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LOOKING OUT FOR WORKERS



COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

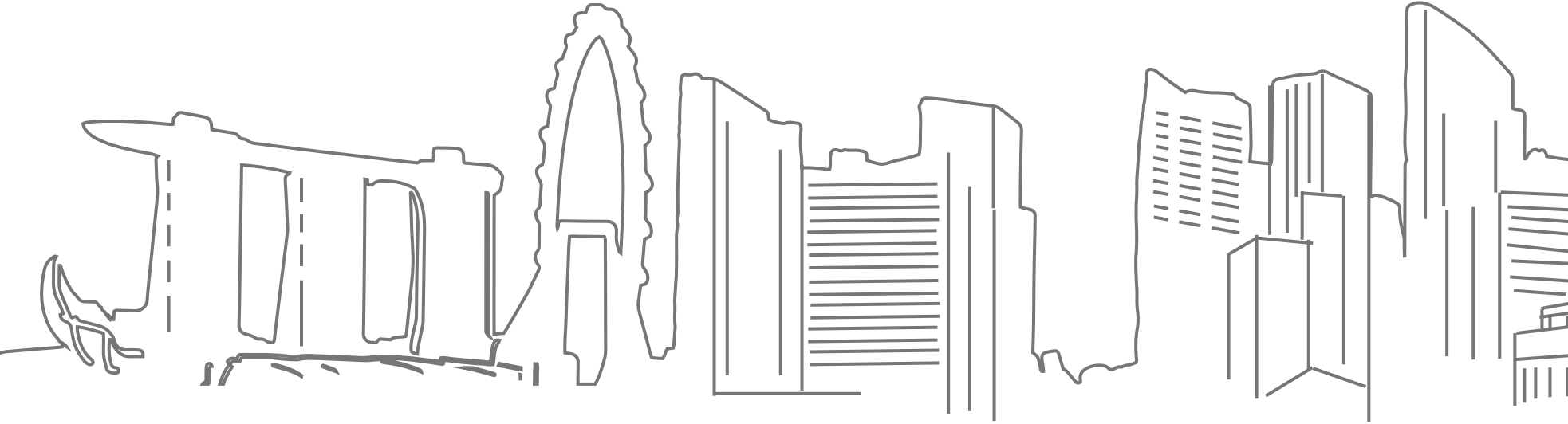
UNIONISED SECTOR

OB AND GB CASES

RETRENCHMENT CASES

WORKPLACE BENEFITS

TAKING CARE OF WORKERS



Workers should be proactive and capitalise on NTUC's and the Government's initiatives on training and upgrading, says ASG Cham.

By **Shukry Rashid**



The Labour Movement will continue to take care of workers' job security amidst a gloomy employment outlook for 2016. This was said by NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Cham Hui Fong during a media briefing on 22 January 2016 on the 2016 unionised sector outlook.

Retrenchment figures crept up in the unionised sector for 2015, with majority of the retrenchments coming from the manufacturing sector.

"With seven consecutive quarters of contraction except for one quarter in 2014 and 2015, and some 5 per cent contraction last year, we understand that workers are generally concerned on the outlook of that sector," said ASG Cham.

She added that we can still expect new and quality jobs coming in this manufacturing sector, and there is an urgency to ensure that our workers are equipped with the right and relevant skills to benefit from new growth sectors, such as advanced manufacturing.

TRAINING AND UPGRADING

With retrenchment comes the worry of job security. ASG Cham said that workers should be proactive and capitalise on NTUC's and the Government's initiatives on training and upgrading.

"Training and upgrading – that is something which will never go wrong. Either be a master of the same job or always look for opportunities to upgrade yourself, whether in the same industry or in other industries," said ASG Cham.

The Labour Movement also hopes that with SkillsFuture, and the various tripartite committees that were set up, it will propel the urgency that workers must continue to reinvent themselves.

DIRECTION FORWARD

Of the 900 active Collective Agreements in 2015, some 320 of them also stipulated provision for training and examination leave. But these are only for courses that are either supported by the companies or are relevant to their job scope.

ASG Cham said that this provision should be expanded, and the Labour Movement is working towards that.

"What we want to do is to really inculcate the training culture within the companies," she said.

One example ASG Cham gave was for like-minded employers to send their employees for training to expand their breadth of skills and to improve their employability.

She also urged employers to provide training or examination leave for employees to make use of initiatives like the SkillsFuture Credit, which can be utilised for training outside their current job scope.

Jobs Outlook For 2016

- ▶ More businesses will be impacted by related cyclical or structural challenges, specifically sectors such as marine engineering, specialty chemicals and printing.
- ▶ For the first quarter of 2016, unionised companies may see retrenchments affecting some 234 workers.



JOBS IN REVIEW

2015

How did 2015 go at the workplace, and where will the Labour Movement's priorities lie next? *NTUC This Week* brings you a roundup.

By **Shukry Rashid** and **Ryan Chan**

The year 2015 was not a prosperous one, as a tight labour market saw a fall in annual increment, with more workers displaced from jobs.

While the Labour Movement expects the tight labour market to remain unchanged in 2016 as the global economy slows down, it will look to continue its efforts for workers under Care, Fair and Grow.

More will also be done for workers, including Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs), who will one day form the majority of the workforce.

Workplace Benefits

- ▶ Among the 900 active Collective Agreements (CAs), 99 per cent provided for death of immediate family members.
- ▶ 91 per cent provided marriage leave.
- ▶ 11 per cent provided eldercare leave and children sick leave.
- ▶ 9 per cent provided family-care leave.
- ▶ 6 per cent provided paternity leave, on top of the Government-paid 1 week paid leave.
- ▶ 320 CAs also provide training/examination leave for workers to go on training.

