

Report about the 10th Global Summit of National Ethics Committees (22-24 June 2014) , And the 12th World Congress of Bioethics (25-29 June 2014) in Mexico City

Venue: Hilton Hotel, Mexico City.

Presented by Michel Daher, MD, FACS,
Secretary General, CCNLE/ LNCCE

Dear President and Members of the CCNLE/LNCCE,

The 10th Global Summit of NEC was a unique platform for the exchange of information about the ongoing work of National Ethics Committees, and thus represented an opportunity for open, quality dialogue.

The aims of the Summit are to:

- Encourage the inclusion of bioethics in the national agendas of the nations and organizations in attendance
- Strengthen the activities developed by the committees, as well as the guides, recommendations and guidelines issued by different organizations
- Understand the impact of the national committees on the societies of their respective countries
- Exchange strategies and information in order to consolidate National Ethics Committees.

The 10th Global Summit was held at the Hilton Hotel, Mexico City from 22-24 June 2014 hosted by Conbioetica, Mexico's Bioethics Advisory Committee and the Ministry of Health. Delegates representing the World Health Organisation, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission were present together with delegates from organisations in 45 countries.

Delegates were welcomed by the Ministry of Health, Mexico, who stressed the increasing importance of bioethics in the decisions government agencies have to make. A report of the 9th Global Summit (Tunis, 2012) was presented by HE Mohamad Salah Ben Ammar, Ministry of Public Health of Tunisia.

Topics Discussed on the First Day of the 10th Global Summit: 23 June 2014

- **SESSION 1 NATIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEES**
Coordinator: Dr. Miguel Oliveira Da Silva, Portugal
Working Group: Nepal, Kenia, Turkey, Switzerland, Portugal Mexico
- A two hours session: The core matter of discussion in this session will be how to guarantee NECs independency and transparency during their deliberations and Opinions. Additionally it will provide the opportunity to identify the ideal profile of NECs and further reflect about the critical roles of National Bioethical Committees in assuring the inclusion of the bioethical culture at all levels of society.
- The agenda for the discussion will be:
 - existing ways of nominating National Bioethics Committees members;

- main academic background;
 - how often they meet and deliberate;
 - process to choose Opinion's subjects;
 - average time spent to conclude an Opinion;
 - how to deal with inside minorities;
 - what kind of problems they have/had with the political power;
 - how they interact with the media.
- **SESSION 2 THE ETHICS OF NEW HEALTH TECHNOLOGY**
 Coordinator: Dr. Michel Daher, Lebanon
 Working Group: Lebanon, Belgium, Australia, Japan, UK, Canada, Tunisia
- A two hours session: Many principles are called on in discussion of ethics in healthcare, but for the purposes of the discussion of new health technologies, there are three central ethical aspects of modern practice that are particularly relevant: a) Competence, where clinical practice is based on specific technical training and competency; b) Respect for patients' health care decisions referred to as "informed consent" and; c) Maintaining the primacy of patients' needs, keeping market-driven considerations out of what should be a medically ethical decision-making process. Questions that might be raised in discussion of the development of new health technologies should include the following:
- Has the new technology been adequately tested for safety and efficacy?
 - Is the technology at least as safe and effective as existing, proven techniques?
 - Is the individual proposing to perform the new procedure fully qualified to do so?
 - Is the new technology cost-effective?

Topics Discussed on the Second Day of the 10th Global Summit: 24 June 2014

SESSION 3 UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Coordinator: Ms. Lotta Eriksson, Sweden

Working Group: Mexico, Estonia, Cuba, Sri-Lanka, Tunisia, Bolivia

One of the most pressing ethical concerns globally is related to universal health coverage and equal access to health care. This session will include reflections of several NECs representing different regions on the forthcoming WHO report Making fair choices on the path to universal health coverage, which addresses key issues of fairness and equity on the path to universal health coverage.

The objectives of the session is to emphasize the ethical questions and issues that confront national bioethics committees as they support their governments to implement universal health coverage and discuss the current and future role of NECs in this area both at a national and a global level. (What role can and do National Ethics Committees (NECs) play in the process of working for universal health coverage – both nationally and globally?)

