

**Committee:** World Health Organisation (WHO)

**Topic:** The question of women's right to abortion

**Student Officer:** Maxine Arduin

**Position:** Deputy President

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## Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates,

My name is Maxine Arduin and I am currently a Year 11 student at Campion School in Athens. I am delighted and excited to have the opportunity to work with you in this year's 9th CSMUN Conference as the Deputy President of the World Health Organization. I am also honored to serve as a Student Officer for the first time. I find this conference the perfect opportunity to develop as an individual in regard to my MUN journey and share my passions as well as motivate you to embark on this journey with me.

Commencing MUN for the first time was a frightening experience, as I am sure it is for a multitude of delegates. Nevertheless, it ignited a spark in me and has helped me develop skills such as public speaking, critical thinking, and debating skills, as well as broadened my knowledge on topics concerning us all globally. MUN offers opportunities to meet like-minded people who are eager to fight for change and gives young adults the opportunity to look at actions and decisions taken regarding humanitarian affairs, political affairs, and in the World Health Organisation, global health issues, from a different angle. The diversity of topics in this year's conference gives a chance to all delegates to truly flourish in their committee and pick topics which are of utmost interest to them. Both topics in this year's World Health Organisation committee are of high global significance in the world we live in, and 'The Question of Women's Rights to Abortion' specifically has been an ongoing debate that will be addressed.

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In this study guide, you will find beneficial information concerning the question of women's rights to abortion which will help you in your preparation prior to the conference. Nevertheless, it is recommended that you conduct your own research and engage yourself in your nation's policy so as to result in fruitful debates and make this experience a memorable one. I look forward to meeting you all!

Yours truly,

Maxine Arduin

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## Topic Introduction

The question of women's rights to abortion has caused a profusion of intense controversy between nations due to the fact that there are varying perspectives and judgements on this matter. According to Amnesty International, abortion is considered a basic healthcare right, which is necessary for millions of women globally who become pregnant, and who are unwilling or unable to keep the child. It is conspicuous that many pregnancies are unwanted, caused accidentally, or engendered as a result of sexual abuse, which consequently means that a great number of women decide to end their pregnancy for economic, social, psychological or personal reasons. In fact, it is estimated that, worldwide, 1 in 4 pregnancies result in abortions yearly.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, despite the great number of requests for abortions, they are a very complex and sensitive procedure that may lead to a multitude of health-related problems such as infertility, and even death if not conducted safely, which is partially why there is so much controversy and varying opinions on this matter between different nations as well as individuals.

As a result of these contradicting opinions, pro-life and pro-choice movements have been created. These movements were engendered so as to protest and express

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<sup>1</sup> Mundasad, Smitha. "Abortion Study: 25% of Pregnancies Terminated, Estimates Suggest." BBC News, BBC, 12 May 2016, [www.bbc.com/news/health-36266873](http://www.bbc.com/news/health-36266873)



different beliefs, as well as organize demonstrations, campaigns, and more, so as to display anger or support towards this topic. Pro-life movements, which are generally against abortion, often argue that doctors should not have the right to end a baby's life, and shame mothers for taking away the child's right to live, by protesting that the mother is killing an individual. Unfortunately, as a result of abortion being prohibited in some nations, 4.7% to 13.2% of maternal deaths are caused by unsafe abortions.

On the other hand, pro-choice movements argue that women should have the choice to do what they want with their body, especially in the case of rape or sexual abuse, as well as if there are financial, social, or psychological issues that would not be beneficial in terms of having and raising a child.

Laws worldwide on abortion vary to a great extent, as some countries make abortion available on demand, with laws such as the Abortion Act of 1967 enacted by the United Kingdom and soon followed by the US, Canada, Tunisia, Denmark, Austria, France, Sweden, New Zealand, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Whereas, in other countries, abortion is outlawed completely. This is the case in a number of nations, primarily Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) such as Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, in which access to safe and legal abortion services are close to impossible.

