



UN WOMEN

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women



Committee: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
(UN Women)

Topic: Addressing the Dispute Towards Abortion

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Dear delegates,

We are overjoyed to have you join us in SPISMUN25! We give you a warm welcome to the UN Women committee and hope you enjoy the topic of the debate. We will go through major issues and you will have to make important decisions playing your role in this debate.

Your Secretary is Isabella Noreen Cotton, your Moderator Joseph Mounsef and, I am Victoria González your chair director. Every delegate is expected to give their best effort in making the debate both engaging and amusing.

We are thrilled to have you here this year and hope you have a wonderful and fun experience.

Good luck, delegates!

If you have any doubts, feel free to share them at:

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Sincerely,

Victoria González



I. Committee Background

Promoting gender equality throughout the globe and reaching the appropriate audience has always been a challenge for the United Nations. *To address important issues that affect women and girls*, the United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in July 2010, with Michelle Bachelet as the *first Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director*. By doing so, there was a significant increase in the UN's impact on advancing gender equality.

UN Women targets gender equality, youth, economic empowerment, security, opportunities, leadership, governance, and the eradication of violence. As part of the UN reform agenda, the implementation of *Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5)* has *helped accomplish*

the *goals* by bringing in additional resources, aiming to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls around the globe.



II. History of the Topic

Abortion is a practice that has been around since ancient times. The first records of abortion date back to the year 1500 BCE, in Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. During those times, considered the Ancient Ages, abortion was not strongly stigmatized. However, with the *increasing influence of the catholic church* in the Middle Ages, *abortion began to be categorized as a serious sin*. In the XVIII and XIX centuries, *it started to be more* strictly regularized due to *advances in science*. In many places, laws supporting abortion ban started to be introduced, giving it a more negative perspective. In the 20th century, feminist movements *started advocating for* women's autonomy over their bodies, leading to better recognition of the *right to choose and major changes in laws* supporting this principle. Currently, the many *perspectives* surrounding abortion *are* strongly dependent on the culture and social groups. In some regions, it is *seen as a right* for women, while in others, it is *harshly criticized*.

In ancient times, people relied on natural methods to practice an abortion, *using herbs and other natural remedies that provoked the fetus to be expelled*. Today, there are different and *safer medical approaches available for women*, including medications like mifepristone and misoprostol, and surgical procedures that consist of aspiration, dilation, and curettage (D&C),

dilation and evacuation (D&E), induction, and saline injections, which is an option not commonly used.

Abortion can be considered in different scenarios for multiple reasons and it involves different methods depending on the situation. The most common cases are:

-Fetus Anomalies: Some fetuses may have severe anomalies that can compromise their quality of life, or can cause death shortly after birth.

-Personal Circumstances: Women may face economic or personal challenges that make it difficult to raise a child at a particular time in their lives.

-Sexual Assault: Abortion can be a crucial option for women victims of sexual assault. -Body Rights: In many societies and cultures, the acknowledgment of women having the right to decide about their bodies exists, including the choice to terminate pregnancy.

The consequences of abortion can vary depending on each individual's physical and mental health and strength. Physical consequences include *infections, heavy bleeding, uterine perforations, and future complications in pregnancies*. A woman can suffer from PTSD or feelings of guilt and sadness as a cause of the trauma an abortion can produce. There are also economic consequences due to the high costs of the medical procedures used to perform an abortion. Aside from financial, mental, and physical consequences, women can also be criticized for carrying an abortion provoked by their cultural beliefs, social circles, and family. It may also affect the relationship with their partner since an abortion is a life-altering event in someone's life.

III. Current Issues

United States:

In June 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned Roe V. Wade who had set a constitutional right for abortion across the



United States. By doing this, they allowed each state to make its abortion laws independently. This independence caused *legal battles* in some states, confusing the laws. Although California and New York, among other states, have kept and protected abortion rights, many states, especially across the South, made near-total bans and restrictions for abortion. After the change in the abortion laws, many women are facing challenges respecting abortion. Women often need to travel to other states that allow abortion to be able to carry out abortions. The new laws have also raised confusion in pregnancy topics, such as miscarriage, and many women are turning to different methods like abortion pills. The changes made by the U.S. Supreme Court have also caused an impact across the globe, strengthening anti-abortion movements in countries like Poland and Brazil and raising concerns about the fragility of abortion rights in nations like Ireland and Argentina. While many global leaders have criticized the ruling as a setback for women's rights, anti-abortion advocates have praised it.



Poland:

Poland has one of the most strict and restrictive laws in Europe, restricting abortion access to cases of rape, incest, and maternal danger. In 2020, the Constitutional Tribunal banned abortion

in cases of fetal anomalies, further restricting the use of abortion. As a response, women have organized *large protests*, starting the “Women’s Strike” movement. Many resort to traveling to other countries, like Germany, to get an abortion and searching for abortion pills online.

Japan:

Japan has fairly strict abortion laws, permitting the procedure only in specific situations, like medical needs, rape, or incest. Although it is not outright criminalized, the Abortion Control Law of 1969 imposes strict regulations. Recent changes have made access easier, including the *arrival of abortion pills in 2023*. Despite all of these limitations, abortions are still common, with around 100,000 procedures each year.

Mexico:

The decriminalization of abortion in certain Mexican states has ignited a national conversation, with supporters advocating for more reforms. Access to abortion differs greatly throughout Mexico, as some states enforce more progressive laws than others. *Mexico's legal position is also shaping discussions in nearby countries* such as El Salvador and Honduras, which are known for having some of the strictest abortion laws in the world.

