

SECTORAL GENDER POLICY

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

(Hereinafter referred to as the Ministry)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Sectoral Gender Policy sets out the commitment of the Ministry to respond to the current Blueprint for Mauritius Vision 2030, the global agenda as guided by Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the National Gender Policy 2022-2030.
- 1.2 The Policy reflects the determination of the Ministry to contribute towards gender mainstreaming in its mission and vision.
- 1.3 The Policy is based on existing strategies, policies, and activities of the Ministry.
- 1.4 The Policy also highlights the responsibilities and roles of key stakeholders in the Ministry to undertake, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Policy.

2.0 DEFINITION - GENDER , GENDER MAINSTREAMING & GENDER EQUALITY

- 2.1 **Gender** refers to *“the different social roles, responsibilities, and identities that society attributes to women and men and the power relations between women and men in a given society. Gender roles and relations differ across countries and cultures and may even differ among different groups within one society. Gender roles and relations are not static, but subject to change.”*
(Source:-National Gender Policy 2022-2030).
- 2.2 **Gender Mainstreaming** means *“the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislations, policies, or programmes in all areas and at all levels thereby, ensuring that the*

concerns, perspectives, needs and experiences of women and men, girls and boys are taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any intervention, including the budgeting process. This is to ensure that women and men benefit equally in political, economic, and social undertakings and that drivers of inequality are not perpetuated.” (Source:-National Gender Policy 2022-2030).

- 2.3 **Gender Equality** means that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued, and favoured equally. (Source:- European Commission, 1998).

3.0 LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORK RELEVANT TO THE MINISTRY

3.1. The Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius

The Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius, based on key democratic principles, sets out the fundamental rights and freedom of its citizens regardless of Gender. In accordance with section 3 of the Constitution, *“...in Mauritius there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, each and all of the following human rights and fundamental freedoms...”*

The set of rules and guidelines in the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius are fundamental tenets that shall always be adhered to.

3.2 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 5, calls for gender equality. The United Nations mentions that *“Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.”*

All units of the Ministry have a catalytic role to play in the continual progress of the implementation of the SDGs, especially in the present social, economic, and environmental context, which remain complex and challenging.

3.3 Equal Opportunities Act 2008

The Equal Opportunities Act safeguards equal access to opportunities and treatments for men and women employees.

3.4 National Gender Policy 2022-2030

The National Gender Policy 2022-2030 translates the concept of gender mainstreaming into concrete strategies and specific actions which become an integral part of the objectives and daily activities of the Ministry.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENT

All consumers have the right to fair trade practices, equitable consumer rights, equal treatment, without any discrimination by reason of race, place of origin, colour, creed or sex that would enable the promotion of a gender-neutral culture.

5.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- 5.1 This Policy aims at ensuring that gender and gender mainstreaming process are integrated into Consumer Protection policies, laws/regulations, practices, activities, and any reform initiatives and programmes.
- 5.2 The Policy sets out what is expected of the Ministry in terms of actions and activities for attaining gender equality in its sector.

6.0 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTRY

6.1 The Ministry shall:-

- i. stand guided by the different legislative frameworks, as well as by national, regional, and international commitments to which Mauritius is a signatory party;
- ii. take measures to address any gender gaps identified or reported, by mainstreaming gender in its sector;
- iii. be committed to gender equality through gender-responsive budgeting;
- iv. promote gender equity in the access and adoption of innovative technologies;
- v. enhance capacity building of both men and women for a gender-sensitive work environment for equal opportunities;
- vi. promote a safe and healthy working environment for both men and women; and
- vii. promote use of gender-neutral language.

7.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 The Permanent Secretary shall ensure

- i. the implementation and enforcement of the Policy;
- ii. the dissemination of the policy amongst all stakeholders; and
- iii. periodic review of the Policy to reflect current needs.

7.2 The Gender Focal Point shall:

- i. act as the reference point for gender issues in the Ministry;
- ii. spearhead the Gender Cell;

- iii. report progress of the Gender Action Plan to the Permanent Secretary; and
- iv. be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of progress made by the Gender Cell regarding the Gender Action Plan.

7.3 The Gender Cell of the Ministry shall:-

- i. meet on a quarterly basis;
- ii. institutionalise gender mainstreaming in all plans, programmes and budgets of the Ministry;
- iii. develop a Gender Action Plan to implement the policy; and
- iv. monitor and evaluate the implementation of the action plan .

Ministry of Consumer and Consumer Protection
07 June 2023