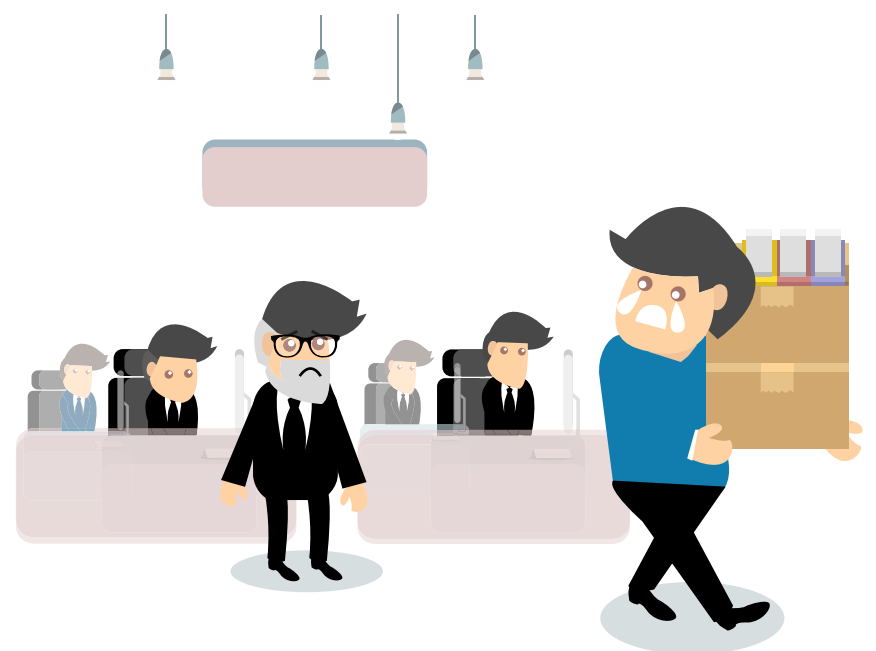


Labour Movement's Continued Efforts

- ▶ Despite an increased number of retrenchments, the Labour Movement was able to ensure workers received their due retrenchment packages.
- ▶ These workers were also helped by NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) to re-skill, receive training and to look for new jobs.
- ▶ Unions also negotiated for training grants paid by companies to support workers to pick up new skillsets.

Workers

- ▶ 2,512 workers from 45 unionised companies were retrenched in 2015, compared to 2,246 in 2014, representing an 11.8 per cent increase.
- ▶ The most retrenchments came from the manufacturing sector.
- ▶ The number of workers on a shorter work week increased from 1,323 in 2014 to 2,098 in 2015.
- ▶ 9 companies implemented a shorter work week in 2015 due to a lower work volume compared to 5 companies in 2014.



Wages

- ▶ Based on a survey on unionised companies from various sectors, the unionised sector saw a slight dip in most employment benefits in 2015.
- ▶ There was an annual increment of 4 per cent on average in 2015, compared to 4.3 per cent in 2014.
- ▶ There was a slight increase of bonus payouts, at 2.98 months in 2015, compared to 2.89 months in 2014.
- ▶ 80 per cent of unionised companies surveyed had adopted the National Wages Council (NWC) recommendations by at least paying \$60 built-in wage increase for low-wage workers earning \$1,100 and below.
- ▶ Low-wage workers earning between \$1,100 to \$1,300 saw an average increment of 5.4 per cent.

Helping More Workers

- ▶ There was a total of 2,851 industrial relations cases in 2015, up from 1,953 in 2014.
- ▶ For Ordinary Branches, 90 per cent of these cases were settled at union-management level, with the rest referred to the Ministry of Manpower or the Industrial Arbitration Court.
- ▶ For General Branches, the number of enquiries from PMEs saw a 72 per cent jump from 424 in 2014 to 729 in 2015.



Helping Workers Progress

The Ministry of Manpower sets out its goals over the next five years, plus we hear what our Labour Members of Parliament have to say.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

Helping Singaporeans take on good jobs, build fulfilling careers, enjoy sustained increases in real incomes and have a more secure retirement – these were some of the broad goals the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) hopes to achieve over the next five years.

The goals were detailed in the Manpower Ministry's Addenda to the President's Address at the opening of Singapore's 13th Parliament on 15 January 2016.

MANPOWER-LEAN

Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say explained that to sustain a nation of opportunity, there's a need to transit from a manpower-led to a manpower-lean economy.

MOM will work closely with the other government agencies and the tripartite partners to strengthen the Singaporean core in the workforce and ensure Singaporeans of all ages have fair opportunities to grow.

To strengthen the Singaporean core in the workforce, he said there is a need to speed up economic restructuring efforts and create higher-quality jobs.

Responding to the Manpower Ministry's plans, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How stressed that with the tight manpower situation, firms have to make the best use of every worker.

"This means more productive job designs and job processes, better skilled employees, better technology and equipment. With higher value-add in each job, the incomes of the workers doing them will have a sustainable basis to rise.

"This is a continuing process. It is not a guaranteed outcome. It takes much focus,

“I shared that our economy is heading towards challenging times. Both cyclical and structural factors could be at play. Regardless, let us take a hard look at the way we educate and train our people; help our companies transform and grow; and find ways to enhance our workers' jobs and productivity, so that we are prepared for any challenges**”**

NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing, sharing his thoughts on the various Ministries' Addenda on Channel 8's Hello Singapore Programme on 19 January 2016

gumption and clear-headedness to make progress. Tripartite collaboration at national and sectoral level will be of great help to nudge things forward," he said.

NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and Chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Manpower Patrick Tay added: "The Labour Movement will continue our drive towards building a Singaporean Core and helping every worker to realise their full potential through building inclusive workplaces and helping our workers to upskill, second skill and deep skill themselves."

QUALITY GROWTH

Turning to the goal of better jobs and higher incomes for all, MOM said it will seek to achieve this through Protection, Progression and Pride.