South Sudan:

South Sudan has limited access to abortion, with exceptions in cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is at high risk. The current conflict in South Sudan has further limited access to reproductive health, including abortion procedures. Unsafe abortions significantly contribute to maternal mortality rates due to a lack of access to legal and safe methods.

El Salvador

El Salvador has one of the most restrictive abortion laws, banning it in all circumstances. *Women who look for abortions or are accused of carrying one in the country face severe consequences,*

including time in prison. Human rights organizations have been extremely important for abortion laws and have stood up for changes to protect women's rights.

Nigeria

Like South Sudan, abortion is restricted and only allowed in cases of rape, incest, or risk to the mother's life. Cultural and religious positions, mainly Islamic and Christian, impact the country's abortion laws. Illegal and unsafe abortion procedures significantly affect the health risk and mortality rates among women living in Nigeria.

United Kingdom

The UK has fairly liberal abortion laws, permitting abortions up to 24 weeks under specific circumstances. Although discussions about reforming the law continue, access to services can differ by region, and some women may face waiting times or financial obstacles. There are also concerns regarding the quality and availability of abortion care, especially in rural areas.

IV. UN Action and Resolutions

UN Actions and Resolutions Regarding Abortion and Reproductive Rights:

- International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) - Cairo 1994:

- This conference featured the importance of reproductive health, including access to safe abortion as a part of human rights.

- This led to the Cairo Programme of Action, highlighting the importance of providing comprehensive reproductive healthcare.

- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995):

- This document ensures the need for women's access to sexual and reproductive health services.

-Calls for governments to address unsafe abortion as an important public health issue.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Goals 3 and 5 (2015):

-Goal 3 includes targets that promote universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, which encompasses family planning and education.



-Goal 5 aims to guarantee reproductive rights for women as a fundamental aspect of achieving global gender equality.

- Resolution 2016 on Preventing Maternal Mortality and Morbidity (UN Human Rights Council):

-This resolution acknowledges that unsafe abortion is causing maternal mortality and morbidity.

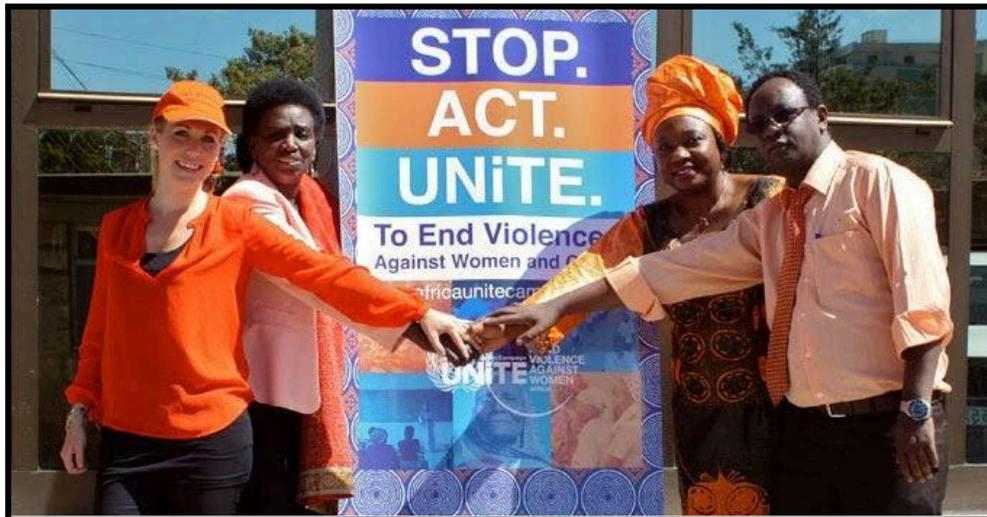
-Encourages member states to make sure women have access to safe and legal abortion according to international human rights standards.

- Resolution on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW General Recommendation No. 24):

-Emphasizes women's right to health, including access to family planning services and abortion allowed by the law.

-Urges governments to address unsafe abortion and ensure reproductive health for all women.

- Universal Periodic Review (UPR):



-A process that regularly evaluates the human rights of all UN Member States and their policies on reproductive rights and abortion access.

-Many countries have received suggestions regarding the need to expand access to safe abortion and lower maternal mortality rates.

- UN Women's advocacy and reports on Reproductive Rights:

-UN Women consistently stand for the addition of reproductive rights in global gender equality efforts.

-Their reports emphasize their need for safe access to legal abortion practices as part of reproductive healthcare.

V. Essential Questions

1. What is your country's position on abortion? Is it legal, restricted, or prohibited?
2. What are the cultural, religious, or political factors that affect your country's laws on abortion rights?
3. Under what circumstances is abortion allowed?

4. How does your country manage situations where abortion laws intervene with human rights/obligations?
5. What actions has your country made according to UN resolutions on reproductive rights and abortion?
6. How does your country educate or spread awareness about reproductive health and abortion rights?
7. What support is available for women looking for abortion services and unplanned pregnancies?
8. How does your country collaborate with international organizations in addressing reproductive health and abortion issues?

VI. Conclusion

The history of abortion spans centuries, with changing perspectives influenced by religion, culture, and politics. While ancient civilizations were more tolerant, religious influences in the Middle Ages led to its stigmatization. Feminist movements in the 20th century shifted the debate towards recognizing abortion as part of women's rights.

Today, abortion laws vary globally. Some countries, like Mexico, are making progress in decriminalization, while others, like Poland and El Salvador, impose strict bans. The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* in the U.S. has intensified global discussions on reproductive rights.

The UN, through efforts like the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), advocates for safe abortion access and reproductive health. However, many nations still struggle to implement these rights, and ongoing efforts are needed to ensure comprehensive reproductive healthcare for all women.

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