Due to the varying views on the issue, it is imperative that the United Nations and the international community aim to address this issue holistically, considering not only the health of the mother or the child, but also taking into consideration other moral, cultural, social, and economic factors that may vary between nations, so as to find clear and feasible solutions for all member states, and thus ameliorate the matter.

## Definition of key terms

### Abortion

Abortion is the deliberate stoppage of a human pregnancy, most often performed by a medical specialist during the first 28 weeks of pregnancy. Few of the



many reasons for this procedure are that the mother's life is in critical danger or that the mother is not financially or mentally stable enough to bear and raise a child.<sup>2</sup>

## Contraception

All means of birth control, such as condoms, which are used to prevent impregnation during sexual intercourse.

## Equality Rights

These rights, also considered basic human rights, include the right to live free from violence and discrimination; to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn an equal wage between sexes.

## Feminism

Feminism consists of a range of social and political movements, as well as ideologies that aim to establish the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes. Feminism is increasingly manifested globally and is represented by institutions committed to act and encourage change on the subject of women's rights.<sup>3</sup>

## Human Rights

Human rights are basic living rights that all human beings obtain regardless of sex, nationality, skin colour, religion, or language, as they are not granted by the government and are instead inherent to individuals.

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<sup>2</sup> "Definitions of Abortion." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 5 June 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definitions\\_of\\_abortion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definitions_of_abortion)

<sup>3</sup> "Feminism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/feminism>



## Healthcare

“Healthcare is the provision and maintenance of medical care such as but not limited to restoring physical, mental, or emotional wellbeing of an individual or a community, most commonly by trained specialists and licensed professionals.”<sup>4</sup>

## Reproductive Rights

Reproductive rights are the rights of all individuals to decide whether to reproduce and maintain reproductive health. This may include the following: an individual’s right to commence family planning, to terminate a pregnancy through the process of abortion, to use contraceptives, and to gain access to reproductive health services.

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a sexual act forced upon an individual without their consent. It is considered an act of violence which the attacker uses against an individual due to a certain motive which has been engendered. It is usually a deliberately committed crime.

## Background Information

While many people believe that it is a woman's right to choose whether or not she deems it necessary to have an abortion, other religious, political, and personal morals that some individuals possess may lead women to believe that having an abortion is wrong. It all comes down to upbringing, ethics, religious backgrounds, political alignments, and other attributes that play a large role in formulating opinions and hence influencing actions.

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<sup>4</sup> “Health Care.” *Merriam-Webster*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/health%20care>



## History on the Right to Abortion

### Previously used methods

The first evidence of induced abortion was from the Egyptian Ebers Papyrus in 1550 BCE.<sup>5</sup> Due to the lack of adequate medical supplies, most of the methods employed in early cultures were non-surgical and consisted of physical activities such as climbing, paddling, weightlifting, or diving, so as to terminate the pregnancy. These procedures were extremely dangerous for the mother and sometimes even led to death in the process. Therefore, the laws that were later enacted had the primary intention of protecting women, as they sought abortions and preferred to do so in a safe manner.

### Beliefs on the Right to Abortion in ancient times

In the past, abortions were considered a sin in nations such as England, as the mother was leading to the stoppage of life, and possibly 'killing' an heir to the family. Therefore, the laws enacted were intended to punish and act as a deterrent, by stating that abortions were a crime and would lead to the death penalty in the early 1800s.

However, in other nations, abortions during early pregnancies were not frowned upon, due to the fact that the embryo was not considered human prior to a certain date and was instead considered a plant. Early philosophers in Ancient Rome and Greece continuously argued that a fetus was not formed until at least 40 days after conception for a male, and around 80 days for a female. Furthermore, Aristotle wrote that: "The line between lawful and unlawful abortion will be marked by the fact of having sensation and being alive," as he considered the embryo to truly become human only after a certain period.

