



Dakar, Senegal  
22-24 March 2018

12<sup>th</sup> Global Summit  
of National Bioethics / Ethics Committees

*Bioethics, Sustainable Development and Societies*

**CALL FOR ACTION**



The participants in the 12<sup>th</sup> Global Summit of National Ethics/Bioethics Committees,

*Coming* from 71 countries and every inhabited continent who have gathered in Dakar (Senegal) for three days of open dialogue and exchange of ideas and experiences;

*Recalling* the history of international efforts both to promote progress in science and technology, medicine, and public health as a means of improving the human condition, while applying ethical principles and values in order to safeguard human rights and human dignity; to promote the well-being of all persons, particularly those made vulnerable by disease, exclusion, or by other safety, security, social, cultural or economic factors or by limitations in their personal autonomy; and to promote universal access to healthcare and the protection of the environment;

*Recognizing* that developments in the life and social sciences, in information and communication as well as biotechnologies and in the provision of health care and public health, including the increasing use of genomics in social and health contexts, generate complex and controversial issues for people and institutions in all nations;

*Aspiring* to advance the application of ethical principles and relevant international instruments in order to guide reflection and help answer ethical questions among different value systems and cultures, and to provide all stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, research scientists, citizens, community leaders, patients and families, ethics/bioethics committees and governmental policymaking bodies in healthcare, biotechnology, environment, population and related fields with guidance and tools to support them in carrying out their responsibilities;

*Taking into account* the importance of working together to promote education about, and understanding of, and to raise awareness regarding, ethical and bioethical issues and concerns amongst members of societies around the world, and of strengthening the capacity of National Ethics/Bioethics Committees to deal with these complex issues;

*Recognizing* that the diversity of national traditions and cultural contexts in which ethical and bioethical deliberation occurs is increasingly affected by the rapid globalization of science and technology;

*Realizing* the need to learn from, and work closely with, experts in the social and natural sciences and the humanities in order to address ethical and bioethical issues in an informed and productive fashion, as well as to gain from experiences from relevant stakeholders including other National Ethics/Bioethics Committees from across the globe;

*Recognizing the need* to better communicate and cooperate with one another, in ways that will support effective action to address the issues of today and to help anticipate issues that will emerge tomorrow;

*Appreciating* the value of public involvement in discussions of issues arising in the life sciences, biotechnology, social and environmental sciences, and in the provision of health care, and the contribution it can make to the development of policy at all levels;

*Recognizing* the significance of the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to, but not limited to, poverty, health, gender equality, social justice and the environment; and the need for international cooperation and harmonization in many areas of policy and governance to address ethical and bioethical issues, including the issue of equitable access to the benefits of advances in science, technology and medicine as many of them cannot be addressed by individual countries alone;

Emphasizing in particular the following three major issues that were addressed during the 2018 Dakar Summit:

- Ethics and electronic data
  - *Agree* to continue to cooperate in identifying the opportunities that can arise from the use of data in research and healthcare delivery at local, national and international levels, whilst ensuring through ethical and legal governance the appropriate protections of people's rights and interests in relation to data and the benefits that can derive from its use, supported by increased engagement and digital literacy amongst the public;
- Health system resilience during outbreaks and disasters
  - *Agree* that ethically informed and integrated systems should be developed and maintained that support the protection of populations through the preparedness for, and response to, health emergencies; that states should be encouraged to work together to facilitate coordinated and effective national and international responses and support; and that particular attention needs to be given to those who are made most vulnerable by health emergencies;
- Importance of social justice and civil society
  - *Agree* that National Ethics/Bioethics Committees should seek to ensure that the views and interests of all members of society are considered and represented; that this must involve the engagement of all areas of civil society in their work as well as the promotion of public discussion of issues in the life sciences, social and environmental sciences and biotechnologies that have implications for the health and wellbeing of all citizens and groups; and that whilst engagement strategies



are still needed, and will vary, lessons should be shared about effective approaches to such engagement;

*Draw* attention to the importance of considering the effects of each country's resolution of issues in bioethics on the affairs of other countries, and the reciprocal effects of events both within and beyond their own countries;

*Commend* the close scrutiny of the international aspects of bioethics deliberations by all National Ethics/Bioethics Committees and similar bodies;

*Encourage* National Ethics/Bioethics Committees to promote public engagement in discourse about developments in the life sciences, including health and social and environmental sciences as well as information and communication and biotechnologies, and specifically about their ethical and social dimensions, including regional discourse between and amongst National Ethics/Bioethics Committees; and

*Reaffirm* the role of the Global Summit of National Ethics/Bioethics Committees as a valuable forum for discussion, for the exchange of ideas and experience, for mutual support and for cooperation on ethical and bioethical issues of international importance.

**Endorsed this 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, in Dakar, Senegal by the participants in the 12<sup>th</sup> Global Summit of National Ethics/Bioethics Committees**