ADVISORY EXPERT COMMITTEE FOR THE TEACHING OF ETHICS

Location: UNESCO HQs, Bonvin Building
       Room: B. 2.08
       1, rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France

Date: July 4, 2005

Participating members of the Advisory Expert Committee:

Representative of COMEST
-   Professor Diego Gracia, Professor of Bioethics, Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Representatives of IBC
-   Professor Donald Evans, Director of Bioethics Centre, Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago, New Zealand
-   Professor Nouzha Guessous-Idrissi, Professor and Chief of Parasitology-Mycology, Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, University of Casablanca, Morocco
-   Professor Leonardo D. de Castro, Professor of Philosophy, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines, Philippines

Representative of UNESCO Chairs in Bioethics:
-   Professor Amnon Carmi, The International Center for Health, Law and Ethics, University of Haifa, Israel

Representative of World Medical Association (WMA):
-   Mr. John Williams, Director of Ethics, World Medical Association, Ferney-Voltaire, France

Representative of Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS):
-   Professor D. Balasubramanian, Director of Research, L.V.Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, India

Other invited participants:
-   Professor M. Benyakar, World Psychiatric Association, Section of Disasters Intervention, Universidad de Buenos Aires, International Bioethical Information System, Buenos Aires, Argentine
-   Professor Jorge Fariña, Universidad de Buenos Aires, International Bioethical Information System, Buenos Aires, Argentine
-   Dr. Carlos Collazo, Instituto de Postgrado del Cono Sur, Buenos Aires, Argentine.

Secretariat:
-   Mr. Henk ten Have, Director, Division of Ethics of Science and Technology (SHS/EST)
-   Mrs. Simone Scholze, Programme Specialist, SHS/EST/ST
-   Mrs. Mônica Serra, Consultant on ethics education, SHS/EST/ST

<u>Documents distributed in advance:</u>
- Advisory Expert Committee – working paper
- Ethics Education Programme – programme description
- Activity report (2004-2005)
- Report Budapest meeting of teaching ethics experts (October 2004)
- Report Moscow meeting of teaching ethics experts (January 2005)
- Standard forms (5) for the GEO database 3 + explanation
- Overview and analysis of programme descriptions (May 2005)

Opening of the meeting

Mr. ten Have welcomed the participants on behalf of UNESCO and gave a brief overview of the work, explaining its context and purpose in the framework of UNESCO SHS/EST activities. Each participant introduced himself/herself and took turns to briefly describe the respective backgrounds. Mr. ten Have mentioned that Professor Ruben Apressyan, Professor of Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences, representative of COMEST, accepted to be member of the Advisory Committee but was unfortunately not able to attend this first meeting.

Mr. ten Have began by specifying the aim of the Committee, namely to assist the Division of Ethics of Science and Technology in the process of promoting ethics teaching programs and setting standards and criteria for ethics teaching programs. The main tasks will be:
(a) advice in regard to the development, implementation and evaluation of the Ethics Education Programme (EEP);
(b) assist in the identification of what should be a core curriculum in the area of ethics;
(c) assist in developing standards and criteria for evaluating existing and newly developed teaching programs, in order to guarantee and monitor the quality of programs; and
(d) advice on setting up a mechanism for review and assessment of teaching ethics programs as well a system of certification of programs that have been positively assessed.

He also emphasized that, based on the recommendations of the report *The Teaching of Ethics*, approved by COMEST in its 3rd Session (December 2003), activities have already been developed to reinforce and increase the capacities of member states in the area of ethics education. He pointed out that pilot activities have been carried out in East and Central Europe, focused on:
- mapping of experts in ethics teaching: data on individual experts have been collected and sampled for Database 1 of the Global Ethics Observatory (GEO);
- sampling of teaching programs: standardised forms have been developed to collect and describe information concerning teaching programs in various disciplines and stages of university education;
- meetings of experts have been hold to discuss descriptions of ethics teaching programs in science, medicine, social sciences, engineering (Budapest, October 2004; Moscow, January 2005) A new meeting has been planned to take place in

Split, Croatia in November 2005. Until now, data on approximately 120 ethics teaching programs have been collected; these forms are now in the process of validation so that they can be the first entries of the GEO Database 3 on Ethics Teaching Programmes.