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<sup>5</sup> "Abortion in the Middle East and North Africa." PRB, [www.prb.org/resources/abortion-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/](http://www.prb.org/resources/abortion-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/)



## Present Day Beliefs and Actions

### Currently used methods

Presently, the primary type of abortion used is the medical abortion, which is a nonsurgical method for women with pregnancies of less than 63 days' gestation- as determined by a combination of last menstrual period, bimanual exam, or ultrasound. Two medications are required for this abortion method: mifepristone, and misoprostol, which prevent further growth and development of the pregnancy, and facilitate expulsion of the pregnancy. The medications are most commonly prescribed by a hospital and are usually taken 1-2 days apart. The lining of the womb then breaks down, causing bleeding and loss of the fetus a few hours after the woman takes the second medicine. However, other methods such as surgical abortions are also a commonly used method ever since the introduction of vacuum suction, as surgical abortion is now considered to be among the safest procedures in medicine. The procedure consists of dilating the opening of the cervix, and inserting a suction tube into the uterus, which completely removes the fetus from the woman's uterus.

### Current status on the Right to Abortion

The Right to Abortion has been granted in 98% of countries if it means that the mother's life will be saved.<sup>6</sup> However, 72% of countries allow abortions so as to preserve both physical and mental health, 69% of countries allow it in case of incest or rape, and 61% of countries in the case of fetal impairment. Moreover, 34% of countries including Canada, the United States, China, and other European Nations allow the performance of abortions following a woman's request.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, there are six remaining nations that have not legalised abortions under any circumstance. These countries are Chile, the Dominican Republic, El

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<sup>6</sup> Berer, Marge. "Abortion Law and Policy around the World: In Search of Decriminalization." *Health and Human Rights*, Harvard University Press, June 2017, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5473035/>

<sup>7</sup> "The World's Abortion Laws." *Center for Reproductive Rights*, [https://maps.reproductiverights.org/worldabortionlaws?category\[295\]=295](https://maps.reproductiverights.org/worldabortionlaws?category[295]=295)



Salvador and Nicaragua as well as Vatican City (represented in the UN by the Holy See) and Malta.

### Current Abortion Statistics according to the WHO

The number of abortions worldwide is declining due to increased access to contraception. Between 1990–94 and 2015–19, the global unintended pregnancy rate has declined, whereas the proportion of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion has increased. Nevertheless, the WHO’s findings also indicate that the legality of abortion across the world has little to no effect on how many abortions occur every year. Meaning, the number of abortions in countries that have legalised it compared to countries that have not legalised it is very similar. Between the years 2015 and 2019, 73.3 million (61% of unintended pregnancies) induced abortions occurred worldwide yearly,<sup>8</sup> corresponding to a global abortion rate of 39 abortions per 1000 women aged 15–49 years. Furthermore, estimates from 2010 to 2014 showed that around 45% of all abortions were unsafe,<sup>9</sup> and almost all these unsafe abortions took place in LEDCs that had not and perhaps still have not legalised abortion, therefore encouraging women to perform illegal abortions, which are most commonly unsafe.

### The division between individuals and nations regarding Abortion

#### Reasons why individuals/nations may be against abortion

Abortion is completely illegal in a number of nations, primarily LEDCs such as Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, in which access to safe and legal abortion services are close to impossible. This is due to a number of reasons such as the misinformation widely spread on the true consequences of abortion, its condemnation in the name of the embryo’s right to life by movements such as pro-life movements worldwide, and the unequal gender relations in many countries that visualize women as mothers, leading to the practice of abortion being stigmatized.

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<sup>8</sup> “Preventing Unsafe Abortion.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion>

<sup>9</sup> Singh, Susheela, et al. “Abortion Worldwide 2017: Uneven Progress and Unequal Access.” *Guttmacher Institute*, 7 Aug. 2020, [www.guttmacher.org/report/abortion-worldwide-2017#](http://www.guttmacher.org/report/abortion-worldwide-2017#)





### Reasons why individuals/nations may be in favor of abortion

On the other hand, it is also argued that the right to abortion should be defended as a woman's right and a health right. If the mother's life is in danger, it should be considered if there are serious fetal anomalies, if there are serious financial or social reasons which would not be beneficial to the child or the family, and if there are potential risks to physical or mental health for the child. Furthermore, there is the prominent argument of when a woman has been raped or sexually abused, as it is a procedure that has occurred with no consent. Therefore, the woman should have the ability to choose what to do with her body.

