PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

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Theme 1: Gender norms and stereotypes

<u>Gender norms and stereotypes as barriers to gender equality</u>

Fixed ideas about what women and men should do in the home or at work are learned by girls and boys in early childhood and throughout their lives. These ideas or gender stereotypes affect their choices in school and as they enter careers and contribute to a lack of progress toward equality between women and men. This limits not only the jobs that women and men consider or are available to them, but also can exclude women and men from social roles and tasks.

➢ Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

Single-sex schooling is the prime source of stereotyping in this country and should not be supported by the state. If private schools want to be single-sex, that's fine. The state should not be supporting gender segregation.

➢ Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

The state should not support single-gender schools. All publicly funded schools should be co-ed.

Theme 2: Work: Occupational segregation by gender, gender discrimination and the gender pay gap

Women and men are often concentrated into different kinds of jobs and within the same occupations, women are often in work that is less well paid and has less opportunities for career advancement. Women often work in areas where they can work part-time so as to fit in with their caring responsibilities. While many men work in low paid jobs, many professions dominated by women are also low paid, and professions that have become female-dominated have become lower paid. This worsens the gender pay gap (the average difference between the wages of women and men who are working).

➢ Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

> Maternity leave policies are a major barrier. The cost and unsuitable childcare is another major issue forcing women into part-time jobs and limiting their career progression.

➢ Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

> Equalize parental leave for mothers and fathers, to be taken within a baby's first year of life. Fund childcare for all children from public sources and ensure hours are such that career-progressing parents can actually work full time.

Theme 3. Care, paid and unpaid, as a social and family responsibility

Care -- the social responsibility of care and women and men's co responsibility for care, especially within the family

Women remain disproportionately responsible for unpaid care and often work in poorly paid care work. For working parents or lone parents, balancing paid work with parenting and or caring for older and dependent adults presents significant challenges. Women are most disadvantaged by these challenges, yet men also suffer from lack of opportunities to share parenting and caring roles. Despite recent legislation and policy initiatives to support early years parental care, inequalities in the distribution of unpaid care continue between women and men. The cost of childcare has been identified as a particular barrier to work for women alongside responsibilities of caring for older relatives and dependent adults.

➢ Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this them in law, policy and practice.

> This is culturally shaped and so convenient for the state.

➢ Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address theme (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

> Care needs to be properly funded and affordable to free women from these socially imposed responsibilities. Men should be featured in caring roles in school books, movies, tv programmes etc. Home Ec should be a core subject for all pupils.

Theme 4: Women's access to, and representation in, public life and decision making

Ensure women's participation and representation in decision-making and leadership in the workplace, political and public life

Women are systematically underrepresented in leadership in economic and political decision-making. Despite the introduction of a candidate gender quota (through the system of party funding) for national political office, and initiatives to support women's access to corporate decision-making roles, men continue to dominate leadership positions. There are also issues to be considered around how media represents women and men.

➢ Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

Men doing business over a pint in a pub after office hours while women rush home to look after children etc. Too much business is done in situations and places that exclude women.

➢ Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

I believe a cultural shift is required. It needs to start with schools not separating boys from girls but promoting cooperation among the pupils irrespective of gender.

5.   Where does gender inequality impact most?

To conclude we would be interested in your response to the following question: <u>In which area do you think gender inequality matters most</u>?

Please rank the following in order of importance, <u>1 being the most important</u>:

- Paid work   1

- Home & family life   2

- Education   4

- Politics and public life   5

- Media   66

- Caring for others   3

- Other – please elaborate

➢ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

➢ Please include any further comments or observations you may have here.

Regulations against unconscious bias, e.g. requiring job or applications to be processed without knowing the name and gender of an applicant, would go some way. Data on women in every aspect of life need to be collected, analysed, and taken into account when taking any decisions. Men and women are different. Transport, health care, work places need to be designed to cater to all, not just the default male. I strongly recommend reading "Invisible Women" by Caroline Criado Perez who lays out these issues in detail.