

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY-MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Background**

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is committed to project itself as an Employer of Choice that makes full use of the talents, skills, experience, competence, desire and willingness to work in different cultural perspectives available in a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society, and where people feel they are respected and valued, and can achieve their potential regardless of their status, that is, their age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation.

The Ministry will follow the guidelines of the Equal Opportunities Commission as set out in its Guidelines for employers for the promotion of an Equal Opportunity Policy at Work in all its employment policies, procedures and practices.

## **Aims of the Policy**

The aims of this policy are to ensure that there is equity, fairness and transparency in all the HR Policies and Practices of the Ministry and the rule of law as enshrined in our constitution prevails, that everybody is equal before the law and 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 conditions, requirements, provisions, criteria, procedures or practices that cannot be justified on any or more of the above-mentioned grounds, or victimized for taking action against the employer for discrimination or for assisting a fellow employee in taking such an action;

## **HR Practices**

**Recruitment and Selection:** All recruitment and selection exercises for appointment at the Ministry, including promotions, transfers and access to benefits, facilities and services, will be fair and equitable, and based solely on merit and in total alignment with the PSC Regulations and other regulations in force in the public service and will not be determined on the status of the employee or prospective employees, that is, age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation.

All job openings will be advertised by the Public Service Commission in accordance with its policy and practices. In case of recruitment under delegated authority,

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all applicants who meet the job requirements will be welcomed, irrespective of their status, that is, their age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation and in conformity with schemes of service and the Public Service Commission Regulations.

**Training & Development:** All employees, irrespective of their status that is, their age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, and marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation, will be considered for training and development opportunities subject to conditions agreed with the donor countries/agencies in case of foreign sponsored scholarships.

**Performance Management System:** The same criteria as determined by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms will be used to measure, manage and monitor the performance of all employees at the Ministry. The established mechanism will be used to enable the appraisers and appraisees to discuss and agree on a work plan at the start of the year, which will subsequently be used during the year to assess the performance of the employees at regular intervals and thereafter determine increments of all employees which will solely be based on the established PMS.

**Discipline:** Disciplinary procedures will be initiated against any officer as per the relevant provisions of the PSC Regulations 1967, as Amended subsequently, for breach of rules and regulations or any provisions of the law, or for misconduct or unsatisfactory service, irrespective of their status, i.e. their position, age, class, colour, creed, etc.

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment on the workplace has an adverse impact on the morale of the workers and is likely to affect the working environment. The Ministry will have a zero tolerance of sexual harassment on its sites of work. It will carry out a sensitization campaign for the staff against sexual harassment. Any alleged case of sexual harassment will be reported to the police forthwith.

## **Administration**

**Promotion of Gender Equality:** The Ministry will ensure that the working conditions are suitable to both men and women alike.

## **Fundamental Principles of the Policy**

**Responsibility:** The Permanent Secretary will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy.

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**Communication:** The policy will be communicated to all workers and job applicants, and will be placed on the organisation's website.

**Consultation:** Workers and their representatives and trade unions will be consulted regularly about the policy, and related action plans and strategies.

**Training on the Policy:** All workers will be sensitized on the policy, on their rights and responsibilities under the policy, and on how the policy will affect the way they carry out their duties and also what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct in the organisation.

**Decision Making:** Managers and workers in key decision-making areas will be trained on the discriminatory effects that certain provisions, practices, requirements, conditions, and criteria can have on workers, and the importance of being able to justify decisions to apply them.

**Complaints:** Any complaint about discrimination in the course of employment will be regarded seriously, and may result in disciplinary sanctions.

**Development:** All workers will be encouraged to develop their skills and qualifications, and to take advantage of promotion and development opportunities in the organisation.

**Monitoring:** Grievances, disciplinary action, performance assessment, and termination of employment, for whatever reason, will be monitored.

**Review:** Requirements, conditions, provisions, criteria and practices will be reviewed regularly, in the light of the monitoring results, and revised, if they are found to, or might, discriminate.

**Affirmative Action:** An equal opportunities action plan will be drawn up, with equality targets and timetables, to show what steps the organisation plans to take to achieve equality of opportunity.

**Effectiveness:** The effectiveness of the policy and the plan will be monitored regularly. A report on progress will be produced each year, and published via the website.

*The policy was approved on [insert date], following consultation with senior managers and representatives of the Staff association.*

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*All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy. Managers must also make sure that their workers know about, and follow the policy.*