification.

### **III. Goals and Activities**

The Committee shall facilitate the activities of its membership in the field of bioethics, including its human rights aspects and other related issues, by:

- a) providing a forum for debate and exchange of information in the field of bioethics and related issues, with special attention to the human rights aspects, and in accordance with the rules and policies governing the exchange of information of each Member and Associate Member;
- b) regularly examining the human rights aspects of bioethics and related issues;
- c) examining topics and issues in the field (particularly cross-cutting and cross-sectoral themes), in order to identify where concerted or joint efforts would be beneficial and where major gaps and constraints affecting cooperation in the field need to be addressed. To facilitate such examination, one or more members and associate members may prepare discussion papers;
- d) promoting coordination of activities undertaken in this field by the United Nations and its specialized agencies;
- e) actively encouraging cooperation among the Members and Associate Members in this field;
- f) facilitating collaboration in the field with other intergovernmental and international organizations, particularly developing-country regional agencies, through regular exchanges of information, documentation and ideas in accordance with the rules and policies governing the exchange of information of each Member and Associate Member, and also in accordance with the rules and policies governing the exchange of information of those non-member organizations with which collaboration is sought, in order to promote bioethics activities both at national and regional levels, including capacity-building initiatives; and
- g) disseminating discussion papers identified by Members and Associate Members having contributed to their development, as appropriate and subject to their approval;
- h) reporting to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and through the respective focal point to the executive heads of Members and Associate Members on the Committee's activities and conclusions.

### **IV. Rules of Procedure**

The Committee shall draw up its Rules of Procedure.