



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Statement by

**THE HONOURABLE HAJI WAHAB HAJI DOLLAH
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 150: INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST THE
REPRODUCTIVE CLONING OF HUMAN BEINGS**

AT

**THE SIXTH COMMITTEE DURING THE 59TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK**

ON

FRIDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2004

[Please check against delivery]

Mr. Chairman,

We are living in the golden era of medical research. Almost every week, a major advance is announced in the scientific journals. Despite the promise of breakthroughs in the near future that could help all of us lead longer and healthier lives, medical research is not immune to political and other pressures. In this regard, my delegation realizes that the issue of human cloning is a complex issue with many facets; political, ethical, moral, legal and scientific. Therefore, it is important that we address the issue with the right perspective and approach.

Mr. Chairman,

2. My delegation believes that firstly it is important to distinguish between the two distinct kinds of cloning: therapeutic cloning and reproductive cloning. Our understanding is that therapeutic cloning is not cloning in the sense most people use the term, namely using technology to create a person who is a genetically identical copy of someone else. That type of cloning is reproductive cloning. We agree that reproductive cloning should rightfully be subject to a ban. Therapeutic cloning, seeks to derive stem cells from a cloned embryo which is created by cloning DNA taken from a donor and transferring it into an unfertilized donor egg. The embryo then divides into a tiny clump of about 100 cells, and the stem cells derived could then be used to create any kind of tissue, from nerve cells to arteries to organs. It would appear that the potential therapies that may be developed from therapeutic cloning are significant.

3. Therapeutic cloning has the potential to solve many existing medical problems faced by humans. Therapeutic cloning, therefore, may significantly reduce the risks involved with stem cell therapies derived from non-related embryos, and save millions of lives. Regardless, therapeutic cloning should be regulated and the results of therapeutic cloning research should not be allowed to be used to advance reproductive cloning.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The reasons for having a ban on reproductive cloning are fairly clear from both the moral and ethical points of view. Changing the way humans have reproduced since man was created raises a host of religious, moral and ethical questions. Moreover, reproductive cloning is an extremely unsafe and dangerous proposition. Though a small number of animals have been successfully

cloned, numerous unsuccessful clones that are either miscarried or seriously malformed would have occurred. It is unclear at this stage whether even those so-called successful clones are truly successful. There is evidence to suggest that cloned organisms suffer from significant developmental and health problems. To my delegation the ban on reproductive cloning, therefore, is entirely appropriate.

5. We fully recognize that cloning is still a new science. Therefore, caution is warranted. However, this promising avenue of scientific inquiry need not be closed off entirely because of justified fears and concerns over reproductive cloning.

Mr. Chairman,

6. My delegation believes that it is entirely appropriate for people to be skeptical about powerful new technologies. Therefore it would also be appropriate to take a collective pause to consider the next steps. With the firm understanding that reproductive cloning should be banned, we should move forward cautiously with therapeutic cloning to see if it can live up to its promise. The whole issue needs to be addressed in a calm and rational manner taking into consideration scientific evidence and proposals, spiritual, moral and ethical views and political and legal considerations. Therefore it is important that there be consensus. With the appropriate legal and other safeguards, research into therapeutic cloning could possibly go forward under the bright light of public scrutiny and perhaps, one day in the future, save lives.

7. While we note with concern that there has been no progress on this agenda item in the Sixth Committee for the last three years, we hope that this Committee would arrive at a decision by consensus to enable us to move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.