Brainstorm on teaching of ethics

The question was raised concerning the criteria applied to select the experts to be included in the database. The main criterion is the existence of an actual teaching program so that the invited expert can describe and provide details of his program. Mr. ten Have also clarified that the choice of areas of ethics is guided by the official mandate of UNESCO. In this sense, business ethics, for instance, will not be considered.

Professor Carmi reported the activities of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics under his coordination, in the University of Haifa, one of the most active chairs, as pointed out by Mr. ten Have. Professor Carmi explained that from 1995 to 2001 he sent questionnaires to 150 medical schools all over the world concerning their activities in ethics education. He found out that most medical doctors who teach ethics in medical schools have never made formal studies in ethics, none of them studied how to teach or educate and, in most medical schools, ethics was taught "ex cathedra". He described the methodology employed by his Chair, based on the collection of cases and their examination in a Socratic way. He said that the discussion of possible solutions to ethical dilemmas, with the guidance of teachers, present the advantage of allowing students to reach their own solutions regarding the different cases studied. Teachers also suggest different solutions and clarify ethical dilemmas.

Other initiatives described by Professor Carmi refer to the publication of books and manuals and the organization of national and international conferences. Especially the manuals, as collection of cases from many different countries, are intended to be used as resources for ethics teaching. These publications are voluntarily edited and translated into many languages and distributed free of charge in many countries by a network of 70 universities involving approximately 130 experts. He stressed that his Chair collaborates with 30 people and does not receive resources from governments or private sector. He finalized his presentation by pointing out that ideally every Chair should work in very close contact with UNESCO, but unfortunately this doesn't happen.

Professor Gracia raised the issue of how to train teachers in ethics in terms of skills and behavior to teach ethics. He defended the idea that to define a core program is important but the most important for UNESCO's actions in the teaching of ethics is also to provide training for teachers in order to improve their pedagogical skills.

Referring to joint activities with the International Council of Nurses about nursing ethics, Professor Carmi enquired about the use of UNESCO name and logo. Professor Guessous-Idrissi also asked for clarifications on the rules that guide UNESCO Chairs. What they can and what they cannot do? What is the control that UNESCO has in relation to the use of its credentials?

Mr. ten Have explained that there are very strict rules regarding the use of UNESCO credentials. Only activities and publications officially approved by UNESCO can be authorized to use the logo.[1] For this reason, a "UNESCO Chair publication" is different from a "UNESCO publication". To be a UNESCO publication it should cover all perspectives of different regions of the world and schools of thought for not being blamed for one-sidedness. He also explained that, according to the rules, every year the Chairs have to report to the Education Sector (Division of Higher Education) and that there is an on-going evaluation process of the UNESCO Chairs Programme since many of the 550 established Chairs (involving 500 institutions in 116 countries) do not seem to be very operational. Mr ten Have explained that early 2005, there are 5 chairs in bioethics and no chairs in the area of ethics of science and technology.[2]

Professor D. Balasubramanian described TWAS activities, comprising national and regional academies of science as well as scientific associations and societies of 89 countries that represent 3.5 billion people. He said that most part of these countries do not have activities in ethics education and underlined the importance of having a core curriculum programme in ethics as well as moral advices regarding science and technology. TWAS could collaborate with this initiative and would be available to convey these ideas, he said, by means of a series of workshops for TWAS member states and assisting them to establish ethics of science and bioethics committees.

Professor Evans added that there are many schools in developed countries with poor programmes of ethics, in spite of all publicity. He mentioned the necessity to examine

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[1] Comment by the secretariat: UNESCO governing bodies have repeatedly examined the question of the use of UNESCO's name and logo, often to stipulate the conditions of authorization in the framework of sponsorships and partnerships. A brochure entitled "Regulatory framework for the use of the name, logo, abbreviation and/or patronage of the UNESCO" reviews all the decisions taken in that regard. The governing bodies have thus been regularly led to authorize the use of UNESCO's name, acronym or logo, in particular in the framework of resolutions and decisions concerning intergovernmental programmes, networks, prizes, official partnerships, special events or in cases where bodies or institutions are placed under the auspices of the Organization. Aware of the difficulties raised by those numerous texts, the Executive Board, at its 169th session (169 EX/Decision 7.4), invited the Director-General "to submit detailed proposals concerning the protection of the name and logo of UNESCO in the Member States" (For further details see doc. 171 EX/37, 17/03/2005).

