

### 38. MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND FAMILY WELFARE

- 38.1 The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare is entrusted with the responsibility to design and implement social policies and programmes which promote women empowerment, child development and family welfare as well as welfare of the community. It, therefore, strives to have the right conditions and environment for the harmonious development of the Mauritian children, women and their families.
- 38.2 Its main objectives are to, *inter alia*, promote and defend women's rights as human rights, work for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and ensure that legal measures are taken to promote equality between men and women; implement gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies and strategies, including those related to poverty alleviation; promote and defend children's rights as human rights, work for the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against children defined as being in the age bracket of 0 to 18 years and ensure that legal measures are taken and mechanisms are put in place to promote safety and security of children, and promote the welfare and empowerment of citizens through community based programmes for an inclusive society.
- 38.3 Activities of the Ministry are carried out through its different units, namely, the Child Development Unit, the Family Welfare and Protection Unit, the Home Economics Unit, the Gender Unit and the Planning and Research Unit; and the Social Welfare Division which has recently been transferred under its purview. It also has under its *aegis* the National Women's Council, the National Children's Council and the National Women Entrepreneur Council which have been ascribed specific roles and functions to enable the Ministry to achieve its objectives efficiently and effectively.
- 38.4 The Child Development Unit (CDU) has as main objectives to provide community safety and community actions in child protection and child welfare in general through community child protection programme and outreach programmes; and provide alternative care to abused children, ranging from temporary removal to a shelter for children in distress, to foster caring and eventually as a last resort, committal to a charitable institution, among others. The CDU operates through six outstations across the country to provide support services and first-hand counselling to all victims of violence. A 24-hour service is offered through hotline 113 where the public can report, anonymously or non-anonymously, cases of children at risk.
- 38.5 Likewise, the Family Welfare and Protection Unit was set up in July 2003 to implement policies and programmes in favour of families and to address the problem of Gender-Based violence. It has a network of six Regional Offices known as Family Support Bureau and offers services such as first-hand counselling; psychological counselling; legal advice; and assistance to victims of domestic violence. Officers are also on-call on a 24-hour basis on hotlines 139 and 119, to attend to emergency cases.
- 38.6 Its Home Economics Unit aims at promoting the social and economic empowerment of women and the community at large through capacity building programmes pertaining to the field of Home Economics. It is responsible for the planning,

organisation, implementation and evaluation of training programmes in the field of Home Economics and related areas. Currently, there are four regional home economics resource centres which serve as training centres cum regional offices for Home Economics staff.

- 38.7 In the same line, Gender Unit provides services through women empowerment centres for the empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality. Training courses on bag making, cookery, dress making, handicraft, embroidery, floral arrangement and adult literacy programmes are delivered in the women empowerment centres. The ultimate goal of the unit is to offer services that empower women to be "at par" with men.
- 38.8 The Planning and Research Unit acts as a coordination and support Unit which provides technical back up to all the units and parastatal bodies operating under the *aegis* of the Ministry. It is responsible for the preparation of policies, programmes, projects, action plans and reports on issues relating to women, child development and family welfare.
- 38.9 Furthermore, the Social Welfare Division is responsible for the management of 57 social welfare centres through the formulation of policies and programmes and that are in line with the Government programme. This division is headed by the Social Welfare Commissioner. He is assisted by the Deputy Social Welfare Commissioner and supported by officers in the grades of Principal Social Welfare Officer, Senior Social Welfare Officer and Social Welfare Officer.
- 38.10 In the context of this Report, the Bureau had consultations with both the Management and Unions. The main requests of Unions pertained to an upward review in the salary of some grades; upgrading of qualifications of certain grades such as Coordinator and Family Welfare and Protection Officer; the creation as well as restyling of grades; increase in the quantum of existing allowances; and removal of the Qualification Bar in the salary scale of the grade of Social Welfare Officer, among others.
- 38.11 Management made proposals for the creation of a series of new grades namely, Head, Alternative Care Unit; Deputy Head for some units; Integrated Support Officer; Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; Research Assistant; Principal Psychologist; Guardian Ad Litem. They equally requested, among others, to remove the Qualification Bar in the salary scale of the grade of Social Welfare Officer; and improve the benefits attached to the grade of Enforcement Officer.
- 38.12 During consultations, both parties were apprised of the Bureau's policy for the creation of grades which is based on the functional needs of the organisation. In regard to alignment of salaries, parties were informed that such requests are examined taking into consideration, among others, the qualifications requirement, nature of duties, level of operation and responsibility; and that requests for upgrading in qualifications should be substantiated by a corresponding evolution in the job complexity and nature of duties.

