



**PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT BY

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**PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE
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In the Sixth Committee on agenda item 150:

“International Convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings”

New York, October 22, 2004

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta is pleased to take the floor during this debate on one of the defining issues of our time. Being a member of the international community for many centuries, the Order of Malta has served others in need, particularly in the areas of health care and humanitarian aid, and is well qualified to understand the full meaning of the concerns raised by the issue of cloning.

In accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we are committed to the right to life, which is to be defended everywhere and always, starting with the right to be born, and including the right to proper health care, and finally the right to a dignified death. Respect for the human dignity of each individual is a fundamental component to assuring these rights.

The Order of Malta has supported healthcare projects since its founding in 1099. Indeed, during the mid-centuries of the last millennium we ran one of the great medical colleges and research and treatment hospitals, then located in Malta. The Order's history of uniting health care and scientific research has continued to this day. Our work at Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, where we provide pre-natal, post-natal and neo-natal treatment for women and their babies regardless of race, religion, culture or social condition, and also in the ophthalmic research sector at Sao Paulo University in Brazil, are two examples. Thus, we are keenly interested in the great potential posed by accelerated adult stem cell research and treatment, whose success in treating individuals already has been demonstrated.

Mr. Chairman, in many parts of the world, for example the United States and Europe, the Order of Malta's youth and young adult participants, its Auxiliary, work together as volunteers at hospitals and summer camps for children with special needs. This is important not only for

cultivating respectful appreciation among the young men and women who work together, but also for the children who observe this positive interaction between men and women. In addition, some of the Order of Malta's auxiliary services, such as the Ambulance Corps in Lithuania and Ireland, allow for young boys and girls to participate, thereby instilling at a young age a sense of social responsibility and achievement among the girls and boys working together to help those suffering misfortune. Perhaps most importantly, children and young people learn from a young age to recognize the inherent dignity of each individual, who is deserving of respect.

In sum, Mr. Chairman, the Order of Malta appreciates the opportunity for exchange in this area of great concern. As the United Nations has persevered in assuring the rights and meeting the needs of all members of the human family - including children, women, the elderly, and the disabled, among others - we are confident that it will also rise to this challenge and encourage pursuit of the scientific potential presented through the demonstrated success of adult stem cell research, while assuring that the rights of each individual are respected. Thus, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta supports the Resolution proposed by Costa Rica calling for an international convention against human cloning, while we reiterate our centuries-old support of the advancement of medical science.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.