



NATIONAL DAY MESSAGE 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are once again commemorating National Day!

The turn of events in our COVID-19 fight in the past few weeks have understandably dampened our mood and hopes for a quicker recovery. But the fight against COVID-19 is making good progress and we have much to celebrate nonetheless.

Supporting and Protecting Our Workers Through COVID-19

There are bright spots in our economic recovery and we are tracking an upward trajectory. Our economy is expected to grow by 4% to 6% this year. Our resident unemployment and retrenchment rates have improved and are far from the severe peaks of last year. Our workers, including PMEs, can keep their jobs, and if impacted, are better able to find and keep good jobs.

The promising results we see today are due to the tripartite partners' close and continued collaboration over the past year. The NTUC Job Security Council (JSC), with support from our Labour Movement partners, has successfully placed over 32,000 workers in jobs since it was formed in February 2020. Today, the JSC network comprises more than 10,000 companies, a significant increase from over a year ago, when we started with just 4,000.

Importantly, the national vaccination drive is progressing well and steadily. This is critical to protect our workers in their daily work where many interactions are unavoidable. NTUC will continue to support vaccination at the workplace to best protect workers' health and ensure business continuity.

Uplifting Our Vulnerable Workers

But I know that there are groups of workers who are still reeling from the prolonged effects of the pandemic.

To our lower-wage workers, I know that you are especially vulnerable during this period. NTUC is pushing hard to expand the Progressive Wage Model faster to benefit more workers so that you can have better wages, welfare and work prospects. To do so, NTUC has lobbied to get buy-in from stakeholders and given workers our

voice through the Tripartite Workgroup on Lower-Wage Workers (TWG-LWW). I look forward to the TWG-LWW's recommendations, which will bring timely support and improve work prospects.

To our freelancers, NTUC continues to lobby hard for you. We want to be able to formally represent you, to afford you better protection. We recognise the need to ensure a fairer bargaining relationship between you and the service buyer. As we move closer to our goal, our NTUC-affiliated associations continue their important work to collectively champion your needs, as well as support your income security, skills mastery, work prospects and health.

To all PMEs, NTUC wants to better support you at your workplace and in your careers. We thank the more than 9,000 PMEs who have given valuable feedback to the NTUC-SNEF PME Taskforce, which is firming up its recommendations for sharing later this year. In addition, we called upon the Government to better safeguard our Singaporean Core. We are glad that the Government heard us and recently announced the formation of the Tripartite Committee on Workplace Fairness. This will complement efforts of the joint Taskforce.

Rallying Our Workforce, Upholding Our Singapore Spirit

National Day is a time to celebrate Singapore and Singaporeans. We Singaporeans have shown unity, resilience and adaptability in weathering an unprecedented storm.

Let us in true Singapore spirit continue to care for each other, steady our resolve, and adapt to thrive in an endemic COVID-19 world.

Let us continue to build a vibrant Singapore that is competitive, sustainable and inclusive.

Let us also look ahead with renewed hope this National Day and forge a better future together.

Happy National Day!