- 38.13 Management apprised the Bureau during consultations that its demands for the creation of several grades would no longer be warranted since the working arrangements had changed. However, Management later on forwarded submissions for the creation of the grades of Director, Technical Services; and Family Welfare and Protection Officer (Roster – day and night). Upon examining the proposal for the creation of a grade of Director, Technical Services, it was observed that there is no functional need for this level at this stage since there is a Permanent Secretary to look into the coordination and evaluation of the overall operational procedures of the different technical units. Creation of the grade of Family Welfare and Protection Officer (Roster - day and night) could not be acceded to since with the payment of On-Call and In-Attendance Allowances, the existing reward package of incumbents is on the better side.
- 38.14 Additionally, Management submitted at a later stage a new set of proposals following the introduction of a new Children’s Bill which included a revamping of the existing structure. However, the Children’s Act was not yet proclaimed at the time of publication of this Report. On this basis, any new position in line with the Children’s Act would be considered once the Bill is proclaimed. As such, a revamping of the present structure, based on functional needs, would be considered on an *ad hoc* basis after the publication of the Report.
- 38.15 After examining each submission, the Bureau is making appropriate recommendations in the ensuing paragraphs for those requests that are meritorious.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (New Grade)**

- 38.16 During consultations, Management informed, among others, that the Planning and Research Unit is called upon to monitor and evaluate projects being carried out by all units. A request was, therefore, made for the creation of a grade of Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, to enable a proper monitoring and evaluation of projects/programmes, in line with international practice. We have also been apprised that this grade is essential for a proper functioning of the unit.

#### **Recommendation 1**

- 38.17 We recommend the creation of a grade of Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. Appointment thereto should be made by selection from among candidates possessing a Degree in Finance or Economics or Statistics or Project Management from a recognised institution or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the Public Service Commission and reckoning at least two years’ post-qualification experience in monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes.**
- 38.18 Incumbents would be responsible to the Head, Planning and Research Unit, and would be called upon, among others, to: provide technical support in the design, monitoring and evaluation of gender based programmes; assist in developing tools and terms of reference for baseline surveys/evaluation of development programmes/projects and/or any research to be undertaken by the Ministry; supervise the baseline

survey/evaluation exercises; organise and conduct training on monitoring and evaluation for the technical staff; and coordinate a process of compiling evidence of good practices through proper assessment and documentation of better practices.

### **Child Development Unit**

#### **Commuted Allowance**

38.19 The Head, Child Development Unit, who is required to be 'On-Call' after normal working hours, during Weekends and Public Holidays, is presently paid a monthly Commuted Allowance for monitoring and supervising the duties of a team after normal working hours. We are, in this review, revising the quantum of the allowance.

#### **Recommendation 2**

**38.20 We recommend that the monthly Commuted Allowance being paid to the Head, Child Development Unit for monitoring and attending to cases related to child abuse/violence after normal working hours, during Weekends and Public Holidays be revised to Rs 6400.**

### **Family Welfare and Protection Unit**

#### **Commuted Allowance**

38.21 The Head, Family Welfare and Protection Unit, who is required to be 'On-Call', is presently paid a monthly Commuted Allowance to monitor and supervise officers in the unit after normal working hours. We are, in this review, revising the quantum of the allowance.

