

Sunday Feedback Session

16th February 2020

Gender, gender norms and stereotypes, and the family.

Chair

Good afternoon everybody and welcome back to another public session of the work of the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality and the citizens have been discussing at their roundtables the question which maybe you can also see on the screen it is that citizens are asked do you agree with the conclusions of the constitutional convention concerning article in 41 2 which is the clause on the woman in the home and if not what would you propose instead. And we're now going to get some quick feedback from the roundtables to hear how far the citizens have come in their discussions this is a topic that we will return to in future sessions as well but it would be very good now to hear the first outcomes of the deliberations of the citizens on that question. So can we hear from table one please.

Table 1

The citizens from table one considered this topic and there were mixed views; one was that this should be removed completely from the Constitution but there was also a view that it should be retained within the Constitution but it should be amended to be gender-neutral thank you.

Table 2

Yes the citizens at this table, table two broadly agreed with the conclusions of the constitutional convention concerning article 41.2 there was some variation in terms of the level of obligation that should be placed on the State. Two citizens selected number three level three that is shall provide or provide a reasonable level of support, one citizen selected level four and three citizens selected level five namely shall support.

Table 3

Yes the majority of the citizens at Table three agreed with the conclusions however they would like a definition on what reasonable level of support means is it financial or emotional. One citizen mostly agreed but would like to understand more on the issue around caring beyond the home in the context of the Assembly they felt that we're not working with finite information and it was not enough to make a decision and then there was one comment on the basic language of the Constitution uses the term common good as a cornerstone and they felt that we need to build on our understanding of what common good means.

Table 4

The citizens at Table four also unanimously agreed with the conclusions of the Constitutional Convention that it should not remain the same however there was similarly to Table three some uncertainty about what the question meant do you want to include carers beyond the home and they would like further clarity on what that meant. In response to the last part there was some variation in the responses by the citizens to the level of obligation that the State should provide for citizens selected a scale of three which would provide a reasonable level of support and to citizens at the table and selected a scale of five that they shall support.

Table 5

The citizens at Table five were also broadly in agreement with the conclusions of the Constitutional Convention in relation to the role of the woman in the home there was concern at the table though in relation to the language of the provisions that the citizens were asked to look at and there was also concern as to how the citizens were being asked to propose new things in relation to language that the citizens didn't really fully understand and they felt that perhaps with the benefit of legal expert assistance in deciphering the language and what they were being asked to define and to understand would be of benefit going forward.

Table 6

The citizens at this table broadly agreed with the convention recommendations however there's a couple of things they just like to add make it gender-neutral to include other carers in the home and non-binary. They'd like the word mothers where it's used endeavour to ensure that mothers changed to guardians and they agreed with number five shall support and lastly a right to a home shall be recognized thank you.

Table 7

The citizens at table number seven in terms of the convention recommendations in terms of the first part article of 41.2 there was broad consensus however and one point that was raised by one of the citizens was in terms of the level of support that maybe it's not achievable and it's more aspirational. Then in terms of article 41.2.2 there was mixed views as well as some confusion; one point raised was that it needs to be in plainer English and that's the views Table seven.

Table 8

The citizens at Table eight were unanimous in their decision and first of all has been said by some of the other tables looking for further clarification on 2.1 meaning care beyond the home, also to make a general gender-neutral and agree for it to remain in the Constitution however have it amended and also how can it be actually given more credence or power. And the last

one clarification on the ruling of the common good supersedes the Constitution and that was referring to the Nicholas case in UK.

Table 9

The citizens at Table nine agree with results would have concerns with; do you want to include carers beyond the home this needs to be defined and clarified for the protection of children with these carers there was divided opinion between endeavour to support and provide a reasonable level of support.

Table 10

The citizens at Table ten were broadly an agreement with the outcome of the Constitutional Convention I suppose the split in relation to care, the level of care would be provided was very similar as well I think three, three and one. There was one issue with the reference to mothers and their neglect of their duties in the in the home within section 41.2 that people thought to be extremely sexist and would need to be amended.

Table 11

The citizens at table 11 were in agreement with the conclusions of the Constitutional Convention and voted five nil in relation to it they had a number of observations. Observation one was that the government is renegeing on 41.2.2 as government's supports are not adequate the citizens requested a definition regarding carers beyond the home and where there is reference to supports does it include financial. And the last observation from the citizens was that the supports should be for both men and women if they are carers but there was concern highlighted on the potential for unintended consequences if it reinforces gender stereotypes that the woman would be at home as the carer and also a woman's role in the work flowers.

Table 12

The majority of the citizens did not agree and would like article 41.2 removed from the Constitution however one citizen would like it retained in its current form.

Table 13

Table thirteen the citizens unanimously agreed with the changes but said it should be gender and place neutral.

Table 14

The citizens a table of fourteen largely agreed with the spirit of the convention conclusions but could not formally say yes as they felt certain aspects should be amended their proposals included that it should include carers and be more gender neutral they agreed the majority agreed with the table relating to article 41.2.2 to that it should be change rather than deleted however one citizen at the table felt that article 41.2.2 should be removed they felt that the convention recommendations relating the option three and option five was too vague as there could be a huge difference between a reasonable level of support and shall support. In the alternative the citizens felt that there should be a stay-at-home payment provided and this could be done by a minimum threshold by legislation. They felt that this could also be one citizen felt that this also could be means tested.

Chair

Thank you very much indeed that's extremely interesting and again very rich in terms of a range of views questions that we will answer in the next session and this brings now to an end the live streaming for this weekend's session of the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality.