

Note: This resolution should not detract from the importance of infertile couples having access to assisted conception e.g. in vitro fertilization, embryo transfer, donor sperm to ova, nor the use of diagnostic procedures to identify the potential for genetic defects in parents or embryos in utero, which should be permitted provided detailed information is given in an appropriate way.

11) **RESOLUTION ON THE APPLICATION OF RESEARCH IN HUMAN GENETICS**

Proposed by the Australian Federation of University Women and the New Zealand Federation of University Women

The 26th Conference resolves:

that IFUW encourage NFAs to make themselves aware of the advances in the medical applications of present and future research in human genetics, and work with other groups to ensure that their respective governments:

1. **establish and fund adequately national committees to advise government and medical professionals on the social and ethical issues associated with the application of advances in genetic knowledge;**
2. **ensure that the public is informed and consulted about proposed practices and regulations;**
3. **consider the cultural mores of the ethnic groups within their population in formulating any regulations.**

Supporting statement:

The issues here are, in general, recognized. Although many governments promote public debate and fund research councils and ethics committees, the pace of research and its burgeoning applications make it imperative for the public to seek out good quality, accurate information.

Most Western countries have developed guidelines that are on the whole consistent and prefer to control by regulation rather than by legislation.

The fact that so many research institutions have committed enormous amounts of money and expertise to genetics research and the ability that computers give them to analyze their data means that new issues arrive before the last have been addressed.

Leaders of the genome project have acknowledged from the start that human genetics can be used to harm as well as help. They have indeed made a point of devoting millions of dollars to studying ethical, legal and social questions. Yet technical gains are close to outrunning the attempts of professional societies and government regulators to guide the use of technology.

Some present issues that are still being debated are:

The reasons for and the conditions under which genetic testing should be carried out.

The patenting of genes.

Xenotransplantation.

The cloning of humans.