



## Economic and Social Council

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### Substantive session of 2010

New York, 28 June-22 July 2010

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally  
agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality  
and empowerment of women**

### **Statement submitted by Family Research Council, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/2010/100.



## **Statement**

### **Scientific, peer-reviewed studies on the psychological impact of abortion**

As the United Nations strives to achieve Millennium Development Goal 5 (Improve maternal health) and, specifically, target 5.B (Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health), women deserve the unbiased consideration and inclusion of all peer-reviewed studies examining abortion's effect on women's health.

Scientific evidence shows that abortion is associated with a wide range of serious and lasting mental health problems. A New Zealand study showed that women who had had an abortion had elevated rates of subsequent mental health problems including depression, anxiety, suicidal behaviours and substance use disorders. The study also showed that the association between abortion and mental health problems persisted after adjustment for confounding factors.

A study using nationally representative United States data with statistical controls showed abortion was a risk factor for post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression and numerous other psychiatric disorders.

Many studies link abortion and suicide. A study in Finland showed that women who had an abortion had six times the risk of death from suicide compared to women who carried to term. A study of more than 173,000 patient records showed an increased rate of suicide over the eight years studied that was not explained by prior mental illness. There are reports of attempted or completed suicides coinciding with the anniversary date of the abortion or expected due date of the aborted child.

A systematic article review showed that abortion was associated with increased risk of depression and attempts at suicide or self-harm.

A South African study revealed that 18 per cent of abortion patients were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder three months after the procedure.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a predictor of poor general health. Effects of trauma often last for many years.

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