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DISTINGUISHED SERVICE (STAR)

Robert Yap Chin Kok

Former President

Singapore National Employers Federation

Nominated by the National Trades Union Congress.

Dr Robert Yap Chin Kok tirelessly champions productivity-driven growth, fair employment practices, and workforce resilience to enhance wages, welfare, and career prospects. Over the past decade, he has played a pivotal role in advancing tripartism, fostering harmonious workplace relations, and promoting responsible employment practices.

As President of the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) from 2014 to 2024, Brother Robert worked closely with tripartite partners to address key workforce challenges, including an ageing workforce, job displacement, and continuous skills upgrading. He was instrumental in supporting the formation of the Tripartite Workgroup on Lower-Wage Workers, recognising workers' essential contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic and advocating for structured wage progression. His support in expanding the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) ensured that wage growth was linked to skills upgrading, job responsibilities, and productivity, thereby creating clear career pathways while sustaining business competitiveness.

Brother Robert led efforts to extend the retirement and re-employment age, ensuring that mature workers remained in the workforce. A roadmap was established to raise the re-employment age to 70 by 2030, allowing businesses and unions time to adapt. To further support senior employment, he advocated for the introduction of the Senior Employment Credit (SEC), which offsets wage costs for hiring Singaporeans aged 60 and above.

Brother Robert also championed automated solutions to support older workers, helping them remain employable without being displaced. Under his leadership, autonomous mobile robots were introduced in warehouse and retail settings to reduce the physical strain on mature employees, allowing them to focus on higher-value tasks.

Brother Robert has also actively supported the interests of professionals, managers, and executives (PMEs). Through his involvement in tripartite councils and workgroups, he has contributed to policies addressing job displacement, career progression, and fair employment practices. His work on the NTUC-SNEF PME Taskforce Report has been instrumental in shaping structured policies for skills upgrading and career mobility, ensuring that PME can adapt to evolving job market demands.

As a champion of continuous learning, Brother Robert has strongly supported the establishment of Company Training Committees to embed lifelong learning and upskilling within organisational culture. His efforts have ensured that businesses invest in their workforce, fostering a future-ready talent pipeline.

Brother Robert's unwavering dedication to the Labour Movement has bridged the gap between employers' needs and workers' aspirations, strengthening tripartism and reinforcing Singapore's workforce resilience. His significant contributions to fair employment, job transformation, and skills development, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, have left a lasting impact on Singapore's labour landscape.