[2] Comment by the secretariat. The existing chairs, in different levels of activity, are:
- UNESCO Chair of Bioethics, established in 2001 at Haifa University, Israel. Director: Professor Amnon Carmi
- UNESCO Chair of Bioethics, established in 1994 at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentine. Director: Dr. Salvador Dario Bergel
- UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, established in 1998 at Egerton University, Kenya. Director: Dr. Kimani Wa Njoroge
- UNESCO Chair in Bioethics: "Biojuridica y Bioetica", established in 1999 at the University Feminina del Sagrado Corazon, Peru. Director: Professor Maria Dolores Vila-Coro (Spain)
- UNESCO Chair in Bioethics: Bioethics and Society, established in 1999 at the University of Granada, Spain. Director: Professor Lorenzo Morillas Cueva
Three applications for new chairs have been approved:
- UNESCO Chair in Bioethics at the University of Brasilia (Brazil): "Bioetica en el contexto de America Latina"
- UNESCO Chair on Environmental Ethics at the East Siberia State University of Technology (Ulan-Ude, Russian Federation)
- UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington (USA): "New social responsibility and the sharing of benefits in the field of bioethics".

the content of ethical programmes. He also considered that in medical ethics teaching the analysis of cases is important but more important is that the "right person" teaches and inspires young students in the area of bioethics. He described the activities carried out by his Centre, which gathers 240 students in a class. At the pre-clinical phase, students examine18 cases, before seeing real patients, in order to find in these cases the bioethical dilemmas. The tutorials are not conducted by experts in bioethics but there are preparatory meetings with clinical teachers. This way, they are encouraging clinical teachers to also teach bioethics, integrating bioethical reflection with clinical practice. Medical students hate "abstract ethics", he noticed.

Mr. ten Have however pointed out that there is a cycle in the teaching of bioethics (starting with interested physicians, taken over by professional bioethicists, and then finally close cooperation between ethicists and physicians).

Mr. John Williams observed that it is a dangerous mistake of UNESCO to concentrate too much in this particular area. The focus should be on education of scientists in ethics and responsible conduct in research. Contrary to medical ethics, there are very few elements in this area. This committee could have a more prominent role in the field of ethical conduct for scientists, where there is no basic infrastructure, just spin offs from bioethics in medical research. Mr. ten Have explained that UNESCO would also deal with issues like ethics teaching related to environment and traditional knowledge, as with ethics in relation to sciences. .

Professor Benyakar said that there are three important issues at stake: material to be taught (content), the way to teach (training of teachers) and the institutional aspect. He mentioned that in Argentine the Ministry of Education encourages the teaching of ethics in the university curriculum. It would be a task of UNESCO to induce and sensitise governments to include ethics teaching in the university curricula.

Professor Evans reminded that in some countries there are professional councils that take responsibility for ethics teaching. For example, they advise governmental bodies, like the Ministry of Education, concerning the minimum of hours of medical ethics to be included in curricula. This could be the approach of UNESCO, he said.

Mr ten Have observed that, at this point, it is important to try to answer an important question: What should be included in a core curriculum? What particular areas do we have in mind? UNESCO is working with Member States in which sometimes the ethics infrastructure for teaching is very weak. In others the quality of the existing programmes can be improved. If we want to create a new generation of ethics teachers and bioethicists, it is necessary to promote international networks that could work in close cooperation. Another option would be to create a task force and bring expertise to countries, introducing information and expertise in these countries.

Mr. Gracia described his successful experience of coordinating a Master in bioethics in Latin America, with 600 hours training and 25 participants each time, based in the idea of "teach the teachers", aiming at improving skills of teachers. The main difficulty faced refers to the strong ideological aspect of bioethics in Latin American countries. Based on that experience, attention must be drawn to the necessity of establishing a "free" field of ethics, exempted from political and religious approaches that do sometimes coincide with bioethics and generate misconceptions.

