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20 July 1993

The Secretary : :  
Technical Committee for Fundamental Rights  
Fax 397 2211 :

Dear Sir /Madam

Legal abortion lowers thes overall abortion rate and maternal death  
rate. .

The Women 'z Legal Sti¬\201tua Committee believes that the right to  
-abortion should be included in any Bill of Rights and that South

Africa should include the relevant portions from the UN Convention  
on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women  
signed by President de Klerk. South Africa will then Jjoin the  
rest of the world regarding freedom of choice in abortion.

In support of this Ã©iatement the following points are provided:

The findings of the International Planned Parenthood Federation,  
reported in the British Medical Journal (Vol. 38, 5 June 1993),  
have shown that the Netherlands has now â\200\230the lowest abortion rate  
in the world.Â® â\200\230Abortion is available on demand in the  
Netherlands.' â\200\230In Western Europe (except for Ireland) where  
abortion is most easily available the rate is 14 per 1000 women,  
in Latin America, where a legal abortion is difficult to obtain  
the rate ly 30 to 60 per 1000 women. Clearly legal abortion  
reduces the total number of abortions.

According to the British Medical Journal (Vol. 298, 8 May 1989)

in the 1850 Â°'s abortien was the main cause of maternal death. The  
number of women who died between 1961 and 1963, was 160, yet after  
the UK 1867 Abortion Act, this number fell to four in the period  
1885 to 1987. In 19656 two years before the 1967 Abortion Act there  
w;rg 3050 cases of sepsis caused by abortion which fell to 390 in  
1882. :

Our hospital services are seriously overstretched (Sunday Times, .

11 and 18 July 1993), If the pattern in the UK is followed it is likely that we can also reduce the rate of sepsis and the medical skills and costs involved.

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Access to legal abortion must be protected.