### Different Existing Movements

#### Pro-Life Movements

Anti-abortion movements, also remarked as pro-life movements, are involved within the abortion debate advocating against the practice of abortion and its legality. Individuals which participate in these protests are against abortion as they believe that the embryo incorporates a right to life, and abortions remove this basic right. Many anti-abortion movements began as counter movements in response to the legalization of abortions in most nations in the late 1900s, and in 2019, it had been discovered that 21% of US citizens believed that abortions should be legalized under no circumstances.<sup>10</sup> Within the United Kingdom, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children is the most prominent Pro-Life Organization, formed after the 1967 Abortion Act, when abortion was legalized. The group campaigns against abortion by supporting protests at pregnancy clinics and organizing regular protests to voice their disagreement regarding the Right to Abortion.

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<sup>10</sup> Hartig, Hannah. "About Six-in-Ten Americans Say Abortion Should Be Legal in All or Most Cases." *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 6 May 2021, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/05/06/about-six-in-ten-americans-say-abortion-should-be-legal-in-all-or-most-cases/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/05/06/about-six-in-ten-americans-say-abortion-should-be-legal-in-all-or-most-cases/)



### Pro-Choice Movements

Pro-Choice Movements globally are organizations and groups of individuals that are in favor of and support the legalization of abortion for all women, as they believe that it is a right for women to choose what will be done with their body, especially in the case of sexual abuse or any financial or social difficulty that the mother may have to overcome. An example of pro-choice movements is the United States abortion-rights movement, which is a sociopolitical movement supporting the view that a woman should have the legal right to an elective abortion.

### Factors that may lead to abortion

#### Poverty

One of the most prominent issues that lead to the potential necessity for abortions, especially in LEDCs, is poverty and the fact that individuals are unable to have a child, as they do not have an adequate lifestyle, and are aware of the fact that they would be unable to provide for the child economically. As a result of this, prospective parents are reluctant to have a child as they know the financial consequences this would have. As a matter of fact, a study conducted by the WHO shows that the usage of contraception drops to 43% in countries that are blighted by issues like poverty, therefore resulting in increased abortion rates since there are more unintended pregnancies between young couples, as well as couples that are unable to provide for a child economically.

#### Poor education on contraception

Despite the fact that contraception is used to a larger extent nowadays and awareness has been spread on the importance of this matter, poor planning and lack of sex education may lead to unexpected pregnancies, especially for young adults. Thus, this leads to increased abortion rates as a couple may be unable to provide for a child. Furthermore, young women do not have the same opportunities as men primarily in terms of their education in LEDCs; more than 130 million girls are not given



the opportunity to go to school in West and South Asia as well as sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>11</sup> A female without proper education is consequently more likely to have more children at a very young age, as they are forced to due to young marriages or are unaware of the consequences due to the fact that they have not been educated on this matter.

### Consequences of unsafe abortions

An unsafe abortion, which usually take place in nations in which abortion is illegal or extremely difficult to obtain, may make the mother more prone to severe physical and mental consequences, as well as affect her wellbeing and social life.

#### Physical Consequences

The WHO has declared that such consequences may consist of incomplete abortions (which are the partial loss of the products of conception in the first 20 weeks), bleeding such as a hemorrhage, uterine perforation (when the uterus is pierced by a sharp object), and any other type of infection.

