

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Section 9 of the Equal Opportunities Act 2008 provides for every employer to draw up and apply an Equal Opportunities Policy at his/her place of work with a view to minimising the risk of an employee being discriminated against and to promote recruitment, training selection and employment on the basis of merit.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) is aware that, having equal opportunities policy in the workplace, is a matter of legal obligation and social justice. It also recognises that this policy, being a sound management practice, will help prevent discrimination while ensuring equality of opportunity for all employees whether temporary, on contract, part-time or full-time.

MoFED is committed to facilitating the creation of a conducive working environment, free of discrimination, where all employees feel that their rights and responsibilities are respected and their contributions are recognised and valued.

MOFED endeavours to formulate and implement sound macroeconomic and fiscal policies to ensure sustainable economic and social development of the country. It also aims at ensuring adequate allocation of funds and maximising revenue mobilization and to improve the standard of living of Mauritians.

2. AIMS

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- no one receives less favourable treatment, by reason of his/her age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by any condition, requirement, provisions, criterion, procedures or practices that cannot be justified on any or more of the abovementioned grounds, or victimised for taking action against the organisation for discrimination, or for assisting a fellow employee in taking such an action;
- a working environment free of bullying, harassment in whatever form, victimisation and promoting dignity and respect for all, is put in place;

- opportunities for employment, training and promotion are open to all employees, irrespective of their age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation; and
- training and access to benefits, facilities and services are fair and equitable, based solely on merit and not on the employees' age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation.

3. POLICY

3.1 DISCRIMINATION

MoFED will not condone any form of discrimination against any staff or customer in relation to the following grounds as defined in the Equal Opportunities Act:

- Age
- Caste
- Colour
- Creed
- Ethnic origin
- Impairment (a handicap that a person may have and could be (i) physical, that is, total or partial loss of a bodily function, total or partial loss of a part of the body, malfunction of a part of the body, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the body, (ii) a mental or psychological disorder or disease, (iii) the presence in the body of organisms that may cause disease (for example, AIDS)
- Marital status (whether the person is single, civilly or religiously married, married but living separately from one's spouse, divorced, widowed or is a single parent)
- Place of origin
- Political opinion
- Race
- Sex (includes discrimination by reason of (i) pregnancy, (ii) family responsibility, that is, the responsibility of the person to care for or support a dependent child or any other immediate family member in need of care or support, (iii) potential pregnancy, that is, the fact that a woman is or may be capable of bearing children, or has expressed the desire to become pregnant; or is likely/perceived as being likely to become pregnant)
- Sexual orientation (homosexuality, including lesbianism, bisexuality or heterosexuality).

3.2 HARASSMENT

MoFED is committed to providing a safe environment for all staff, free from harassment at work, including sexual harassment.

Any form of harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace. Any such allegation will be treated seriously, with prompt investigation. Any person proved to have harassed somebody, will be dealt with in the appropriate manner, after an enquiry has been conducted.

All complaints of harassment from staff or members of the public will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. MoFED ensures that nobody will be victimised for making such a complaint.

3.3 TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In all cases, no factors other than performance and competence will be used as the basis for performance assessment, training and career development opportunities for the staff of the Ministry. All procedures for recruitment and training would be rendered transparent, thus, giving equal chances to all participants/candidates. As far as is practicable, the outcomes of such exercises would be communicated to all.

Focus will be on performance rather than personal traits, interpersonal relationships, misconceptions, rumours or unfounded allegations.

3.4 GRIEVANCES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Officers who believe that they are being treated unfairly as a result of discrimination, may immediately report, preferably in writing, the matter to their Head of Section or the Human Resource Section. The HR Section or any other Section shall investigate into the grievance/complaint within a reasonable period of time.

All allegations of discrimination on the ground of race, religion or belief, colour, sex, age, national origin, disability or sexual orientation will be dealt with seriousness and in confidentiality. If proven, appropriate actions will be taken.

MoFED ensures that nobody will be penalised for raising such a grievance, unless it is unfounded and made in bad faith and vexation.

With regard to customers, nobody will be refused access to facilities and services on the basis of the abovementioned grounds.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) It is the responsibility of MOFED to ensure that:

- the policy is communicated so that all employees are aware of and understand their obligations, responsibilities and rights pertaining to equal opportunities;
- all employees are committed to the principles and legislation relating to equal opportunities and will be applying them in the workplace;
- ongoing support and guidance/training in connection with equal opportunities is provided to all staff;
- all stakeholders are treated in an equitable manner;
- a culture that encourages equal opportunities is present at the Ministry;
- immediate and appropriate action are taken to minimise or eliminate any discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace; and
- any matter that is not in line with the principles of equal opportunities is addressed as promptly as possible.

(b) It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they:

- comply with this policy and treat their colleagues and customers with respect and professionalism;
- refrain from engaging in discriminatory or harassing behaviour; and
- inform their Head of Section or the Human Resource Section if they believe that they have been treated unfairly.

Name : Mr M. S. Ayoob Saab

Designation: Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Signature : 

Date : 05 July 2019