The re-employment age would be raised from current 65 to 67 by 2017.

The Ministry also wants all workers to take pride in their work and all employers to value their workers. It will work with tripartite partners to promote progressive HR practices,

invest in human capital and create workplaces where workers in all jobs are respected and valued.

"We can only achieve and sustain better jobs, higher incomes and financial security for all if employers, unions, workers, government agencies, and the community at large work in unity. Together, we can instill pride and confidence in co-creating our desired future of a better workforce and progressive workplaces for Singaporeans and Singapore," concluded Manpower Minister Lim.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Parliament will debate the President's address during its sitting beginning 25 January 2016.

Several Labour Members of Parliament will be speaking, and among them are Director (Progressive Wage Model), Industrial Relations Department and MP for Tampines GRC Desmond Choo and NTUC Director (Field), Industrial Relations Department and MP for Tanjong Pagar GRC Melvin Yong who will be making their maiden speeches in the House.

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ANDROID

LM Voices in Parliament

What issues will NTUC's newest LM MPs raise in Parliament? We hear from them to get a glimpse.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

Having a background in the Singapore Police Force is not the only thing NTUC Director (Field), Industrial Relations Department Melvin Yong and NTUC Director (Progressive Wage Model), Industrial Relations Department Desmond Choo share in common – both are also serving their first term as Labour Members of Parliament (MPs) this year.

As part of the Presidential Debate from 25–29 January 2016, both Mr Yong and Mr Choo will give their maiden parliamentary speeches and raise issues that concern both workers and the nation.

Desmond Choo

OBSERVATION OF VALUES

“Our Labour Movement embraces outcome-driven approaches to work. This allows our staff the opportunities to find their own feet. We advocate flexible work structures so that they have space to develop and balance their priorities. We focus on outcomes so that they can explore different approaches to solving challenges. We treasure them and help them to develop themselves beyond their union work ... Millennials in 20 years' time will form the majority of the workforce. The structures we put in place, be it at the workplace or in school, will be critical for Singapore.”

ON RAISING A FAMILY

“The key things for young parents who are professionals to achieve work-life balance I believe is time and an understanding employer. Initiatives such as paternity leave is a step in the right direction but more can be done. Companies must change structurally to support young parents. They should offer employees access to initiatives such as flexible work arrangements. These are the types of family-friendly practices that help an employee achieve both a fulfilling family life and career progression. Once our workers know we go the distance to care for them, then the employer is more than a company – it becomes family. And they will go the distance for family.”

As a young parent myself, I can understand the concerns of those facing these issues and I hope to bring to the debates in Parliament the voices of our young workers, young families and our students.”



Melvin Yong

NEW ROLES

“In my first three months in NTUC last year, I walked the ground and received a broad view of the various unions in the Labour Movement. It was only the beginning of 2016 that I became more involved in specific unions. I became Deputy Executive Secretary of United Workers of Electronic & Electrical Industries and I received a more in-depth understanding of issues through my dealings with them. On 1 February 2016, I will be taking the role of Executive Secretary of National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU). Both these unions have different concerns.”

For the electronics sector, it is more affected by the economic fluctuations. So there is a need to watch the workers affected and figure out how I can best help them. The transport sector on the other hand is a growing industry undergoing a restructure. So I'm working very closely with the operators to make sure there is a smooth transition for our workers.”

TRIPARTISM IN SINGAPORE

“For tripartism to work, there must be a representative of all the parties involved. There must also be trust among the tripartite partners. Just as it was our key competitive advantage in the last few decades, tripartism will continue to play an important role in the future. The economy today is open and businesses can simply move out of the country. We have to remember that Singapore is very small. We don't have a domestic market nor resources. We only have people. That is why we need to work together to continue to be economically competitive.”





On the panel (from left): Mr Warren Fernandez, editor of *The Straits Times*; Ms Lee Huay Leng, editor of *Lianhe Wanbao*; Associate Professor Eugene Tan, former Nominated Member of Parliament and academic; and Mr Kok Heng Leun, artistic director of Drama Box Ltd.

A Shared Goal

It's all about seeking robust solutions that meet the needs of the people and the country through tripartism, says SG Chan.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

Collaborative governance in Singapore has worked very well in some parts of society over many years. It is a process that involves the Government, community and private sectors working together to achieve more than any one party could achieve on its own.

NTUC Secretary-General (SG) Chan Chun Sing shared this point when addressing a panel discussion at the annual Singapore Perspectives (SP) conference organised by the Institute of Policy Studies with the theme "We" on 18 January 2016.

The session on Collaborative Governance was chaired by Mr Warren Fernandez, editor of *The Straits Times*. The line-up of panellists included Ms Lee Huay Leng, editor of *Lianhe Wanbao*; Associate Professor Eugene Tan, former Nominated Member of Parliament and academic; and Mr Kok Heng Leun, Artistic Director of Drama Box Ltd.

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

SG Chan cited two examples of collaborative governance – tripartism and the work of the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) and the Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCC).

He said that they share many positive attributes which Singaporeans can pick up and apply in other areas of society.

"In order for this to work, first there must be shared goals and this is about our common goals. We all have our differences and preferences but can we transcend them?"

"In tripartism and in the IRO or IRCC work, there is a common goal that transcends beyond the individual's or parties' interests, and because of that, they have shared goals and shared values that make them work. But most importantly, they trust each other," emphasised the Labour Chief to an audience of some 800 leaders from varied fields in Singapore.

He added that this trust had come about over a prolonged period through challenges and crises.

"When you have trust, then we can talk about the next thing, which is seeking solutions for a better future," he said.

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND RESPONSIBILITY

SG Chan also emphasised that collaborative governance was not just confined at the conversation level to define problems and seek solutions. It also requires collective action, responsibility and leadership.