#### Social Consequences

Unsafe abortions may lead to social issues, mainly because there are contradictory ideas on the right to abortion. It is not uncommon for women to face disrespect from society and appear as weak when an abortion has been conducted, thus influencing a woman's thoughts, and damaging her mentality, and consequently delaying her recovery. Abortion is stigmatized because it violates the feminine ideals of the inevitability of motherhood. Moreover, hatred in regard to abortion still remains particularly strong when it comes to young unmarried women due to certain moral values or religious beliefs, which may increase the risk of maternal mortality due to it provoking a delay in seeking treatment as a result of women questioning whether what they are doing is right. Furthermore, the negative attitude portrayed by health workers and medical specialists in some cases such as in LEDCs where abortions are frowned

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<sup>11</sup> "Twice as Many Girls as Boys Will Never Start School Says NEW UNESCO Gender EAtlas." UNESCO, 10 Mar. 2016, <https://en.unesco.org/news/twice-many-girls-boys-will-never-start-school-says-new-unesco-gender-eatlas>



upon, leads to poor quality of care and thus further delays in postabortion care for women.

## Major countries and organizations involved

### United States of America (USA)

Although abortion has been completely legalised throughout the United States by the federal government, the accessibility to safe abortions varies from state to state since state laws may differ, consequently enabling some states to ‘get away’ with having stricter laws on abortion. Abortion is a divisive issue within society due to different cultural, religious, and political beliefs, which is why various anti-abortion laws have been enforced in each state ever since 1900. Nevertheless, in 1962, the Society for Humane Abortion was formed, providing women with information on how to obtain and perform abortions in a safe manner, which increased the number of safe abortions and consequently reduced the number of maternal deaths.

The current judicial interpretation of the US Constitution regarding abortion is that abortion is legal under certain circumstances regarding the safety of the mother and unborn child’s life, following the 1973 landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

Although abortion is legal in all US states, and every state has at least one abortion clinic, abortion remains a controversial political issue in some states. An example are two cases in Texas and Louisiana: *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* (2016)<sup>12</sup> and *June Medical Services, LLC v. Russo* (2020),<sup>13</sup> which depict the attempts to restrict abortion laws. Furthermore, in 2019, New York passed the Reproductive Health Act (RHA), which repealed a pre-Roe provision that banned third-trimester

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<sup>12</sup> Parenthood, Planned. “Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt.” *Planned Parenthood Action Fund*, [www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/issues/abortion/whole-womans-health-v-hellerstedt#:~:text=In%20the%20landmark%20Whole%20Woman%27s,to%20access%20safe%2C%20legal%20abortion.](http://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/issues/abortion/whole-womans-health-v-hellerstedt#:~:text=In%20the%20landmark%20Whole%20Woman%27s,to%20access%20safe%2C%20legal%20abortion.)

<sup>13</sup> Jamille Fields Allsbrook and Nora Ellmann. “June Medical Services v. Russo.” *Center for American Progress*, [www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/02/06/480156/june-medical-services-v-gee/](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/02/06/480156/june-medical-services-v-gee/).



abortions except in cases where the mother's life was in critical danger. Additionally, abortion in the Northern Mariana Islands in the US, is illegal.

### United Kingdom (UK)

President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, John Peel, advised the British Government on what soon became the 1967 Abortion Act. The Abortion Act allowed for legal abortion on a number of grounds, including to prevent grave permanent injury to a woman's physical or mental health, to avoid injury to the physical or mental health of the woman or her existing child if the pregnancy was still under 28 weeks, or if the child was likely to be severely physically or mentally handicapped.

### The Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic is one of the few countries globally that has made abortion completely illegal, with no exception to saving the mother's life, or other such reasons. The ban of abortion was made constitutional in September 2009 when a constitutional amendment stated that the right to life was "inviolable from conception until death" and was agreed upon by the congress. Despite the opposition by The Dominican Gynecology and Obstetrics Society which stated that the number of maternal deaths would rise as a result of the illegality of abortion, abortions remained illegal, and further criminalization on this matter was introduced. In fact, in October 2012, the Dominican Republic talked over Article 90 of the Penal Code, which ordered criminal penalties for women who proceeded with abortions as well as for women who had encouraged and helped with this sort of decision.

As a result of this, women and girls who are economically able to, travel to another country so as to find safe providers to help them end a pregnancy. Nevertheless, a large percentage of women are still forced to risk their lives in order to have illegal abortions, which are often unsafe and may result in serious health complications.



