

2.16 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of the Attorney General regarding the extension of the UK's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Island:

Would H.M. Attorney General please inform Members what are the legal obstacles - such as the need for legislation governing the employment of children - which must be overcome before Jersey can seek the extension of the U.K. ratification of the U.N. (United Nations) Convention for the Rights of the Child of the Island please?

The Attorney General:

Before a conventional treaty is ratified on behalf of the Island, the United Kingdom makes sufficient inquiry to ensure that the Island legislation is consistent with the international obligations in the convention so that the United Kingdom will not be in breach of those obligations by extending the instrument of ratification. The Law Officers expect to carry out their review of Island legislation which will assist the U.K. in making those inquiries and being satisfied with the result. However, there are frequently judgment calls which have to be made in the course of doing so and the U.K. lawyers and the Law Officers sometimes reach different views. I say that by way of warning that sometimes things are raised unexpectedly after the request for ratification is made. We are currently conducting a full review of the convention to see what is required and that review is not yet complete. For present purposes, I can say there will be at least one legislative change needed which is implied by the question and that is in relation to Article 32 of the convention which requires provision to be made for: "a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment and appropriate regulation of hours and conditions of employment." New legislation, namely, the Draft Children Regulation of Employment (Jersey) Order has been prepared and is the subject of consultation and currently taken forward by the Minister for Health and Social Services. That is one example. There may well be other examples of legislation which we will need. I would certainly be hopeful that such changes can be achieved within the timeframe of the next Strategic Plan.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I thank the Attorney General for the answer.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Very well, the Deputy of St. Mary is not in the Chamber to ask his question, so it falls away and we come to question 18 which the Deputy of St. Martin will ask of the Chief Minister.