"Easy to say, not easy to do. Because in this process, you will require trust, respect and most importantly, it requires humility to say that each of us may have our own perspective but each of us may not have the best perspective. That each of us must learn to respect each other's views, build on it and produce something even better for all the groups that we are in," he stressed.



NTUC Secretary-General (SG) Chan Chun Sing speaking on collaborative governance at this year's Singapore Perspectives conference.

CALLS FOR MORE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Session moderator Warren Fernandez noted that an often cited criticism about tripartism was that the process often took place behind closed doors.

And much of the debate and compromises reached were away from the public's eye.

SG Chan explained that tripartite partners take a very practical approach to issues to focus on outcomes.

"It would be odd, weird even, if tripartite partners do not have different perspectives. The question is, what will allow us to have a better outcome? Open debates work sometimes, and closed door consultations work at other times. We must be able to use both processes to engage our people.

"What is most important is that people come to the table with a shared goal of making the future better for our country and workers, and that they have the same values of respect, trust and humility. Most importantly, they want to find a better solution not just for themselves, but for all those involved," he stressed.

Courses for Consideration

As you chart your personal upskilling journey, here are some courses that will let NTUC members make use of subsidies from both the Union Training Assistance Programme (UTAP) and SkillsFuture Credit (SFC).

By **Jonathan Tan**



With some 10,000 courses to choose from in the SFC course directory, you'll be spoilt for choice when it comes to picking a relevant course to suit your needs. To put things into perspective, we've highlighted four categories of possible courses you could consider.

Better yet, they're all approved for subsidy from both SFC and UTAP, a boon for NTUC members.

FRESH STARTERS

New to the workforce? Consider picking up work skills such as technical writing and mastering Microsoft Office to let you excel at your job.



Courses to consider

-  Excellence in Technical Writing, offered by Nanyang Technological University
-  ES WSQ – Perform Spreadsheet Functions, offered by NTUC's LearningHub

CAREER TRANSITION

Opting for a fresh start in an entirely new industry? Consider taking up a new area of expertise that will help make the change smoother.



Courses to consider

-  Enhancing Critical Administrative Skills, offered by Singapore Institute of Management
-  NICF – Certified Associate in Project Management, offered by NTUC LearningHub

SKILLS UPGRADING

Looking to gain a competitive edge for your job? Consider picking up skills to help you develop personal effectiveness and communications.



Courses to consider

-  Diploma in Business Practice (Business Administration) — Certificate in Communications & IT Skills, offered by Temasek Polytechnic
-  ES WSQ – Develop Personal Effectiveness at Operations Level, offered by NTUC LearningHub

BACK TO WORK

Looking to re-join the workforce after a short hiatus? Consider updating yourself and gaining new skills to keep up with ever-changing work environments.

Courses to consider

-  Certified Service Professional, offered by Service Quality Centre Pte Ltd
-  ES WSQ- Perform Essential Online Functions, offered by NTUC LearningHub

SG Chan on the Bangladeshis' Arrest



Labour Chief urges Singaporeans not to let the actions of a few taint the contributions of law-abiding foreign workers.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

NTUC Secretary-General (SG) Chan Chun Sing said he was extremely concerned to hear about the discovery of a radical cell comprising foreign workers in Singapore.

SG Chan's statement came in the light of the announcement by the Government on 20 January 2016 that 27 male Bangladeshi nationals working in the construction industry in Singapore had been arrested by the Internal Security Department for terror links. They were arrested between 16 November and 1 December 2015.

Twenty-six of them have been repatriated back to their country while one is currently serving a jail sentence for attempting to leave the country via illegal and clandestine means after learning about the arrests. The Internal Security Department said those arrested were planning to take part in extremist activities in other countries, including Bangladesh. No terrorist acts were planned in Singapore.

“I was extremely concerned to hear about the discovery of a radical cell comprising foreign workers in Singapore.

Majority of the foreign workers here contribute positively to the growth and development of our nation. As such, we must be careful not to let the actions of these radicalised foreign workers taint the positive contributions of other law-abiding foreign workers who live harmoniously amongst us.

As such, we must strengthen our efforts to integrate foreign workers and guard against ostracising them. It is also critical that we do not allow this incident to affect the strong ties we share with our fellow Muslim Singaporeans as religious harmony is the cornerstone to our unique heritage in Singapore. The greater the threat to split our social fabric, the more we must reach out and embrace each other as Singaporeans.

Let us all stay calm and focus on working together to always stay vigilant against such threats.”

NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing, in a Facebook posting on 20 January 2016

GOOD TO KNOW



Find out more about the highlighted courses or browse other possible options you might be interested in for your specific needs here:

SFC course directory: www.skillsfuture.sg/credit

UTAP's course list: <http://skillsupgrade.ntuc.org.sg/>

NTUC LearningHub: <http://www.ntuclearninghub.com/pages/skillsfuture-for-individuals>





Photo by Jonathan Tan

CDE's specialists are equipped with essential skills to assist domestic employees with their grievances.

More than a Help Centre

NTUC's newly-opened Centre for Domestic Employees will provide more than just assistance and advice – it plans to promote good employer-employee relations too.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

To help address work-related challenges and issues of domestic employees in Singapore, the Labour Movement launched on 24 January 2016 the Centre for Domestic Employees (CDE).

The centre will reach out to domestic employees to provide them with an avenue to seek assistance, advice and relief.

It will complement the efforts of existing non-government organisations to assist domestic employees.

According to the Manpower Ministry, there are about 230,000 foreign domestic employees in Singapore, and this number is expected to increase to 300,000 by 2030.

"With the increasing number of the elderly and women entering the workforce, we believe more will be looking to hire domestic employees," said CDE Chairman Yeo Guat Kwang.

ALL-ROUND APPROACH

Other than having a 24-hour toll free helpline, CDE will provide services that include humanitarian aid, emergency shelter, and free legal clinics in partnership with The Law Society.

