

# “The right to enjoy scientific progress and the freedom indispensable for scientific research”

22 February, 2018 h. 3:00 – 5:00 pm  
United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 5

## Concept paper

On 22 February 2018, the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations will host a panel discussion to address the issue of the "The right to enjoy scientific progress and the freedom indispensable for scientific research". The event is organized by the “Luca Coscioni Association” in collaboration with the American Association for the Advancement of Science and will see the participation of Professor Mikel Mancisidor, member of the UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and coordinator of the "General Comment" on the right to science currently developed by the CESCR.

The “implementation of the right to enjoy scientific progress and the freedom indispensable for scientific research” emanates from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Specifically, Article 15 of ICESCR sets forth:

“1. The right of everyone:

- (a) to take part in cultural life;
- (b) to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications;
- (c) to benefit from the protection of moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

2. States Parties to the above Covenant, in order to achieve the full realization of this right, shall take the steps necessary for the conservation, development and dissemination of science and culture.

3. The States Parties to the above Covenant undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity.

4. The States Parties to the above Covenant recognize the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of international contacts and co-operation in the scientific and cultural fields.

Given the progress and advances in the scientific sector, “the implementation of the right to enjoy scientific progress and the freedom indispensable for scientific research” calls for renewed attention to the need to promote and protect scientific freedom and create the general economic, social, cultural and legal conditions to foster its most beneficial impact on the welfare and wellbeing of humanity.

UNESCO has recognized “that research on the human genome and its resulting applications open up vast prospects for progress in improving the health of individuals and of humankind as a whole, but emphasizing that such research should fully respect human dignity, freedom and human rights, as well as the prohibition of all forms of discrimination”.

A joint expert seminar co-organized by UNESCO in 2009 adopted the Venice Statement on the Right to Enjoy the Benefits of Scientific Progress, which indicates that: “The ongoing process of science has different meanings and implications in different contexts and may pose significant challenges for human rights in the world today. The processes, products and applications of science should be used for the benefit of all humanity without discrimination, particularly with regard to disadvantaged and marginalized persons and communities”.

The former UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, Farida Shaheed, focused her annual report-2012 (A/HRC20/26) on, inter alia, “the normative content of the right to benefit from scientific progress and its application”.

Scientific research is at the core of the activities of the WHO, one of the most important technical agencies of the UN system, where each department has its own research unit. While producing strictly evidence-based recommendations and guidelines, WHO's action clearly illustrates the benefits for all who enjoy the right to science.

The event on 22 February aims to bring to the attention of Permanent Missions the many aspects of “human rights to science” and update

participants on the most recent opportunities for the United Nations to adopt a more structured approach to these aspects in its various fora.

For more information [www.freedomofresearch.org](http://www.freedomofresearch.org)

### **Programme of the event:**

*H.E. Sebastiano Cardi, Permanent Representative, Italy*

*Marco Cappato, Former Member European Parliament, Treasurer, Associazione Luca Coscioni*

Mr. Cappato will introduce the upcoming 5th meeting of the World Congress of Freedom of Scientific Research, which is scheduled to take place at the European Parliament in Brussels from April 11 to 13 2018. He will also present an international “call of action” on the right to science.

*Mikel Mancisidor, Member, UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Geneva*

Dr. Mancisidor, working on behalf of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, is in the process of developing a draft General Comment on the right to science as articulated in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. His presentation will address the core content of the right to science, how the right is both an integral component of and independent complement to other human rights, and the process by which an authoritative understanding of the right is being developed by the Committee.

*Jessica Wyndham, Director, AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights and Law Program*

For the past ten years, the American Association for the Advancement of Science has worked with the scientific, engineering and health communities to determine the meaning and significance of the right to science from their perspective, to understand the limitations on the right in practice, and

the steps needed to ensure its realization. Wyndham will draw on research conducted with the global scientific community to articulate the breadth of benefits derived by science and the infrastructure and protections required to ensure a flourishing scientific community.

*Andrea Boggio, Professor, Bryant University, and Cesare Romano, Professor, Loyola Law School Los Angeles*

Drawing on their experience researching and monitoring state practices with regard to the right to science, Drs. Boggio and Romano will discuss current trends in the realization of the right to science with a particular emphasis on the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific advancement and the conditions that foster the conservation, development, and diffusion of science and technology.

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