**Current levels of representation of women in Human Rights Organs and Mechanisms**

1. Over the years, the State of Mauritius has established 6 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to ensure the protection of the rights of its people, namely; the National Human Rights Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, Equal Opportunities Commission, Independent Police Complaints Commission, Ombudsperson for Children’s Office and Ombudsperson for Financial Services as presented at **Annex 1**.

2. A number of initiatives have been taken by the Government to ensure that the principle of gender equality permeates within its programmes, policies and strategies. By adopting the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, the State of Mauritius reaffirmed its commitment to women’s empowerment and gender equality.

3. The Equal Opportunities Act establishes the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Equal Opportunities Tribunal with strict jurisdictions, and sets up strict policy measures protecting women’s right by prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex or sexual orientation, amongst others, and ensuring equal opportunities in terms of employment, training, education, accommodation and also against any form of sexual harassment.

4. Regarding the posts occupied in leadership roles and hierarchy in human rights organs and mechanisms, it may be observed that Mauritius has achieved parity in terms of women’s representation. For instance, as high court judges, with more than 47% of puisne judges are women. Mauritius has also the highest percentage of female permanent secretaries in Africa at 37%. Among legislators, senior officials and managers in the public sector, 40% are women.

5. Mauritius also had the first-ever female President who held office from 2015 to March 2018, HE Mrs Ameenah Gurrib Fakim, the appointment of women as the Speaker of the National Assembly in 2014, Mrs Maya Hanoomanjee and the Vice Prime Minister in November 2017. In addition, out of the 6 NHRIs, 2 of them are headed by women, namely the Independent Police Complaints Commission and the Ombudsperson for Children.

6. The right to political participation and decision-making process of women may be said to have been greatly implemented in Mauritius. Even though it is not enshrined in the Constitution, policies adopted demonstrate the impressive strides that the State of Mauritius has made in putting in place the institutional and legal framework for substantive gender equality.

7. Moreover, as announced recently in the Government Programme 2020-2024, the State of Mauritius is committed to instill a society where gender equality is promoted to ensure a fair and adequate representation of all genders as well as the human and social development of women in Mauritius. To that effect, it will also strengthen governance of parastatal institutions by ensuring, among others, adequate and appropriate gender representation on their Board of Directors.

12 February 2020

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| **SN** | **NHRI** | **Mandate** | **Established under** | **Chairperson** |
| 1 | National Human Rights Commission | To visit police stations, prisons and other places of detention. It also promotes the respect of human rights through education. | Human Rights Act 1998 | Mrs Marie Lourdes Lee Yin Lam Hung |
| 2 | Equal Opportunities Commission | To work towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status. In this respect, it is essential that you, as Mauritian citizens, know your rights. | Equal Opportunities Act 2008 | ​Mr Khalid Tegally |
| 3 | Office of the Ombudsman | To investigate into complaints against Government Institutions and seek redress to injustice if any, sustained in consequence of any alleged maladministration that may have been committed by any public officer or authority in the exercise of administrative functions. | Ombudsman Act | Mr S.M Hatteea |
| 4 | Ombudsperson for children | Represents and defends the rights of children in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega, children of Mauritian origin who live abroad and children of any other nationalities who reside in the Republic of Mauritius. | Ombudsperson for Children Act 2003 | Mrs Rita Venkatasawmy |
| 5 | Independent Police Complaints Commission | To investigate into complaints made against police officers in the discharge of their functions, other than complaints of acts of corruption or money laundering offences. | Independent Police Complaints Commission Act | Mrs Deviyanee Beesoondoyal |
| 6 | Ombudsperson for Financial Services | To receive and deal with complaints from consumers of financial services against financial institutions and may make an award for compensation, where appropriate, and give such directives as he may determine to financial institutions. It is incumbent on the Office of Ombudsperson for Financial Services to inform and educate the general public on investments in financial services offered by financial institutions. | Ombudsperson for Financial Services Act 2018 | Mr Mardayah Yeru Kunondu |

***ANNEX 1***