Staff of CDE are also trained by Silver Ribbon on basic mental health wellness to detect domestic employees who show signs of distress.

"CDE will take on a proactive and upstream approach in providing assistance to domestic employees as we want to help resolve their issues and challenges even before they begin to trouble them," said Mr Yeo.

Mr Yeo, who also chairs the Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC), said that CDE will take an all stake-holder approach in engaging domestic employees, employers or agencies on related issues.

The centre will also seek to promote good employer-employee working relationships, good employment practices and social integration through various workshops and social functions.

A NEED TO BE INCLUSIVE

NTUC Secretary-General (SG) Chan Chun Sing, who graced the launch as guest-of-honour, said CDE reflects the Labour Movement's continuous efforts to widen its reach to help different groups of workers.

"This is part of our longer-term effort towards becoming an all-inclusive Labour Movement. With CDE, we also hope that more support can be rendered to our domestic employees so they can work in a safe and healthy environment," added SG Chan.

CDE: In the Making

NTUC This Week follows the shaping and setting up of the centre and finds out what visitors can expect.

Words and Photos by **Jonathan Tan**

EASILY ACCESSIBLE

Prominently located at 185A, Goldhill Centre, right next to United Square on Thomson Road, the centre is also just across from Novena MRT.

A COSY REFUGE

The 1,200 square feet walk-in centre offers a safe, homely and comfortable setting.

MULTI-FUNCTION SPACES

Designed to maximise the available space, the centre's multi-function areas can be converted to support a variety of uses. There are private corners for one-to-one consultation and rooms for closed door discussions. The central lounge and reception area can be reconfigured efficiently to host talks and workshops.

24-HOUR OPERATIONS

CDE's specialists and volunteers, proficient in the native languages of the domestic employees they're helping, will be on call 24-hours a day, seven days a week manning the centre's helpline.



The transformation of the centre took just four weeks.

GOOD TO KNOW



24H Helpline: **1800 2255 233**

Address: 185A Thomson Road, Goldhill Centre (level 2)
Operating Hours: Tues-Sun, 10.00am-6.00pm
(Closed on Mon and Public Holidays)

Ground Opinions

We meet up with domestic workers from various countries who are working in this city to hear what they have to say about the Centre for Domestic Employees.

“It’s a really great opportunity to work in Singapore. I was a data encoder back in the Philippines before I came here. But the pay wasn’t very great. I’ve been here for four years, working for two different employers. I think Singapore provides domestic employees like myself better opportunities than anywhere else. I’d really like to upgrade myself to improve my skills and I hope the centre will be able to accommodate that.”

Lyra Herbillla, Philippines

“I was working in a clinic as a nurse back home in Myanmar. But nurses there don’t get paid very well. I’ve also worked as a maid in Japan and Malaysia before coming to Singapore two years ago. So far so good. My employers treat me like family. I have heard some cases of maids who get mistreated by their employers. I hope the centre can also be a place where maids can go for counselling and emotional support.”

Sawe Yi, Myanmar

“I’ve been working with the same employer for six years now, and this employer is my first one since my last work as a domestic helper in Taiwan. I’ve no problems with the work here, and everything is good between me and my employer. I think this Centre for Domestic Employees is very nice and it is very good to know that they can help us. Because we won’t know whether we will have problems in the future.”

Chonita Recamara, Philippines

“I’m from Cirebon in West Java and I’ve been with the same employer for 20 years already. The good thing is that we can communicate well with each other and they have been very thoughtful and caring to me. Sometimes, some of us working here have a problem but we don’t know where to go. So it’s good that there is this centre because now we have a place to go and get advice for issues.”

Alpiyah, Indonesia

“I’ve been working in Singapore for about one year. To take care of my two younger sisters, I had to quit university to come here to work. I wanted to work in Singapore as it’s safer than any other country. I’m glad there’s this new centre as it can be very useful to my friends who have issues. I will let them know about it.”

Dii Ching, Myanmar

“The centre will be good because we can now go there if we have problems. It’s also good to know that we have a number to call for advice on what we can do for our problems. At least we can get advice.”

Mufidatun Nurlailei, Indonesia



What is U Associate?

Heard of the U Associate programme? It's all about helping and taking care of SMEs through various partnerships. We have the details here.

By **Ryan Chan** and **Shukry Rashid**

The U Associate is a programme where associations of various industries partner NTUC to engage more Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs). SMEs are expected to make up majority of the workers within the next two decades.

First set up in 2011, the programme provides opportunities for SMEs to connect with industry leaders to share ideas and network. To date, U Associate has 22 partners across 14 industries. Find out how U Associate can benefit you.

Networking

Ever wondered how the people in charge of the world's biggest companies manage to scale the heights to the top? One of the best features of U Associate is the number of opportunities created through connecting SMEs with top leaders from various industries. This allows them to meet with experts and learn from the best.



Growth

Through these partnerships, programmes like the Young Engineers Leadership (YEL) provide engineers with the necessary skills to deepen skills to progress in their career. The upcoming U Associate Convention will see the announcement of several sectoral programmes in selected industries. Look out for our full coverage of the convention for more details of these programmes.



Care, Fair and Grow with U Associate

Voice For The Workers

SMEs can also raise their concerns pertaining to their profession or industry. With the extensive relationship between partner associations and the Labour Movement, the U Associate programme is always looking out for ways to improve working conditions. For example, the Singapore Industrial and Services Employees' Union (SISEU) launched its Real Estate Professionals' Chapter with the backing of U Associate partners like the Institute of Estate Agents, Singapore (IEA) and the Singapore Accredited Estate Agencies (SAES).



UTAP

U Associate members are also entitled to the same privileges as union members, which include the Union Training Assistance Programme (UTAP). With UTAP, members are eligible for up to \$250 in training subsidies per calendar year. Up to 50 per cent of the payable course fee can be claimed.