SESSION 4 RESEARCH INVOLVING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS (ESPECIALLY CHILDREN)

Coordinator: Prof. Alastair V Campbell, Singapore

Working Group: UK, Uganda, Senegal, Austria, Lebanon, Estonia

Notions of “vulnerability” remain highly contestable. Certain populations, such as children, are generally thought to be “vulnerable”. Even then, it is not always clear in what sense children are vulnerable in research participation, how they should be protected and by whom.

In the context of these broader ethical deliberations on biomedical research involving vulnerable populations, particularly children, the Working Group will prepare a discussion paper taking an initial look at the different ways that “vulnerability” has been defined in existing guidelines and the key issues that have arisen. In addition, it will consider the feasibility of a more inclusive definition of “vulnerability” and the implications of using one safeguard to cover all potentially vulnerable groups.

My contribution to this Summit as CCNLE Representative, and personal Comments

I had the pleasure to participate actively in the organization of the 10th Global Summit of National Ethics Committees (22-24 June 2014) as member of the Steering Committee. This organization need a continuous collaboration, communication, and networking with the other members and the permanent secretary of the Summit. I was a coordinator of a session and had 2 plenary presentations and one poster.to present.

As I was the lonely one registered from Lebanon in these 2 meetings, I had the pleasure & the privilege to be representing the CCNLE / LNCCE. This was a good opportunity for me to:

- 1) Meet interesting and internationally renowned people in the Ethics and Bioethics field, and who can be of a great help & support for our local activities in the future.
- 2) Work on the elaboration of an official document, approved by the Summit, and accepted for publication by the WHO as general recommendations.
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- 3) Learn about new issues on Bioethics including: (Copy of Abstracts are available upon request)
 - Human organs & Tissue Donation.
 - Healthcare and Global Justice
 - Research Ethics
 - Reproductive Technology (Stem Cells, Markets, ---)
 - Genetic Research, Biobanking, Genomics
 - End of Life Care
 - Education in Bioethics
 - Bioethical Developments in
 - Synthetic Biology

- Ethical Issues in Biobanks
- Stem Cell Research and Therapy
- Medical Ethics
- Law & Regulation in Bioethics.

4) Some representative persons I have met and who can help in our future activities:

- WHO – Dr. Najeeb Al Shorbajy (Dir. EET&HR)
- Dafna Feinholz- Dir Bioethics Unit -UNESCO
- Mohamed Ben Ammar- Ministry of Health- Tunisia
- CCNE / SVS - France – Dr. Patrick Gaudray
- Dr. Manuel Ruiz de Chavel, president NBC, – Mexico
- EMRO representative for regional symposia:
- Dr. Lino Paula – European Commission for Bioethics
- Adam Michaels- Representing USA
- Julian Kinderlerer- European Commission

5) During this conference, and following discussion I have gained some experience from other members which can help in promoting our CCNLE.

Here are some ideas or propositions:

- Elaborate Bylaws for the Committee defining its mission, role, objectives, and functions (based on IBC recommendations),
- Put a calendar for an annual activity: Seminar for the members to elaborate, discuss, and approve a document (collaboration with UNESCO, IBC, Local institutions...)
- Increase collaboration with the IBC of the Unesco and prepare for joint meetings in Lebanon- Joint Symposium on a topic; Capacity-Building in Bioethics for the members of the Committee, and interested people..
- Increase collaboration with Universities (for teaching and education of Bioethics), and with the Research Committees for the Ethics issues...
- Increase collaboration with Ethics Committees in the hospitals: help in their creation, and reinforce their role...
- Put a mailing list of local organisms, institutions, persons interested or involved in Bioethics; send regular information about the activity of the CCNLE or UNESCO...
We can be a leader in the ME area and the Arab countries...
- Application for Membership of the CCNLE in the International association of Bioethics (I.A.B.)

- Plan for participation in the next Summit (11th Summit in 2016 in Berlin) and Plan for participation in the next World Congress (13th W.C.B. in 2016) in Edinburgh.

Finally, I would like to thank you all, president and members, for your support which facilitated my participation in these 2 events.

Best regards,

Michel Daher, MD, FACS
Secretary General of the CCNLE

Beirut, 24, 7, 2014