**Draft General Comment on Article 6 of the** **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Right to life**

Euclid University (EUCLID), being both an intergovernmental organization as well as an institution of higher learning (academia) would like to thank the Rapporteur for circulating General Comment No. 36 on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the Right to Life.

As expressed by other States such as Malta, we welcome the focus on the protection of life of all human beings, and the emphasis on life, broadly defined, as a fundamental right.

EUCLID wishes to provide some remarks on paragraph 9 and convey the overall concern that an intergovernmental instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights should provide fundamental and broadly accepted principles without seeking to provide detailed and binding provisions on complex and sensitive issues such as circumstances surrounding abortion. As it is, the Covenant already holds in balance the fundamental right to life (which at the very least implies the right to life of the unborn throughout the pregnancy or after some specific points of development) with the rights of the mother (and as applicable of the father).

Inasmuch as by mandate, EUCLID trains government staff for a variety of countries (12 Participating States) in related areas such as global health and international law, we wish to emphasize the importance of strengthening commonly held principles rather than seeking to turn a consensual Covenant in a binding treaty having divisive and overly specific intent.

EUCLID therefore echoes the growing consensus that paragraph 9 suffers from being excessively vague in some areas (meaning of “mental pain”), excessively specific in other areas, and generally overreaching by introducing legally binding language in what is meant to be a consensual framework document.

The proposed language could also be construed or misconstrued to mean that whenever a State places limitations on access to abortion, this would result in the possibility of women seeking illegal and dangerous abortions, which would in return make any of the initial limitations prohibited under this interpretation of article 6.

Likewise, paragraph 10 is an attempt to achieve global legalization of passive euthanasia, again in vaguely defined circumstances (severe physical or mental pain). This is an extremely sensitive topic which should be addressed by each UN Member State, even as the international community is learning from the experience of countries which have legalized this practice. Any attempt to fast-track the international legalization of euthanasia may well result in a backlash against international institutions as well as undermine the historical foundation achieved by the Covenant in its current form and interpretation.

In conclusion, EUCLID advises that the current attempt to transform the Covenant from internationally agreed-upon framework into a legally binding instrument listing a specific set of reproductive and end-of-life rights will ultimately destroy the strong and consensual foundation that the Covenant has historically represented.

Respectfully submitted on October 4, 2017.