Country: Australia

Committee: LEGAL

Topic: Ethics and Legality of Genetic Engineering

Genetic engineering is one of the many branches of science today. It can be used to enhance or cure traits in living organisms. In present-day diseases such as cancer, AIDS, hemophilia, and diabetes can be cured by genetic engineering. Also with the help of scientists having the ability to produce stronger, smarter and more durable people than your average guy off the street. This can come with some issues

such as;

1) Potential health harms:

1. Higher risk of allergies.
2. Production of unknown toxins
3. Enhancement to the environment for toxic fungi.
4. Harms we don’t even know about.

2) Ethical issues:

1. Safety hazards during operations.
2. Informed Consent
3. Accessible only to the top class of people due to very expensive prices.

As the delegation of Australia, we are one of the many countries that allow genetic engineering. Crops are allowed to be modified under the regulation of authorities. Nearly all the cotton grown in Australia is genetically modified to be resistant to certain insects and pesticides. Australia has had its fair share of contributions to the topic. Fungus-resistant wheat is one of them, the enhancements were made against a common fungus called wheat rust that destroyed many wheat crops. In Australian laws, the tolerance for genetic engineering in crops does not translate over to humans. Section 15 of the PHRC Act specifically prohibits a person from modifying the genome of a human embryo in a way that the modification is heritable by upcoming descendants of that person. This means the use of genome editing in reproduction is forbidden.

Ethical blockages in genetic engineering have risen for a long time and could determine the future of the industry. We believe that genetic engineering has a long way to go and could impact our future when it comes to diseases and improved human capabilities. As the delegation of Australia, we are intrigued to see what solutions our committee can come up with about the ethics and legality of genetic engineering.