U Associate Convention

The inaugural U Associate Convention in 2015 saw more than 500 leaders, professionals, students and partners come together to share ideas and discuss current trends.

With a theme of 'Disruptive Innovation', this year's U Associate Convention will hope to inspire SMEs to push boundaries by disrupting current norms and innovate with new solutions. Two keynote speakers – Scott Anthony of Innosight and Peter Ho of Hope Technik – will take the stage to speak on this year's theme.

What: U Associate Convention 2016

When: 18 February 2016, 12pm to 5pm

Where: NTUC Auditorium, Level 7, NTUC Centre, One Marina Boulevard

i To RSVP, email uassociate@ntuc.org.sg. For more information, visit www.ntuc.org.sg/uassociate.

Helping SMEs

Taskforce appoints NTUC U SME as a Lean Enterprise Development Multiplier to help SMEs and strengthen the Singaporean core.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

NTUC U SME was appointed on 15 January 2016 as one of nine trade associations, chambers and industry partners tasked to be outreach channels for the Lean Enterprise Development (LED) Scheme.

As a member of the group, U SME will help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) become manpower-lean with technology, develop a pipeline of skilled talent to strengthen the Singaporean core, guide SMEs and cluster companies in developing LED project proposals.

Known as the LED Multipliers, the group includes the Singapore Manufacturing Federation, Workforce Advancement Federation, Restaurant Association of Singapore, Association of Small and Medium Enterprises, Singapore Precision Engineering and Technology Association, Singapore Business Federation, Singapore National Employers Federation, and Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In his facebook posting on 16 January 2016, U SME Lead Yeo Guat Kwang said: "As the Lead of NTUC's U SME, I am very pleased that U SME was appointed as an LED Multiplier to help our SMEs build a strong Singaporean core and adopt manpower-lean solutions. Through the LED projects, we can help our SMEs transform and create a more progressive career path for our SME workers, as they will acquire the relevant knowledge and skills to take on higher value jobs."

CRITICAL ROLE

The LED Multipliers were chosen by the LED Taskforce comprising Singapore Workforce



Development Agency (WDA), Spring Singapore and the Labour Movement. NTUC Director (Progressive Wage Model), Industrial Relations Department Desmond Choo sits on the LED Taskforce as co-chairman.

"With U SME as a Multiplier, we will be able to better communicate to companies that NTUC is not just concerned about employer and employee relationships ... Unions also play a critical role in mobilising management and workers to work together for a common benefit," said Mr Choo.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

The LED Multipliers are expecting 400 SMEs to embark on the LED Scheme over the next two years. This however cannot be at the expense of quality, said Mr Choo.

He added: "NTUC will of course try to get as many SMEs on board as we can, but we are not just chasing numbers. We must make sure that quality is there. Every time we get a company on board, there should also be wage increases and wage improvements for our workers."

LED SCHEME

Announced by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) in August 2015, the LED scheme aims

to help SMEs achieve stronger business growth and offer better jobs and careers to Singaporeans within an increasingly manpower-lean landscape.

Under the scheme, MOM will grant temporary manpower policy adjustments during the period of an SME's transition into becoming manpower-lean while creating a strong Singaporean core.

INSIDER'S GUIDE

NTUC U SME Secretariat

Date of Establishment: June 2014

Purpose: To foster good relations with SMEs, help them in learning from best practices, and explore possibilities on how the Labour Movement can partner each company to bring about more benefits and assistance to both employers and workers.

Outreach: To date, NTUC U SME has reached out to more than 1,300 SMEs.

Contact: sme@ntuc.org.sg

i For more information on the LED Scheme, visit www.mom.gov.sg or email leds@mom.gov.sg.

Phey Yew Kok Pleads Guilty

Court proceeds with 12 of 34 charges against him.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

Former NTUC President and Chairman Phey Yew Kok was on 22 January 2016 convicted and sentenced by the State Court to 60 months' in jail.

They faced a total of 34 charges. He pleaded guilty to 12 charges, with the remaining charges taken into consideration for purpose of sentencing.

In a news release, the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) said Phey was first charged in Court on 10 December 1979. Subsequently, he fled jurisdiction and failed to turn up in Court on 7 January 1980.

They spent the subsequent 35 years on the run. He eventually surrendered himself at the Singapore Embassy in Bangkok on 22 June 2015, and was brought back to Singapore to face his charges.

FACE 2 FACE WITH

Mary Chan

By **Marcus Lin**

Bubbly Khoo Teck Puat Hospital Nurse Clinician Mary Chan, 60, who is also Healthcare Services Employees' Union (HSEU) Assistant General Secretary, found her vocation early in life and thrives on being able to serve others.

NTUC TW: You are a nurse, unionist, wife, mother and grandmother. How do you find time for all these things?

Madam Mary Chan: First, you must have passion and a love for what you are doing. If you don't have that, you may lose interest, feel stressed and then you give up. I also have a secret three-in-one formula, what I call a tripartite partnership of my own where I find time for work, union and family.

Though I may feel stressed at times from shouldering more responsibilities, I do not let the stress overcome me because I enjoy what I am doing. Stress happens when several things require attention all at once. But this can be avoided with proper time management and prioritising to do what's important first. The challenge is to know which hat to wear and when.

You are now a veteran nurse and unionist. What was your journey like?

I got into the union soon after I became a trainee nurse in 1972 at the age of 17 after leaving school. The unionists were very proactive and came to the hospital where I was attached to give a talk to the new employees. Nurses were then unionised under the Amalgamated Union of Public Employees (AUPE) and it was the union's founding General Secretary G Kandasamy's wife, a nurse herself, who gave the talk.

If I am not mistaken, almost everyone joined the union after the talk. We just signed on for the union, even though some of us did not know what we were signing. Obviously, it was fortunate that the unionists came and we signed up.