Concerning these influences, which are also noticeable in other regions of the world, Professor Guessous-Idrissi highlighted the question how UNESCO can promote ethics that is free from political, religious or even cultural factors.

The Committee agreed that a different approach was needed than the one taken by some Committees; a more differentiated understanding of ethics and ethics teaching was needed.

The issue of low salaries of teachers and the impossibility of full time dedication to education in many regions of the world was also raised. Professor Gracia mentioned the fact that universities are loosing people to the private sector due to the low level of salaries.

Professor Guessous-Idrissi called attention to the cultural and religious strong roots of behavior of people in many regions of the world. She also highlighted the fact that the UNESCO declarations in bioethics are important tools to use and to change this issue.

Mr. ten Have pointed out that major initiatives must be made by Member States themselves. UNESCO with its limited budget and staff can only operate as "facilitator", feeding its Members with advices, recommendations, and suggestions of program. In this regard, it is important to identify examples and models of ethics teaching in Member States that can be useful for colleagues elsewhere, and to exchange experiences with practical approaches that have proven their value in teaching programs. Having learned about the multimedia programs developed by the team of professor Benyakar in Buenos Aires, it is a pleasure to enjoy the presence of the team here in the meeting.

Professor Benyakar then began the presentation of the International Bioethical Information System (IBIS) comprising educational activities and resources for the teaching of ethics. The didactic tools developed by him and his group at the University of Buenos Aires are freely distributed. Copies of the CD-ROM based multimedia system were distributed to the members of the Advisory Committee. The quality of the material presented by Professor Benyakar was strongly supported by the group. The presentation demonstrated the power of visualizing materials for students, particularly students in health care. It also showed how theory and practice, sound and images, reading and writing, observation, analysis and reflection can be combine to design interesting and challenging teaching resources.

Professor Carmi suggested that the work of the Advisory Committee could be order in two parts: "brain and muscles" and the group should advice on what can be done ("brain") and how to do ("muscles"), also preparing some material.

Professor Evans underlined the necessity to establish terms of reference for the Committee and to have the clear objective of producing something which can be useful for Member States.. Mr. ten Have clarified that the Committee will develop a twofold approach: (a) prepare materials showing different perspectives; (b) advise UNESCO. This is not an Advisory Committee for the UNESCO chairs, but for Member States, he said. One short-term and feasible objective can be to develop a core curriculum in bioethics, based on the normative instruments developed by

UNESCO, and in particular the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. If such a core curriculum can be proposed, the next step will then be to develop educational materials and resources to implement it. The expertise of the team of professor Benyakar can be very instrumental here; if a proposal for a core curriculum in bioethics is there, he and his team can start to make a multimedia presentation based on the proposal. For the development and distribution of this presentation, UNESCO should attempt to raise extra-budgetary funds.

Professor Balasubramanian suggested that TWAS could organize a workshop to present to the countries what the Committee agreed upon and to invite feedback on the proposals.

The question was raised by Mr. John Williams about to whom the core curriculum will be directed. After a discussion on this issue, it was agreed that it should be mainly addressed to health care professionals.

Mr. ten Have suggested then to focus on bioethics as a first step and to aim to develop a core curriculum, based on the implementation of the Declaration (and actually proposed in Article 23). In the subsequent stage the team of Professor Benyakar would be invited to assist UNESCO in the preparation of multimedia teaching material. Another meeting was suggested to take place in the spring 2006. For this meeting, the members are requested to send materials and ideas regarding the issue of how to translate the Declaration into a core curriculum useful in all Member States of UNESCO..

Summary of the brainstorm

By summarizing the results of the brainstorming session so far, Mr. ten Have said that the following aspects of the work of the Advisory Committee must be clarified at this stage:
(a) the work must have a long-term perspective (at least two years);
(b) the Advisory Committee should meet more frequently and the next meeting would be in spring 2006;
(c) particular models and a specific ethics teaching programmes could be separately developed (e,g. one for bioethics and other for ethics of science and technology) and the respective material and multimedia tools translated into 6 UNESCO official languages; and
(d) a core curriculum for bioethics should be the first step.

Mr. ten Have brought the meeting to a close, by thanking the members of the Committee and the invited participants.