#### **Recommendation 3**

**38.22 We recommend that the monthly Commuted Allowance being paid to the Head, Family Welfare and Protection Unit for monitoring and attending to cases related to domestic violence after normal working hours, during Weekends and Public Holidays be revised to Rs 6400.**

### **Family Welfare and Protection Officer**

38.23 Presently, Family Welfare and Protection Officers, possessing a Degree in the relevant field, are allowed to move incrementally in the Master Salary Scale after drawing their top salary for a year. This arrangement should continue to prevail.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**38.24 We recommend that officers in the grade of Family Welfare and Protection Officer possessing a Degree in Social Work or an equivalent qualification should be allowed to move incrementally in the Master Salary Scale up to salary point Rs 46100 provided they satisfy the performance criteria as set out in the Introductory Chapter of this Volume.**

### Time-Off Facilities

38.25 Provisions were made in our previous Report for incumbents in the grade of Family Welfare and Protection Officer who are required, on a regular basis, to put in additional hours of work to cope with the demands of their job, to be granted equivalent time-off for the extra hours put in. However, where it has not been possible for Management to grant, upon application, time-off within a period of four months, the officers are compensated at the normal hourly rate, subject to having put in a minimum of 15 extra hours in a month. **This whole arrangement is still effective and should continue.**

### Allowance (Hot Line Service)

38.26 Officers of the Ministry who attend to the 24-hour hotline service to provide first hand counselling and advice to the public on any family related issue/problem and in particular to desperate persons who are in urgent need of help and support are currently granted an all-inclusive allowance (excluding travelling). We are, in this Report, revising the quantum of the allowance.

### Recommendation 5

**38.27 We recommend that the all-inclusive allowance (excluding travelling) being paid to officers who are required to answer phone calls received after office hours during Weekdays, Weekends and Public Holidays through the three digits Hotline Intervention of the Ministry for the purpose of first hand counselling, advice or intervention into family and child abuse/violence cases, as appropriate, should be revised as follows:**

Period	All-inclusive Allowance (excluding travelling)
<b>Weekdays From 1600 hours to 0900 hours the following day</b>	<b>Rs 340 per day/night period</b>
<b>Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays From 0900 hours to 0900 hours the following day</b>	<b>Rs 470 per day/night period</b>

### Risk Allowance

38.28 Officers of the Child Development Unit and Family Welfare and Protection Unit who, by nature of their work, are exposed to very risky situations/environment are being paid a monthly Risk Allowance. This provision is still effective.

### Recommendation 6

**38.29 We recommend that officers working in the Child Development Unit and Family Welfare and Protection Unit who, by nature of their work, are exposed to very risky situations and environment should continue to be paid a monthly Risk Allowance equivalent to one and a half increments at the initial of their respective salary scale.**

**38.30 We also recommend that officers working in the Child Development Unit and Family Welfare and Protection Unit, in post as at the eve of the publication of the 2021 Report drawing a higher quantum as Risk Allowance than what is recommended at paragraph 38.28 above, should continue to draw same on a personal basis.**

### **Home Economics Unit**

#### **Senior Home Economics Officer**

38.31 Provision exists for Senior Home Economics Officers possessing the relevant Degree or an equivalent qualification to move incrementally in the Master Salary Scale. This arrangement is still valid and should continue. We recommend accordingly.

### **Recommendation 7**

**38.32 We recommend that officers in the grade of Senior Home Economics Officer possessing a Degree in Home Economics or Home Science or Food Science or an equivalent qualification should be allowed to move incrementally in the Master Salary Scale up to salary point Rs 55900 provided they satisfy the performance criteria as set out in the Introductory Chapter of this Volume.**

#### **Enforcement Officer**

38.33 As per its current scheme of service, Enforcement Officers are called upon to monitor, carry out inspections/checks and ensure follow-up actions at Child Day Care Institutions as well as Shelters/Child Residential Institutions to ensure compliance with set Regulations/Guidelines.