How does holding union office differ from being an ordinary member?

I would say it is very enriching and satisfying in many ways. It gives me a chance to be more involved and to learn more about union work and the rights of the people on the ground. I am also in a position to do more for members. As many people may be NTUC or union members without realising their rights and the benefits available, I am able to help them and this includes disciplinary and industrial relations matters.

The satisfaction comes when they approach me to say thank you and call me by name which does not happen if I do not go to the ground. It really makes me feel that my job is appreciated. It is also good advertisement for union recruitment because people will want to join the union when they see their colleagues enjoying the benefits.

What kind of help do you get to do your union work?

To be able to do all that requires supportive employers which I am lucky to have here at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. For instance, in addition to having understanding superiors who grant union leave when needed, the HR department supports me with staff to help with all the administrative work and provides space for the union office. I also have the support of the union and the support and understanding of my husband and children. They all allow me to juggle all my different roles.



INSIDER'S GUIDE



Healthcare Services Employees' Union (HSEU)

HSEU

Established: 30 December 1989

Why: To represent employees in the healthcare sector.

Numbers Now: More than 40,000 members.

Did You Know: HSEU was formed after a merger between Health Corporation of Singapore Staff Union (HCSSU) and National University Hospital Employees' Union (NUHEU) in 2006.

就业保障： 周期性衰退或 结构性转变？

当局已陆续寄发启动未来技能补助户头的通知书给国人。为了让大家了解详情，本期特列表说明如何使用这笔补助金来提升个人的技能。

文：陈振声，全国职工总会秘书长



自2015年元月加入工运大家庭以来，好多人关心我的工作，问我做了些什么，又是如何坚守岗位的？当时我开玩笑地答说“一切都为了减轻社会与家庭发展部同事的工作负担”。我的意思是，如果我干得出色，社会与发展部同仁的工作便可以减少一些。这可没有半点夸大。越多国人有了优质的工作，他们便可以照顾好家人的生活，社会与发展部须关照的家庭自然就会减少了。

为此，作为工运首长，或现在人们所称的秘书长，我每一天关切的头等大事除了就业，还是就业。具体来说，便是如何才能让工友有一份收入不错、有前途又深具意义的好工，以及如何让年长工友、年轻人和弱势群体就业，等等。凡是人们提到的，我们都想得到，并在忧心的同时想方设法一一改善。

自就任以来，我每一个星期都拜访公司，和众多的公司老板交谈，聆听工会领袖的心声，也和工友们交流。他们所关心的问题多半相同，有些是关于公司的生存和竞争力，有些则是关于工友的未来就业问题。

妨碍就业的因素

目前的就业前景充满挑战，很多人担心要是公司的订单不足，工友接下来是否还能就业？有些人不确定当前的局势是遭遇周期性逆风或是深层结构变化。如果是前者，人们可以寄望乌云很快吹散；但若是后者，情况就会变得更糟，到时企业便无法聘请同一名工友担任原来性质的工作。足见协助工友提高就业能力是何等的迫切。

举例而言，有些印务厂的工友正在面临公司订单逐年减少的境况，而有些工友则目睹印务厂迁移海外，把印刷品返运新加坡的事实。科技改变了人们的阅读习惯，很多人已不再依靠印刷载体阅读报章和书籍了。很明显的，这个行业正在发生结构性变化，我国公司和工友必须迅速适应变迁以求生存。科技发展也令消费习惯改变，一方面创造了新的市场需求，一方面也冲击着旧市场。我们或许无法保住所有旧的工作，但一定要设法创新，开拓崭新的产品市场，制造新的就业机会，以求生存与发展。在此结构转变的阶段，我国工友刻不容缓，须迅速掌握新技能，才能担任新工作。

然而，目睹需求放缓的现象，人们不禁会问，这到底是周期性使然还是结构性变化所致？就人们熟悉的职总平价、巨人、昇菘等超市的销售情况来看，到底这是全球经济疲弱导致需求放缓还是消费者消费习惯改变，更多人转向网购？

力求自保

这或许是两股市场力量同时运作而形成的问题。那么，我国的零售业者又该如何应对呢？

或许症结不在我国的零售业者而是网购的习惯。如果网购习惯成为主流，那么，业者要如何作好准备、如何迎接挑战，公司该引进什么科技，工友该掌握些什么新技能才能跟进需求呢？

另外，无法跟进新科技步伐和新行业需求的年长工友该如何是

好？我们可以创造哪些工作，让他们赚取足够的工资来养家糊口呢？面对经济放缓，我国公司是否有能力投资并引进新科技吗？不进行更多投资的话，又要如何落实结构性转化呢？

当全球经济放缓时，吸引外资便尤其困难。最近，我拜访了一家高端发动机维修公司。他们的工友生产力高，技术能力强。然而，该公司是否有余力在下一波技术潮中继续投资新科技，维修新一代的发动机？我们暂时无法确定。我国有技术劳动力，我们设法压低成本，劳资关系和谐，还有其他诸多优势。但跨国集团是否会为了非经济因素而把资本投放在他处？这并不是我们所控制的。要知道，超越竞争、吸引外资前来我国创造新优质工作不容易。然而，尽管我们无法控制所有的因素，我们一定要以最好的理由说服投资家前来投资。切记，世上没人有义务照顾我们的生活。

接下来数月可能充满挑战。不过，俗语说：危中有机。无论乌云满天意味着周期性或者结构性问题，我们依然要集体应对。每次经济衰退来临，我们宁可将其视为结构性转变而不作为周期性衰退。。此外，尽管时局变化，有些处事原则我们务必坚守。

劳资政协作至关重要

首先，我们须依靠劳资政协作所发挥出来的力量克服困难，从而营造有利的商业环境。这是职总、全国雇主联合会和新加坡工商联合总会，以及人力部、教育部和贸工部之所以不断紧密合作的原因所在。我们所要与之抗衡的是外来竞争而不是对方。

