

**Subject: MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON DECEMBER 24, 2012 AT AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY  
HOSPITAL KARACHI**

A meeting of the National Bioethics Committee was held on December 24, 2012 in the Faculty Office Building of the Aga Khan University, Hospital Karachi. The Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division, Syed Arshad Ali chaired the meeting. The members of National Bioethics Committee attended the meeting are at annexure-A.

1.1. Dr Zulfiqar A Bhutta, Member NBC and the Chairman, Research Ethics Committee welcomed the participants and lamented that the National Bioethics Committee hasn't so far been efficient in taking decisions particularly on some important issues. The Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division, Syed Arshad Ali assured that the Cabinet Division will take full ownership of the National Bioethics Committee and go all out to take the NBC agenda forward.

1.2. The Member Secretary and Executive Director, PMRC, Dr Huma Qureshi presented overall progress of the National Bioethics Committee with particular regard to the decision of the previous meeting, wherein Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division, Syed Arshad Ali was nominated by the Cabinet Secretary to represent her in pre NBC as well as other NBC meetings owing to her commitments/preoccupation in official business of Cabinet Division.

2. The members were informed that the NBC News letter has been drafted and shared with the members. The Web site and logo have already been developed and the material relating thereto has been posted on the web site. Research Ethics Committee is somehow functioning but Medical Ethics Committee is yet to be functional. As regard the separate budget for research activities of NBC; it was recalled a decision was taken in the previous meeting that a request shall be sent from Cabinet Division to Finance Division to allocate some additional amount for NBC's research activities through PMRC's regular budget 2013-14. The members wanted that next five years budgetary projections for NBC's research activities be shared with the members.

### **Decision**

**It was resolved that Cabinet Division shall recommend to the Finance Division for some additional allocation of fund for the research work of National Bioethics Committee in the regular budget of PMRC 2013-14.**

3. Consequent upon the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the devolution of the Health Ministry, it was imperative that the provinces shall establish their bioethics committees. PMRC shall send the material and extend all possible support.

### **Decision**

**A letter shall be written from the Cabinet Division to all Health Secretaries in the Provinces for activation of Provincial Bioethics Committees (PBCs). The Director General, Health shall act as focal person.**

4. The Committee viewed with concern the high cost incurring on human resource/personnel cost to the tune of 35-40% of the total budget of Research and Advocacy Fund (RAF), a project of DFID. The Committee is of the view that personnel cost should not exceed 20% of the cost of the research project. In this context, letters were written to RAF. RAF had informed that they were looking into high cost and shall report back soon.

### **Decision**

**A letter shall be issued from Cabinet Division to Research and Advocacy Fund (RAF) in this behalf.**

5. Dr Farhat Moazam said, a major issue for NBC has been its inability to hold regular meetings as planned owing to non availability of Chairperson. This has led to inconsistency and lack of follow through by the members on decision taken. She proposed that when the designated Chair is unavailable for a regular NBC meeting due to his/her engagement, someone from amongst the members may act as a Chair for the meeting rather than postponing it to another day.

## **Decision**

**In the event of non availability of Cabinet Secretary or Additional Secretary, some one from amongst the members shall be chosen to act as Chair.**

6 In the context of Medical Ethics Committee, a Sub-Committee of National Bioethics Committee, the representative of Pakistan Medical & Dental Council, Dr. Ahmed Nadeem Akbar informed that PM&DC has recently updated the medical code of ethics with statutory backing and they can take punitive action against delinquents. The Members were of the view that updating the medical code of ethics with punitive clauses may not help much unless medical community is made aware of medical ethics through education and training on regular basis. Dr. Farhat Moazam reminded that PM&DC's code of ethics has provided that biomedical ethics will be part of the curriculum and taught in the schools, but no efforts have been made in this direction. Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawed proposed that PM&DC's updated code of ethics and the Physician-Pharma guidelines developed by the NBC be circulated to pharmaceutical industry and the medical institutions by the Cabinet Division.

## **Decisions**

- (i) Dr. Ahmed Nadeem Akbar shall disseminate the code of conduct and Physician-Pharma guidelines to all medical institutions.**
- (ii) The Medical Ethics Committee shall develop guidelines, training materials and schedule for the medical practitioners and update the medical curricula for under and postgraduate students.**
- (iii) Dr. Farhat Moazam shall head the subcommittee of Medical Ethics Committee comprising of Dr. Syed Haroon Ahmed, Dr. Asim Ahmed, Dr. Fareed khan, Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawed, Dr. Ahmed Nadeem Akbar and Dr. Ferozedin Memon as members. Dr. Farhat Moazam will initiate the process for convening the meeting.**

7 As regards membership tenure, the members are appointed for a period of five years, extendable for another term of five years. Most of the members have now

completed eight years, and have two more years to go. The need is to induct and train new members and older ones are replaced. Dr. Bhutta suggested that nominations from medical institutions and Universities be invited and from individuals as well who are willing to contribute. In addition, as per TOR, absence in three consecutive meetings may lead to termination of the membership.

### **Decisions**

- (i) An invitation for membership on the web site shall be uploaded in lieu of the members either retiring after completing the term or being replaced on account of absence from three successive meetings.**
- (ii) Representation from CPSP, WHO (Pakistan), Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Pharma bureau etc. shall be obtained.**
- (iii) Two provincial members represented on NBC are superfluous, for Director General, Health from all provinces are ex-officio members of NBC and shall also act as focal persons for Provincial Bioethics Committees.**
- (iv) A letter shall be written from Cabinet Division to all national programmes seeking ethical approval from NBC, Pakistan prior to the launch of the project.**
- (v) The next meeting shall be held in April 2013 in consultation with members with regard to the date, time and venue.**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

1. Prof. Dr Zulfiqar A Bhutta, Prof. of Paediatrics & Child Health, The Aga Khan University, Stadium Road, Karachi -74800.
2. Dr. Huma Qureshi, Executive Director, Member/ Secretary NBC, Pakistan Medical Research Council (PMRC) Shahrah-e-Jamhuriat, Sector G-5/2, Islamabad.
3. Prof. Dr. Syed Haroon Ahmed, Director, Psycho Social Centre, Clifton, Karachi.
4. Dr. Farhat Moazam, Professor and Chairperson, Centre of Biomedical Ethics & Culture (CBEC), Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) Karachi
5. Prof. Dr. Aasim Ahmad, Professor / Chief Nephrologist, the Kidney Centre, Karachi.
6. Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawaid, Editor In chief, Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences & Pulse International, Karachi.
7. Dr Feroze Din Memon, Director General Health Services, Health Department, Government of Sind, Karachi
8. Dr Farid Khan, Nominee of Pharma industry, Karachi.
9. Dr Ahmed Nadeem Akbar, Registrar and Nominee Pakistan Medical & Dental Council, Islamabad