

**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS
ENTERPRISE AND COOPERATIVES
(Business and Enterprise Division)**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
POLICY**



May 2018

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

“All of us do not have equal talent but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents”

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Introduction

- (i) The Equal Opportunities Commission, under Section 27(3)(f) of the Equal Opportunities Act 2008, has issued Guidelines and Codes for the avoidance of discrimination notably in the field of employment.
- (ii) Section 9 of the Act provides that every employer needs to draw up and apply an equal opportunity Policy at his/her place of work, with a view to minimizing the risks of discrimination and promoting recruitment, training, selection and employment on the basis of merit.
- (iii) These Guidelines aim at shedding light on various aspects that have to be taken into account by the employer in its Equal Opportunity Policy.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this Equal Opportunity Policy is to ensure that:
 - no one receives less favourable treatment, by reason of his or 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 victimised for taking action against the employer for discrimination or for assisting a fellow employee in taking such an action;
 - opportunities for employment, training and promotion are open to all candidates 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
 - selection for employment, promotion, transfer and training, and access to benefits, facilities and services, will be fair and equitable and based solely on merit and not on the status of the employees or prospective employees, namely, age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation.

Pledge

3. The Ministry of Business Enterprise and Cooperatives (Business and Enterprise Division) is committed to building an organisation that makes full use of the talents, skills, experiences, competences, desire and willingness to work and 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 full 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.

4. The Ministry will follow the recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Commission as set forth in its Guidelines on Application of an Equal Opportunity Policy at work in all its employment policies, procedures and practices.

applicability

5. This Policy applies to all aspects of employment including recruitment, appointment, training, promotion and termination of employment.

implementation

6. The Ministry will take the following steps to put this Policy into practice and ensure its implementation:

- The Policy will be a priority for the Ministry.
- The Deputy Permanent Secretary will be responsible for the effective implementation of the Policy.
- The Policy will be communicated to all employees and be placed on the Ministry's website.
- Heads of Sections will be consulted regularly about the Policy, and about related action plans and strategies.
- All Heads of Sections will be briefed 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.
- All staff will be briefed 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 at the level of the Ministry.
- Complaints about discrimination in the course of employment will be considered with utmost seriousness, and if proved, may result in disciplinary actions as appropriate according to existing rules and regulations.
- Funded vacancies will be advertised as per established rules and procedures and, save where a genuine occupational requirement or statutory exception applies, all applicants 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.

- All employees will be encouraged to develop their talents, skills and qualifications, and to take advantage of promotion and career opportunities in the organisation.
- Training selection criteria will be entirely related to the job or training opportunities, where available and applicable.
- Grievances, disciplinary actions, performance assessments, and termination of employment, for whatever reason, will also be closely monitored.
- Requirements, conditions, provisions, criteria and practices will be reviewed in the light of the monitoring results, if they are found to, or might, discriminate.
- The effectiveness of the Equal Opportunity Policy will be monitored regularly.

advocacy

7. This Policy has been endorsed by the Permanent Secretary and has the full support of Management.

8. The Policy was approved on (*Date of approval*), following consultations with all Heads of Sections.

9. Overall responsibility for the effectiveness of this Policy lies with the Permanent Secretary.

10. All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with this Policy. Head of Sections must also make sure their staff know about, and follow, the Policy.