38.34 During consultations, the staff side has submitted that site visits are being conducted on a priority needs basis all over the island due to lack of transport facilities at the Ministry. Hence, officers have to attend to the maximum complaints possible whenever the transport facility is available to them. As a result, inspections are not being carried out on a regular basis and sufficient time is not being devoted to each case properly, which subsequently impedes on service delivery.

38.35 The Bureau considers that the inspections and follow-up actions at Child Day Care Institutions are core functions of the Enforcement Officers and is vital, especially as it concerns the health and safety of children. The delay in attending to complaints may increase the risks of child abuses. We have examined the issue and are making appropriate recommendations.

### **Recommendation 8**

**38.36 We recommend that the Ministry considers the advisability of providing regular transport facilities to Enforcement Officers in order to ensure that complaints are being attended to without delay.**

38.37 Enforcement Officers are also required to carry out inspections at illegal Child Day Care Centres. It has been represented that officers in the grade of Enforcement Officer

are very often verbally abused during their site visits in such centres. Hence, the staff side have requested for the payment of a risk allowance.

- 38.38 However, the Bureau considers that the grant of a risk allowance would not curb down the risks faced by these officers during their inspections. Alternatively, it would be appropriate if the services of officers of the Police Department could be solicited in this regard. We recommend accordingly.

### **Recommendation 9**

- 38.39 We recommend that the Ministry should make necessary arrangements with the Police Department for their officers to accompany Enforcement Officers during their site visits at illegal Child Day Care Centres.**

### **Principal Psychologist (New Grade)**

- 38.40 Union members made submissions with respect to the creation of a grade of Principal Psychologist. Both Management and staff side requested for incumbent to be entrusted with the responsibility to supervise and ensure the smooth running of psychological services provided to the different stakeholders. After examining the justifications provided for the organisational need of this grade, the Bureau is recommending accordingly.

### **Recommendation 10**

- 38.41 We recommend the creation of a grade of Principal Psychologist. Appointment thereto should be made by promotion, on the basis of experience and merit, of officers in the grade of Psychologist/Senior Psychologist reckoning at least four years' service in a substantive capacity in the grade.**

- 38.42 Incumbent would be required to, *inter alia*, carry out clinical supervision; vet psychological assessment reports and data related to psychometric testing; conduct training and research; devise appropriate rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of violence; and arrange for the provision of debriefing services for staff of the Ministry and evaluation of same.

### **Functions of the Guardian Ad Litem**

- 38.43 Both Union and Management have requested for the creation of a grade of Guardian Ad Litem which, according to them is based on the provision of the Children's Act 2020. The duties, as stipulated in the Act, are to advocate for the child's best interests before a court; monitor the child's best interests, including any impact caused by the involvement in the justice process, throughout the investigation and the judicial proceedings on the child; and make recommendations related to the child's best interests to the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Police and any other person or body in relation to any court proceedings involving the child. Presently, the Psychologist/Senior Psychologists are already providing support to children involved in court proceedings. Upon examination of the Act, it was found that reference is made therein to the functions and not to the creation of a dedicated grade.

- 38.44 Another observation made is that the qualifications proposed for the grade of Guardian Ad Litem is a Master's Degree in Psychology/Counselling, that is, one of the qualifications requirement of the grade of Psychologist/Senior Psychologist. Given that if a grade of Guardian Ad Litem is created, it would be a stand-alone grade, which the Bureau is not in favour of creating as incumbents would not have a proper career path.
- 38.45 In the light of the above discussion, it would, therefore, not be appropriate to provide for a stand-alone grade. The Bureau believes that instead the scheme of service of the grade of Psychologist/Senior Psychologist should be reviewed to include the functions pertaining to Guardian Ad Litem. **Should the need arise, the Ministry may consider the advisability of increasing its staff size to be able to accommodate the new functions.**

### Recommendation 11

- 38.46 We recommend that the scheme of service of the grade of Psychologist/Senior Psychologist be amended to include the functions ascribed to the Guardian Ad Litem.**

### Allowance for Clinical Services

- 38.47 At present, Psychologists/Senior Psychologists of the Ministry possessing a postgraduate qualification in Clinical Psychology or Counselling Psychology or Psychology with specialisation in Clinical Psychology, with clinical experience and who are required, over and above their normal duties, to provide clinical services to children and their families, are paid an allowance. We are maintaining the payment of the allowance.