其次，为了确保我国工友掌握适应未来工作和市场的技能，我们必须大力推动持续教育和技能培训。单凭一种技能已经不足以满足需要，工友须掌握的技能必须是既可适应当今市场的运作，也能跟上未来工作的需求。这便是开展“未来技能”计划的原因。

第三，我们不能骄傲自满，固步自封。相反，应该时刻探讨如何维持公司竞争力，如何压低成本，如何培训学生掌握符合市场需求的技能？也须保持法规竞争力，并将土地、劳动力和资源供给给成长领域，以及创造新产品和市场等。这也是我们设立未来经济委员会，重新审视我国经济基础，力图在下一个阶段跨向另一高峰的原因。

按市场规律，唯有适者才能生存。为此，工运承诺与劳资政伙伴合作，确保我国工友比竞争对手更能适应环境又能迅速完成任务。若政府机构、商业伙伴及工运三者能继续密切合作，我们的成功几率还是很高的。劳资政协作的理念很容易理解，但须小心经营，维持着良好关系，以及达到彼此的谅解与共识。

这也就是我决定设立这个部落格的主因。以此作为平台，定期分享工运如何思考着与大家携手跨越障碍。我想对全体工作人士说：你们在打拼的路途上绝对不孤单，工运会与你们同在同一条战线，将和你们一起携手共进，协助你们适应变迁，开创美好的未来。

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“职总周报”

2016年1月24日
售价 60c
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维护工友利益

全国职工总会助理秘书长詹惠凤表示，工友不妨采取主动，借助职总和政府的培训与技能提升计划，从而提升个人的就业能力。



职总助理秘书长 詹惠凤

于2016年1月22日举行的媒体发布会上就2016年工会组织群组的前景发表谈话

时表示，虽然2016年的雇佣前景不明朗，但工运依然会顾及工友的就业保障问题。

去年有工会组织的公司发生一些裁员现象，其中有大多发生在制造业上。

詹惠凤指出，尽管如此，工友仍然可以在制造业中找到新创造的，以及收入不错的工作。为此，当务之急是确保我们的工友能够掌握好恰当和相关的技术，从而在新涌现的高级制造业中谋生。

培训与提升

裁员难免会引起工友们担忧就业保障的问题。詹惠凤认为，工友们在担忧之余，不妨采取主动，善加借助职总和政府的计划参加技能提升培训，从而提升个人的就业能力。

她说：“参加培训和技能提升绝对错不了。你要嘛在本行业成为行尊，要嘛寻找机会提升实力。不管是在同行业或者在别的行业发展都该抱有这种态度。”

据统计，目前仍有900个生效的劳资集体协议中，其中320个包含培训假和考试假的条文。但这仅局限于公司资助的课程或是与工作相关的培训。

詹惠凤认为，这些条文应该加以扩充，工运正朝这个方向努力。她指出：“我们的目的是在公司内部提倡培训员工的文化。”

詹惠凤在会上举例子说，许多想法雷同的雇主可以让他们的雇员参加技能深广培训，以提高雇

员的就业能力。她也呼吁雇主给予员工培训假或考试假，好让员工们善用未来技能补助，学习工作范围以外的技能。

以下是2015年本地职场的重点回顾：

薪金

- ✓ 根据一份针对700家共聘请了22万3000名员工的各行业公司调查显示，工友在2015年的大部分雇佣福利比以前略微减少。
- ✓ 在2015年，这批工友的平均年薪增长为4%，2014年则是4.3%。
- ✓ 与2014年达2.89个月的花红相比，2015年的花红略微增长，达2.98个月。
- ✓ 在接受调查的公司当中，有80%接纳了全国工资理事会的建议，给月入在1100元及以下的低薪工友至少60元的固定加薪。
- ✓ 月入1100元至1300元的低薪工友，则平均获得5.4%的加薪。

工友

- ✓ 2015年共有2512名在45家设有工会的公司工作的工友遭受裁员，比2014年的2212名增加了13.5%。
- ✓ 裁员最多来自制造业，被裁人数占了总数的93%。
- ✓ 工作周缩短的工友从2014年的1323名增加到2015年的2098名。
- ✓ 有9家公司因工作需求减少而实施缩短工作周措施，

工运仍然维护工友利益

- ✓ 尽管裁员增加，工运仍然确保工友得到应有的裁员配套。

- ✓ 职总就业与职能培训中心也协助被裁工友参加技能提升培训，以便另找工作。

职场福利

- ✓ 在生效中的900家公司劳资集体协议里，99%包含工友逝世后的家属福利。
- ✓ 91%包含婚姻假
- ✓ 11%包含护老假
- ✓ 9%包含照顾家庭假
- ✓ 6%在政府给予的一周带薪产假之外另外给予员工产假
- ✓ 320家公司的劳资集体协议中包含了培训假和考试假，有利于员工参加培训。

协助更多工友

- ✓ 在普通分会中，2015年处理的劳资纠纷案子和相关的咨询共有1448宗，比起2014年的1253宗增加了15.6%。
- ✓ 这些案子90%已在工会与管理层的级别获得解决，其余的则交由人力部或工业仲裁庭调解。
- ✓ 在一般分会中，相关职场和雇佣的咨询从2014年的597宗增加到2015年的1226宗。专经执行人员咨询者从2014年的424人，飙升至729人，增加了72%。
- ✓ 2015年涉及专经执人员的工业关系相关问题有2851宗，相比2014年的1953宗。

2016年前景

- ✓ 将有更多企业遭受周期性衰退或结构性变的冲击，尤其是海事工程业、化学业和印刷业。
- ✓ 2016年首季，有工会组织的公司将会发生裁员，受影响工友约234名。