

# **Barcelona Declaration of the International Society for Clinical Bioethics**

## **Protection of Children's Dignity and Rights in the Context of New Global Challenges and Increased Vulnerabilities**

[XV Annual Conference  
International Society for Clinical Bioethics  
*Bioethics and Paediatrics: Future Development and Challenges*  
Barcelona, September 20-21, 2018]

### **Preamble**

1. The International Society for Clinical Bioethics held the XV Conference in Barcelona on September 20-21, 2018 and discussed future developments and challenges in pediatrics and children's protection rights in an effort to make universal appeal to ensure that every child is protected for a better future.
2. Children are our common future across the Globe. They depend on us, the families, the states, and international and local guidelines, and regulations. Children are vulnerable and dependent; therefore, it is our duty to provide them with a happy future, healthy childhood, and protection from discrimination and violence.
3. Efforts must be made to ensure that the international, national and local standards for the protection of children's rights are strictly enforced. Global efforts must be aimed at zero tolerance on the growing vulnerability of children in the context of scientific and technological progress, global challenges, and migration processes.
4. At the same time, threats to global peace, scientific and technological advances, and a departure from the values of humanism create the conditions and prerequisites for increasing vulnerability of children, and many children still live in the risk zone.

### **Problems**

5. Threats to the health of children remain relevant on the international agenda and at the level of national states. These include war, poverty, hunger, racial discrimination, exploitation, adult brutality and other acts of violence.

6. With increasing migration and displacement, many children are forced to leave their homes and sometimes their families. There are migrants in all countries around the world. Their number is growing faster than the world's population, and in 2015 it exceeded 244 million people. In fact, every 4.1 seconds there is a new refugee in the world, while approximately 65 million people are internally displaced, including more than 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum-seekers and more than 40 million internally displaced persons. The UN notes that 46% of the 45.2 million children and adolescents under the age of 18 are minors who become hostages of global politics and are even more vulnerable in these conditions.

7. Scientific and technological advances, designed to improve the life and health of children and promote their harmonious development and success, often create prerequisites for threats and potential risks, including the consequences of genetic engineering, information technology and virtual reality, cybercrime, the growth of social inequality and loss of access to social benefits, social maladjustment and many others. It is a reality that the 50 % of the medicines used for children have not been tested safe for them, 90 % in the cases of premature neonates.

8. We witness the emergence of a disturbing trend of dehumanization in international and national legislation in terms of the rights of children and their parents, and the emergence of legal norms legitimizing children's euthanasia, which is a direct threat to the life and health of children, and destroys the values of the traditional family.

9. All these problems lay the groundwork for dismantling the values and norms of positive results that have been achieved thanks to such basic international documents, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953), the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

## Tasks

10. Compliance with international guidelines and regulations for the protection of children and adolescents, therefore the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child must be recognized at local, regional, and international levels.

11. Ensuring of equal opportunities for children and access to healthcare and social benefits. Advances in science and technology should be aimed at improving the health and quality of life of children, reducing injuries, disabilities, and causes of child mortality.

12. Protecting children's rights of migrants, and internally displaced persons and preventing their use for discrimination, exploitation, trafficking, and manipulation, and protecting their personal space, cyber-space, and their personal data.

13. Children must be prepared for a responsible life in a free society and be able to adapt to uncertainty, to have the opportunity to define themselves as individuals, and realize their potential in a safe and supportive environment (e.g., family, education, sports, etc.) to ensure their well-being.

14. Commitment to the values of humanism in the family, social policies, including those supported by traditional religions to strengthen the relationship between parents, family, and children.

15. Bioethical expertise and well-organized activities aiming at forecasting new emerging threats to human potential and vulnerable groups of population, especially of children, are increasingly needed.

16. The core of this kind of activity should be bioethical guidelines formulated in terms of clinical and global bioethics to minimize the risks of vulnerability, to guarantee protection of children's rights in the context of global challenges and medical practice.

## **Ethical duties**

We hereby solemnly commit ourselves to:

17. Promote the active participation of the scientific and expert community, of which we are a part, in protecting the well-being of children.

18. Work together within the framework of international cooperation, also at local and regional levels.

19. Include in the agenda of annual international meetings topics related to the risks of vulnerability and protection of the rights of children, and to intensify research in this direction.

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