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5 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour of the Chief Minister regarding the implementation of the ‘United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: compliance of draft Laws and training of States of Jersey employees’ (P.63/2017): [OQ.1/2019]

What progress has the Chief Minister made in implementing United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: compliance of draft Laws and training of States of Jersey employees, P.63/2017, which was adopted by the States on 26th September 2017?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Yes, and my Assistant Chief Minister, the Deputy of Grouville, is answering this question, Sir.

Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville (Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur):

On 2nd October 2018 the Minister for Children and Housing issued a Ministerial Decision for law-drafting instructions to bring into effect the Council of Ministers’ policy decision to indirectly incorporate the U.N.C.R.C. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) into domestic legislation. The new legislation will introduce the statutory duty on the States of Jersey to have due regard to the convention in legislation and policy, as is the case in the Welsh Assembly. As part of implementing this programme of work, all States of Jersey employees will be provided with a copy of the U.N.C.R.C., as well as a package of training measures addressing the provisions and implications of the convention.

3.5.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I have been briefed on this by the Children’s Commissioner, so I have a certain level of information. But it did concern me that this was a States decision, it was not just my own decision. It was unanimously passed by the previous Assembly. The purpose of my proposition at that time was to contribute to a culture change within the States workforce and within the Council of Ministers and our Parliament. Can I ask the Assistant Minister: does she believe that that culture change is in effect in this Council of Ministers, as in: is every Minister considering children as a matter of course when they are forming policy and drafting legislation?

The Deputy of Grouville:

I would answer that by saying that by putting this - and the Deputy played a good part in this, having her proposition passed - I see as a transition period to indirectly incorporate the U.N.C.R.C. During that time, as we introduce policy, we will be able to give focus on the international legislation as we bring it into domestic legislation. During that period staff will be trained; front line staff, staff in the judiciary and if anyone wanted to see the cultural change happening already, it is happening with children in schools. As the good Deputy will know, Grouville School was the first school to introduce this and they are now progressing on to a gold award scheme. There are 16 schools registered and, my goodness me, I was very, very enlightened when I attended one of their classes as they told me the rights of children. But more specifically, to answer her question, yes, I feel it is on the agenda now. We now have a Minister for Children, as we have never had before, and, as she knows, it is one of the States top priorities to put children first. It is most firmly on the agenda and, as most things with a cultural change, that takes a bit longer.

3.5.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can I just clarify the response? Is every Minister considering children as a matter of course over the course of their work, every Minister?

The Bailiff:

That was another question and the rule is you wait until you are invited to speak.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Sorry, Sir, that was the gist of my question and I did not feel it was answered.

The Deputy of Grouville:

We now have a Minister for Children around the Council of Ministers' table. As we discuss issues, then he sits there and he comes from the discussion point of view, from a housing and children perspective and it is one of the top 5 strategic priorities. Obviously, it is going to play a part in every aspect of Government decision-making.

3.5.3 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Given the intention to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and also given the priority, children as a priority, as is shown in the Common Strategic Priorities, can the Minister assure us that she and her ministerial colleagues will be supporting the proposition today, P.144, as it is an important move towards implementing the United Nations Rights of the Child?

The Deputy of Grouville:

I believe the whole suite of package from the U.N.C.R.C. was going to be adopted or going to be brought to this Assembly for consideration, in which P.144 was part of that. I cannot speak for other Ministers but it is up to Ministers how they vote on that particular element or whether they wait until the whole package comes forward or whether they disagree with the notion. I really cannot speak for my fellow Ministers.

3.5.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you believe that it is congruent with the Convention on Human Rights for Jersey Government to charge the children of E.U. (European Union) nationals £12.50 to be part of our community?

The Deputy of Grouville:

I believe this is the cost of registering them, so somebody has got to pay for it and why not the people receiving the benefit?

3.5.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Are there any implications for the practice of child labour when it comes to the U.N. (United Nations) Convention on Children's Rights and how that might affect Jersey?

The Deputy of Grouville:

Child labour in Jersey, the impact of child labour in Jersey; I am unaware of child labour in Jersey.

3.5.6 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Does the Minister agree that decisions of the previous Assembly should be respected and, where possible, should come back to the new Assembly if a significant change is made to them? One of the decisions, one part of the proposition, P.63/2017, was to send a copy of the U.N.C.R.C. to all States employees. I understand that will be sent as part of a training package. But I do believe that there is a facility whereby the Chief Minister can directly email all States employees and this has been used

frequently by the chief executive recently. I would like to press on that particular part of the proposition, it could be easily achieved within a day via a simple email. Would the Assistant Minister agree to look into that part and have at least that part fulfilled in short order?

The Deputy of Grouville:

Yes, I believe that is going to be undertaken in the first instance but it is also going to be followed up with a package of training that is relevant to people's specific areas of responsibility.