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The law and regulations prohibit employment discrimination based on race or ethnicity, disability, family status (marital status or pregnancy), or sex. The law stipulates employers must prove that proficiency in a particular language is a justifiable job requirement if they reject a candidate on those grounds. Regulations do not prohibit employment discrimination on the grounds of age, color, religion, political opinion, national origin or citizenship, sexual orientation or gender identity, HIV or other communicable disease status, or social status. The law authorizes the Equal Opportunities Commission to work towards the elimination of discrimination and harassment as well as to promote equal opportunity for men and women.

The government generally enforced these laws and regulations. In cases in which employment discrimination occurred, courts had broad powers to levy penalties on those violating these laws and regulations. Although the government generally enforced these laws, women reportedly faced some discrimination in employment, salary, and promotion opportunities. According to official statistics, the median monthly income for women in 2021 was on average 75 percent of that of men. An Equal Opportunity Commission report, also from 2021, indicated that women earned 15 percent less than their male counterparts. The proportion of women working as managers, administrators, professionals, and associate professionals stood at 35.5 percent in 2020, lower than the 47.5 percent for men.

There were reports that foreign domestic workers faced discrimination during the February COVID-19 wave. Media reported some foreign domestic workers who contracted COVID-19 were fired and forced to leave their employers' homes. Others were denied access to medical care or forced to work extremely long hours with no additional pay. In addition, foreign domestic workers faced discrimination based on disability (health) and family status (pregnancy). Foreign domestic

workers faced significant barriers to justice as employers were able to claim that the termination was due to other issues, such as poor performance at work. Unemployment among adults with disabilities was high, in part due to discrimination and insufficient government support (see section 6, Persons with Disabilities). Human rights activists and local scholars continued to raise concerns about job prospects for minority students, who were more likely to hold low-paying, low-skilled jobs and earn below-average wages.

### **e. Acceptable Conditions of Work**

**Wage and Hour Laws:** The statutory minimum wage was below the poverty line for an average-sized household. The law does not regulate working hours, paid weekly rest, rest breaks, or compulsory overtime for most employees. Several labor groups reported that employers expected employees to work extremely long hours and called for legislation to address that concern. Foreign domestic workers are excluded from the statutory minimum wage and often faced extremely long working hours (12 to 16 hours a day). They were often expected to be on call 24 hours a day, a condition exacerbated by the compulsory live-in requirement.

**Occupational Safety and Health:** The law includes occupational safety and health (OSH) standards for various industries. The law provides for standards that are appropriate for the main industries in the economy. The law makes enterprise and dispatching agencies responsible for occupational injuries to temporary workers. OSH laws allow workers to remove themselves from situations that endanger health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. Employers are required to report any injuries sustained by their employees in work-related accidents.

The Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labor Department is responsible for promoting safety and health promotion, identifying unsafe conditions, enforcing safety management legislation, and formulating and

implementing policy generally. Inspectors may make unannounced inspections and initiate investigations and prosecutions. For the first half of the year, the Labor Department reported occupational accidents increased 1 percent over the same period in 2021.

**Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement:** The Labor Department is responsible for enforcing wage and working hour laws as well as OSH standards in conjunction with the labor agencies of local authorities. The government effectively enforced the law; the number of labor inspectors was sufficient to enforce compliance. Labor inspectors have the authority to conduct unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. Penalties for violations of wage laws or OSH standards include fines, damages, and workers' compensation payments. These penalties were commensurate with those for similar offenses. Penalties were regularly applied against violators. The Labor Tribunal adjudicated disputes involving nonpayment or underpayment of wages and wrongful dismissal. The Labor Tribunal presented several barriers to domestic workers, such as prolonged court cases and high court fees, which discouraged them from seeking justice. Interpretation services for foreign domestic workers were limited.