## The National Organization for Women (NOW)

The National Organization for Women (NOW) was established in 1966 in Washington D.C. by a group of feminists who were dedicated to actively challenging sex discrimination in society. Therefore, the NOW has been working towards reproductive rights and justice for women, thus enabling the use of abortions to a greater extent. They have established an annual “Love Your Body Day” which is a national day designed to speak out against images of women that are harmful and offensive, thus empowering them. Furthermore, they offer a great number of projects, activities, and activism for young women, so as to encourage them to stand up for themselves.

## World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO reports annual statistics concerning the number of unsafe abortions which take place globally, as well as provides gradual solutions and means of combating this issue so as to eliminate the number of unsafe abortions worldwide. Furthermore, many campaigns are organized with the aim of informing the public about the results of unintended pregnancy and contraceptive use, consequently spreading awareness on the matter, and thus ameliorating the issue. Lastly, in 2012, the WHO published updated technical and policy guidance on safe abortion in the following publications: Safe abortion: technical and policy guidance for health systems, Clinical practice handbook for safe abortion, Health worker roles in providing safe abortion care and post-abortion contraception (2015), and medical management of abortion (2018).

## Amnesty International

Amnesty International, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) situated in the United Kingdom, prioritizes research and education on human rights, so as to make them more accessible and ensure their implementation. The organization is said to have more than seven million members and supporters around the world, due to its widespread educational programs and campaigns that involve all



individuals. Campaigns such as the one that took place in Ireland: #notacriminal, helped ameliorate the situation in Ireland on the question of women’s rights to abortion, as it became a matter that was spoken about more openly. An amnesty international activist even mentioned that “Partnering with Amnesty helped us globalize our campaign to change Ireland's abortion laws.” Furthermore, the large number of other campaigns such as a “My Body, My Rights” campaign are engendered for the sole purpose of empowering women and stopping the control and criminalization of sexuality and reproduction.



## Timeline of events

<u>7th April 1948</u>	The World Health Organization is founded
<u>July 1961</u>	Amnesty International is founded
<u>30th June 1966</u>	The National Organization for Women is established
<u>January 1967</u>	The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children is formed
<u>27th October 1967</u>	The Abortion Act of 1967 is enacted in the United Kingdom, enabling abortions in the case that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the child or mother
<u>22nd January 1973</u>	The Roe v. Wade case occurs
<u>20th May 2003</u>	Amnesty International co-hosts “Women with Disabilities & Allies Forum: Linking Arms for Equality & Justice for All”
<u>June 2005</u>	The Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network is founded
<u>June 2007</u>	Amnesty International changes its neutral stance on abortion to supporting access to abortion in cases of rape and incest, and when the life or the health of the mother might be threatened
<u>18th September 2009</u>	Abortion is officially completely banned in the Dominican Republic
<u>9th March 2010</u>	The Commission on the Status of Women introduces “Eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women”
<u>22nd January 2019</u>	The Reproductive Health Act is enacted in New York
<u>23rd September 2019</u>	Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage was adopted





## Previous attempts to solve the issue

### The Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network (GIWYN)

The GIWYN is an NGO in Nigeria that has launched a number of campaigns against unsafe abortions, promoting women's rights, gender equality and the safe and legal access to abortion for all women. Their work is "based on the principle that every woman and youth have the right to the highest standard of living, safe reproductive choices, high quality health care, and an enabling environment that promotes their fundamental human, reproductive and sexual health rights." <sup>14</sup>

### Roe v. Wade

Roe v. Wade, (1973), was a case of the US Supreme Court in which it ruled that the Constitution of the US ensures the safekeeping of a pregnant woman's freedom to choose whether or not she would like to have an abortion without intemperate government limitation. It became a continuous national talk within the US about whether and to what extent fetus removal ought to be lawful, who ought to choose the legality of abortion, what strategies the Supreme Court ought to utilize, and what the part of spiritual and ethical views within the political domain ought to be.

