1) DEVOLUTION
I am aware that the CEDAW is considering the issue of extending abortion law to N Ireland, in the absence of a functioning Stormont Executive to represent the wishes of the population of NI, and without any representation by MPs from NI. This is worrying from a constitutional point of view and contradicts the findings of a recent ComRes poll, which indicated that a majority of people in NI wished the issue to be decided in the local assembly. Any decision should await its reinstatement as the matter is very sensitive in this part of the UK.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
The current law has been effective in that tens of thousands of people born in NI would have been aborted under the provisions of the Abortion Act this is a well-established figure, agreed by the Advertising Standards Agency. It has been pointed out that NI is the safest place in the UK for people diagnosed in utero as having a disability. Many people in NI hold to the opinion that the unborn baby also has human rights. Those who escaped the possibility of abortion would strongly agree - changing the law results in a change of culture. Expectant parents may receive an overly pessimistic opinion about the child's future prospects of quality of life, resulting in no life at all.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
I believe in equality of human rights between the mother and child, except where the mother’s life is at severe risk. In this situation the baby's life is also at serious risk. It is preferable to have a live mother that that both should die. The claim that NI’s abortion laws contravene the UN convention on Human Rights is invalid as this is merely the opinion of one unelected committee. This was confirmed by the Supreme Court.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
As a Plastic Surgeon I am aware of children with disability and disfigurement, such as severe cleft lip and palate, who have been treated and are living healthy and happy lives. In other jurisdictions they might well have been aborted. I have friends who have children with Down's syndrome who, similarly are living happy and fulfilled lives into adulthood. Are such children aborted to "save them" from a life of frustration and sadness or in order to relieve adults and members of our society from inconvenience and expenditure? Many of us do not think that this is how a humane society should function, and of course the same applies to children who would have been born in a totally healthy condition. This is all the more tragic in European countries, none of which are close to replenishing their populations in the context of a precipitous decline in birth rates.

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