



March 7, 2005

H.E. Mr. Jean Ping
President, U.N. General Assembly
U.N. Headquarters
Conference Building
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which is the world's largest multi-disciplinary science society, I am writing to express concerns about the non-binding resolution on human cloning on which the U.N. General Assembly will soon vote. We recognize the international importance of this issue, and respectfully draw attention to the critical role that science and technology have played in enabling people around the globe to preserve their dignity.

We believe that cloning for research purposes, where stem cells are extracted for further study, holds great promise for contributing to human health and dignity by developing effective treatments or cures for people whose daily lives are challenged by serious diseases and injuries that cause great suffering and premature death. On the other hand, AAAS has endorsed a legal ban on efforts to clone human embryos for reproduction. It is critical to make clear the distinction between the two types of cloning. Thus we are concerned that the resolution adopted by the Sixth Committee for consideration by the U.N. General Assembly is not sufficiently clear in drawing that distinction and, as a result, may needlessly lead to mistaken efforts to impede research that can truly enhance human welfare.

We urge the U.N. Assembly to modify the current resolution in a way that speaks directly to the benefits for humankind of scientific inquiry into the causes, prevention and treatment of human diseases, while also reemphasizing the worldwide consensus that human reproductive cloning should not be permitted. We appreciate your willingness to bring these matters to the attention of the Member States of the U.N. General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner

C: H.E. Mr. Mohamed Bennouna
Chair, Sixth Committee of the 59th Session