Principle of respect for human vulnerability and personal integrity: Preliminary outline

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WORKING DOCUMENT ON
THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT FOR
HUMAN VULNERABILITY AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY
Intention of the draft

To initiate and stimulate debate of the IBC at its 16th session in Mexico City
Starting point
History

• 1978 Belmont Report
• 1996 rev. Declaration of Helsinki
• 1997 UNESCO (Decl. Human Genome and Human Rights)
• 2002 CIOMS Biomed. Research involving human subjects
• 1998 Barcelona Declaration
Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005)

• „In applying and advancing scientific knowledge, medical practice and associated technologies, human vulnerability should be taken into account. Individuals and groups of special vulnerability should be protected and the personal integrity of such individuals respected.“ (Art 8)
Outline of the text

I  Introduction/Issue/Outline
II  General Framework
III  Historical and Philosophical Approach
IV  Vulnerabilities in Various Categories of Persons Requiring Special Protection
V  Vulnerabilities in Various Contexts
VI  Results and Suggestions
VII  Further Reading
VIII Conclusion
General framework

- Medical Practice
- Human experimentation and research
- Health care and biomedical research policies – Public health (social responsibility)
Important issues to discuss
Question Nr. 1: The extent of the concept

- Every human being is vulnerable because of its very existence
- Need to define certain criteria: the impossibility or incapacity to react
- Need to define certain criteria: But – beware of the danger of a too broad definition which loses force ("everybody is vulnerable")
Question Nr. 2: The recognition and means of protection of individuals or groups

- When and under which circumstances should vulnerability be recognized?
- Different categories (characteristic) vs. different contexts (condition)
Question Nr. 3: The respect of personal integrity

- In regard to the **application** and advancement of scientific knowledge of medical practice and its associated technologies
- Principles of solidarity, justice and equity
Various categories
(to be completed)

- Children
- Women (see specific slide)
- Handicapped persons
- Elderly and very old persons
- Mentally ill persons
- Temporarily incapacitated persons
- Immigrants
- Asylum seekers
- Nomads
- Ethnic and racial minorities
- Unemployed persons
- Homeless persons
- Prisoners
- Illiterate persons
Women

- Women of childbearing potential
- Pregnant women

- Gender equality, but: existing differences between women and men are of a biological and social nature. Sex refers to the biologically determined differences between women and men. Gender refers to the social differences.

- We have to be aware that in some parts of the world women are especially vulnerable due to their social conditioning and to an eventual lack of education.
Various contexts (to be completed)

- Persons in hierarchical situations
  - (eg students, employees)

- Members of the armed forces

- Members of the police

- ..........
Next steps ?
Suggestions for further steps:

• Representation of members of all UNESCO regions in the working group
• Gender balanced
• Balanced in the different disciplines
• Organized meeting(s) to discuss and define the specific issues

• Guidance for the stakeholders (Governments, Ethics Committees, health professionals etc.)
Thank you for your attention!