Roe v. Wade reshaped American legislative issues, separating much of the US into abortion rights and anti-abortion movements. The decision included the case of Norma McCorvey known as "Jane Roe" who in 1969 became pregnant with her third child. McCorvey needed an abortion, but she lived in Texas, where abortion was illegal except when necessary to avoid damaging the mother's life. She was introduced to lawyers Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee, who filed a lawsuit stating that Texas's abortion laws were unconstitutional.

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<sup>14</sup> "Who We Are - GIWYN: Women's Rights Are Not Negotiable." GIWYN, 19 Feb. 2018, <https://giwynn.org/who-we-are/>



## Relevant UN Resolutions, Events, Treaties and Legislation

### World Health Organization Manuals

A United Nations specialized agency, the WHO, has done a lot of work and conducted adequate research regarding educating the public on abortion and fighting for its legality globally, primarily by publishing several manuals on this matter. Each manual consists of information concerning how to deal with unsafe abortions as well as guidelines.<sup>15</sup>

### Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage

The UN General Assembly adopted a landmark ‘Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage’ on 23 September 2019, which restates the need to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services and reproductive rights.<sup>16</sup>

### Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), on the right to life

Through this article, the Human Rights Committee was able to reaffirm that safe, legal, and effective access to abortion is a human right protected under the ICCPR, including, in particular, under the right to life, preventable maternal mortality and morbidity constitute violations of the right to life, and the right to life under the ICCPR begins at birth.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “Preventing Unsafe Abortion.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion).

<sup>16</sup> “74/2. Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage.” *A/Res/74/2 - e - a/Res/74/2 -Desktop*, undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/2.

<sup>17</sup> “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.” *OHCHR*, [www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx#:~:text=Sentence%20of%20death%20shall%20not,Party%20to%20the%20present%20Covenant](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx#:~:text=Sentence%20of%20death%20shall%20not,Party%20to%20the%20present%20Covenant).



Eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women , E/CN.6/2010/L.6, 9 March 2010

The main goal of The Commission on the Status of Women is improving maternal health as well as reducing the maternal mortality rate. This is due to the fact that in 2010, an estimated 355,000 women died due to complications of childbirth, and 99% of these deaths occurred in developing countries, therefore by achieving this goal globally, this would no longer be a prominent issue and cause of maternal mortality.<sup>18</sup>

## Possible solutions

### Education

#### Increased awareness on Contraception

Raising awareness on contraception as well as sex education overall would allow women to be fully aware and consider the implications of having sexual relations. This would further educate them on the consequences of risky sexual behaviors, which would eliminate a great number of misconceptions and reduce the number of necessary abortions globally.

#### Increased awareness on Sexual Assault

Raising awareness on sexual assault would enable young girls and women as well as men to be aware of what they need to look out for as well as be careful of when it comes to risky situations, or even day-to-day situations, and consequently decrease the number of sexual assault occurrences and unwanted pregnancies engendered this way.

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<sup>18</sup> “Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality and Morbidity through the Empowerment of Women .” *United Nations Economic and Social Council* , [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/outcomes/L%206%20%20MM.Advance%20unedited.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/outcomes/L%206%20%20MM.Advance%20unedited.pdf).



## Increased support from the government

### Financial Support

So as to decrease the number of abortions, the government could decide on a specific amount of money lended to couples who are unable to provide for a child at the time of the pregnancy and therefore aid them in being able to create a suitable lifestyle for the child. Furthermore, all governments may consider making contraception and other types of protection available to a greater extent so as to decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies.

### Mental Support

The government could be encouraged to assist people with psychological aid when necessary, so as to ease the transition and idea of having a child for young adults and help in the case of a possible trauma having been caused by sexual assault, leading to pregnancy. Such mental support may come from the implementation of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), or a government-funded campaign on mental health.

## Legislation by all member states

All member states may consider working towards creating individual national laws about the right to abortion so as to ensure that the set legislations do not lead to religious disputes as well as moral disagreements between member states, and enable all nations to work independently regarding this sensitive matter.

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