

# COMEST's Dream for a Code of Conduct for Scientists



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# Ethics of Science at UNESCO

- 1970 UNESCO's first reflections on ethics of life sciences
- 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers
- 1993 International Bioethics Committee (IBC)
- 1998 Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC)
- 1998 World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST)

# Declarations Prepared by IBC

- Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997)
- World Declaration on Human Genetic Data (2003)
- Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005)

COMEST: None

# World Conference on Science (WCS) Budapest, 1999

- co-organised by UNESCO and ICSU
  - “Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge”
  - “Science Agenda – Framework for Action.”
    - Emphasis on the responsibility and ethics of science / self-criticism of science
    - Follow-up by UNESCO’s COMEST and ICSU’s SCRES

# What COMEST has done

- Ethics of Fresh Water
- Ethics of Information Technology
- Space Ethics
- Environmental Ethics
- Nanoethics
- Ethics Education

# COMEST's Efforts to Make a Code of Conduct

- ICSU Standards for Ethics and Responsibility in Science, 2001
- UN Inter-Agency Consultative Meeting, 2003
- Executive Board of UNESCO, 2003
- Expert Meeting on the Code of Ethics, COMEST, Paris, 2005
- 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session, COMEST, Bangkok, 2005
- 5<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session, COMEST, Dakar, 2006

# Changing Concept of Science

- 1930s: Logical Positivism, Mertonian Sociology of Science
- 1960s: Post-Analytic Philosophy
- 1970s: Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK)
- 1990s: 'Science Wars'

# From Freedom to Responsibility

- SCFCS (1963): Standing Committee on the Freedom in the Conduct of Science
  - ➔ Focus on the freedom of science and the rights of scientists
- SCRES(1996-2002), COMEST(1998)
  - ➔ Focus on the social responsibility of scientists and the ethics of science

# Analysis of Existing Codes of Conduct

- Collection of all codes of conduct
- Critical comparative analysis of strengths and weaknesses
- Creating a database in the Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs)

# International Consultations

- Six regional consultative meetings, 2006
  - Tokyo, New Delhi, Geneva, Bangkok, Seoul, Belo Horizonte
  - UNESCO “Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers” of 1974 as a basis of assessment
  - Unanimous preference for the code of conduct in Asia
  - US and some European countries are negative to further standard setting of UNESCO.
- Further consultation meetings are planned in Africa and Arab region in 2007.

# Changing Views on S&T in Korea

Member of OECD (1996)

Growing attention to environment, quality of life, ethics, etc.

- S&T as a means to economic development  
(1960s – early 1990s)
- S&T as a *culture*  
(late 1990s)

# World Conference on Science and Korea

- Turning point to Korea as well as to the world
  - Korea sent a delegation led by the Minister of S&T.
  - Follow-up by Korean NatCom for UNESCO and STEPI with the strong support of the MOST.
  - Reports by UNESCO and STEPI:
    - *Monitoring Science and Technology Activities in Korea* (2001)
    - *Review of Science and Technology in Korea: Towards a Contact between Science and Society* (2002).
  - Books by Korean NatCom UNESCO:
    - *Ethics of Scientific Research* (2001)
    - *Science; Technology and Human Rights* ( 2001).

# “A Study on the Charter for Scientists and Engineers,” (2002)

- Interdisciplinary team of 17 researchers:
  - old scientists, engineers and medical doctors in the KAST / young STS scholars outside of the KAST
  - Research carried out mainly by the STSers: the scientists were very much like advisors
- Intensive study on the result of the WCS 1999 and its follow-up works
  - 5 background papers
  - 6 pages-long draft of the Charter for Scientists and Engineers

# Draft of the Charter

1. Value of S&T
2. Necessity of the development of S&T
3. Sound development of S&T community
4. Social responsibility of scientists and engineers
5. Ethics of S&T
6. Institutionalisation for 4 & 5
7. Science/technology & humanities/social sciences relationship
8. Studies of ethics, ethics education

# The Rise of Hwang Woo-Suk and the Debate on Ethics

- Hwang Woo-Suk et al., *Science*, 2004
  - The Korean Bioethics Association challenged Hwang for ethical flaws
  - Hwang blamed ethicists for blocking technology. The government (including President) advocated Hwang.
- Sudden Request for the Enactment of the Charter
  - By Park Key Young, Presidential Advisor on Information Technology and Science
  - Ad hoc task force team in the KOFST:
    - 15 member draft-making team
    - Philosopher/ social scientists/ STSers/ top scientists

# Making an 1-page Charter

- Neither scientism nor anti-scientism
  - Fierce fights between scientists and non-scientists
    - Scientists for pure science, ethical neutrality and freedom of research
    - Humanists and social scientists for adverse aspects of S&T, social responsibility and ethics
- ⇒ Mediocre and dull Charter resulted from inevitable compromise

# Charter for Scientists and Engineers (KOFST, 11 November 2004)

- Science and technology are valuable cultural heritages of humankind and provide a system of knowledge based on rationality and universality that has a great influence on human lives.
- We, scientists and engineers hereby declare that we shall hold a sense of pride and responsibility as the key players in improving the quality of life and creating a bright future for our society with an infinite sense of exploration and creativity.
  1. We will work to ensure happiness and peace of humankind through enhancement of scientific knowledge and pursuit of technological innovations.
  2. We will create a clean and safe natural environment through sustainable development of science and technology.
  3. We value autonomy in pursuing scientific research, but shall observe our social responsibility and a sense of ethics as scientists and engineers.
  4. We commit ourselves to the education of future generations for the development of science and technology.
  5. We will take the leading role in enhancing the public understanding of science and technology.
  6. We will contribute to the development of our proud traditional culture and to the achievement of national unity.

# Interest in Research Ethics after the Hwang Scandal

- MOST & STEPI, Guideline for Research Ethics, 2007.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development & Korea Research Foundation, *Introduction to Research Ethics*, 2006.
- KOFST and KAST made their own codes of research ethics, which merged into one.
- Proposal (to the MOST) for a joint project on the comprehensive “Code of Conduct for Scientists and Engineers” by three institutions: Korean NatCom for UNESCO, KOFST and KAST rejected.