

## Dean Fischbach Moderates United Nations Conference on Stem Cells



Dean Gerald Fischbach as he prepares to moderate UN Stem Cell Conference. He is flanked to his right by Drs. Larry Goldstein of the University of California, San Diego and Douglas Melton of Harvard to his right and Drs. Ian Wilmut of the Roslib Institute in the United Kingdom and Gerlad Schatten of the University of Pittsburgh.

The United Nations (UN) was host to a conference on science and policy issues surrounding embryonic stem cell research (ESC) and somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT). The Genetics Policy Institute and the UN Asian Group of Legal Experts Meeting cosponsored the June 2nd conference which took place at UN headquarters. The conference lineup included a dozen of the world's leading stem cell scientists, including Dr. Ian Wilmut of the United Kingdom who led the effort to clone Dolly the sheep, Douglas Melton of Harvard University who has developed seventeen stem cell lines, and Drs. Shin-Yong Moon and Woo Suk Hwang of South Korea who conducted the first successful derivation of human stem cells using SCNT. Dean Fischbach moderated the entire conference.

Just as the debate over ESC and SCNT continues in Washington, it is also an important international issue. Last year the UN voted to postpone for one year two resolutions on SCNT. The first, sponsored by Costa Rica and supported by the United States, would have called for a worldwide ban on all forms of cloning, including SCNT. A second, sponsored by Belgium, would have called for a worldwide ban on reproductive cloning but allowed individual member states to decide how they wished to handle SCNT. The vote was very close with the Costa Rican resolution failing by only one vote in the Legal Committee. The UN is expected to take up the issues again this fall.

Dean Fischbach and all participants at the conference stressed the importance of preventing the UN from passing the Costa Rican resolution. They also made it abundantly clear that they oppose reproductive cloning. For more information on the conference visit the Genetics Policy Institute website at [www.genpol.org](http://www.genpol.org).