### Recommendation 12

- 38.48 We recommend that officers in the grade of Psychologist/Senior Psychologist possessing a postgraduate qualification in Clinical Psychology or Counselling Psychology or Psychology with specialisation in Clinical Psychology, with clinical experience and who are regularly required to provide clinical services to children and their families, over and above their prescribed duties should continue to be paid an allowance equivalent to two increments at the point reached in their salary scale subject to the approval of the Supervising Officer.**

### "On-Call" and "In-Attendance" Allowances

- 38.49 Presently, officers in several grades are being paid "On-Call" and "In-Attendance" Allowances for the provision of an emergency service after official hours of work on a rotational basis and to attend to people in distress at nights during Weekdays, Weekends and on Public Holidays. The quantum of the allowance is being revised in this Report.



## Recommendation 13

**38.50 We recommend that the "On-Call" and "In-Attendance" Allowances being paid to officers of the Ministry who are required to attend to emergencies be revised as follows:-**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>"On-Call" Allowance Rs</b>	<b>"In-Attendance" during On-Call Rs/hour</b>
<b>Psychologist/Senior Psychologist</b>	<b>Weekdays</b> 1600 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 315 daily</b>	<b>Rs 160</b> per hour of attendance up to a maximum of <b>Rs 640</b> per day/ night period.
	<b>Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays</b> 0900 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 470 daily</b>	<b>Rs 160</b> per hour of attendance up to a maximum of <b>Rs 960</b> per day/ night period.
<b>Coordinator</b>	<b>Weekdays</b> 1600 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 265 daily</b>	***
	<b>Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays</b> 0900 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 395 daily</b>	***
<b>Principal Family Welfare and Protection Officer</b>  <b>Senior Family Welfare and Protection Officer</b>	<b>Weekdays</b> 1600 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 175 daily</b>	
	<b>Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays</b> 0900 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 265 daily</b>	***
<b>Inspector of Police</b> <b>Police Sergeant</b> <b>Police Constable</b> <b>Nursing Officer</b> <b>Family Welfare and Protection Officer</b>	<b>Weekdays</b> 1600 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 175 daily</b>	<b>Rs 85</b> per hour of attendance up to a maximum of <b>Rs 510</b> per day/ night period.
	<b>Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays</b> 0900 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 265 daily</b>	<b>Rs 85</b> per hour of attendance up to a maximum of <b>Rs 680</b> per day/ night period.
<b>Child Care Worker</b>	<b>Weekdays</b> 1600 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 130 daily</b>	<b>Rs 70</b> per hour of attendance up to a maximum of <b>Rs 420</b> per day/night period.
	<b>Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays</b> 0900 hours to 0900 hours the following day	<b>Rs 195 daily</b>	<b>Rs 70</b> per hour of attendance up to a maximum of <b>Rs 560</b> per day/ night period.

Grade	Period	"On-Call" Allowance Rs	"In-Attendance" during On-Call Rs/hour
<b>Driver</b>	<b>Weekdays</b> 1645 hours to 0745 hours the following day	<b>Rs 110 daily</b>	<b>***</b>
	<b>Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays</b> 0745 hours to 0745 hours the following day	<b>Rs 165 daily</b>	
	*** Overtime at the rates in force for attendance outside normal working hours.		

### Loan Facilities to Enforcement Officers

#### Recommendation 14

**38.51 We recommend that Enforcement Officers should be granted loan facilities for the purchase of a car on the same terms and conditions as laid down at paragraph 16.2.45(g) of Volume 1 of this Report.**

