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Making Singapore a safer place to work



Workfare is the best welfare

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New prototype uniforms boost image of security officers

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Workplans 2006

Let's Work Together To Move 'Rocks'

Workfare and older workers take centrestage; unions urged to adopt NTUC's workplans as their own

A MINDSET change and a strong conviction to push through various initiatives to provide jobs for Singaporeans, grow the labour movement and enhance the well-being of workers.

That's the call NTUC made to unions and co-operatives as it unveiled six core priorities in its latest workplans to achieve better jobs, better pay and better life for all.

Dubbed "the six big rocks of 2006", they comprise of the NTUC Workfare Initiative (NWI), Raising Effective Retirement Age, Towards 1 Million Members By 2015, Leadership Development, International Relations and Organisational Development.

Taking top priority is the NWI, which aims to help low-wage workers take on better jobs and earn better pay. This scheme is NTUC's response to the recently unveiled report by the Ministerial Committee on Low-Wage Workers.

To achieve this, the Job Re-creation Programme (JRP) will be ramped up to re-create 10,000 existing jobs each year, and have it extended to more sectors. The current targeted income range of up to \$1,800 will also be expanded to cover higher-skilled and supervisory level jobs that pay up to \$2,500 a month.

Describing the report of the Ministerial Committee on Low Wage Workers as "timely", labour chief Lim Boon Heng disclosed that NTUC and the

Workforce Development Agency had jointly requested \$40 million from the Government to fund the JRP.

The Singapore Labour Foundation (SLF) will also contribute \$10 million to support the expansion of JRP, raising the total amount to \$50 million.

"I am happy that the Ministerial Committee on Low-Wage Workers has supported our proposal, and we hope that the Government will respond during next month's Budget, or earlier," he told more than 500 unionists and NTUC staff at the Workplans Seminar on Jan 13.

Mr Lim also noted that the various work plans are aimed to give confidence to the workers by equipping them with right skills and knowledge to make the necessary transitions in this fast-changing environment.

Other key programmes under the

ANOTHER priority of the labour movement this year is to increase the employment rate of older workers, especially those in their 50s, and the re-employment rate of older workers past the official retirement age of 62.

Said NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Lim Swee Say: "We will target 50 companies over the next two years to enhance the employment opportunities for older workers and retired workers. This initiative to re-design jobs, re-train and re-tune human resource policies will

NTUC Rocks

- 1 NTUC Workfare Initiative**
 - NTUC will invest \$50m over two years
 - Job Re-creation Programme to be expanded
- 2 Raising Effective Retirement Age**
 - Target 50 companies to retain older workers
 - Up to \$15m to help older workers stay in jobs
- 3 Towards 1 Million Members By 2015**
- 4 Leadership Development**
- 5 International Relations**
- 6 Organisational Development**

NWI include rolling out the Best Sourcing Initiative (BSI), expanding the Customer-Centric Initiative (CCI) to more service providers, and assisting more workers go for training through enhanced financial support under the NTUC Education and Training Fund.

Supporting the NTUC's workplans, Amalgamated Union of Public Employees General Secretary Teo Yock Ngee said

unions should collectively work towards achieving the key performance indicators, and to dispel the notion that union work is a thankless job.

"NTUC has presented to us a wonderful workplan for the year. Let's all think differently and seek ways to achieve the targets."

• *More on NTUC Workplans: Pages 3-5*

Keeping Older Workers Employed

cost up to \$15 million."

Besides this, efforts will be made to prepare older workers for re-employment through job redesign and improving the working environment, and to implement portable medical benefits.

The moves, said NTUC chief Lim Boon Heng, are part of the labour movement's drive to raise the effective retirement age of workers so that they can stay financially afloat in their golden years.

He pointed out that while Singapore's life expectancy rates rank among the

highest in the world, the employment rates of people in their late 50s and 60s are low as compared to other developed countries.

Current retirement savings are also insufficient for most retired workers to sustain for the rest of their lives.

"Therefore, our energies for 2006 will be to help older workers find re-employment and stay in employment, then we can talk about an inclusive society and hope for a better future," said Mr Lim.