

The Advertiser

(Australia)

Emotional plea for stem cell research

15oct04

A COALITION of 125 scientific and patients' groups yesterday urged the United Nations to reject a global ban on stem cell research sought by the Bush Administration and more than 50 countries.

At an emotional news conference, scientists evoked the memory of paralysed *Superman* actor Christopher Reeve, an ardent campaigner for stem cell research who died on Monday while individuals with a range of diseases pleaded with the world body not to take away their hope for a cure.

A committee of the 191-nation UN General Assembly is scheduled to open debate on October 21 on the drafting of a treaty on human cloning, an issue pending in the assembly since 2001.

All 191 UN members agree on a treaty that would prohibit the cloning of human beings. They are sharply divided, however, over whether to allow the cloning of human embryos for stem cell or similar research, known as "therapeutic cloning".