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Speech By Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Manpower Shawn Huang at Ministry of Manpower Committee of Supply 2026

Shawn Huang, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Manpower, Parliament House

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A. Promoting Inclusive Workplace Practices: Tripartite Instruments on Managing Harassment

A1. Mr Chairman, allow me to begin by sharing how we are strengthening our workplace fairness framework so that all workers are treated fairly.

A2. I appreciate Ms Diana Pang's suggestion to make inclusive practices manageable for Small and Medium Enterprises. The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices, or TAFEP, will step up public outreach and education efforts on the Workplace Fairness Act. TAFEP's resources and guides are kept simplified and bite-sized. Even SMEs with no dedicated HR personnel can easily apply them.

A3. Ms Diana Pang also spoke about strengthening protections against workplace harassment and bullying. No worker should be subjected to such unacceptable practices in the workplace. The Workplace Fairness Act strengthens protections for workers facing harassment by requiring firms to put in place grievance handling processes. Beyond this, we will go upstream to help employers prevent workplace harassment and bullying. MOM and tripartite partners are reviewing the existing Tripartite Advisory on Managing Workplace Harassment, and developing a new Tripartite Standard on this matter. This will enhance the guidance for employers to adopt best practices to prevent and respond to workplace harassment.

B. Enabling Women and Caregivers to Remain in the Workforce

B1. Let me now highlight, or outline, our targeted measures for groups that need more support, starting with women and caregivers, two groups that tend to overlap.

B2. Too often, women who take on caregiving responsibilities may feel that they are making a zero-sum choice between caring for their loved ones or pursuing their careers.

a. As Ms Mariam Jaafar pointed out, caregivers who leave the workforce often find it hard to return. Programmes like Workforce Singapore's Career Conversion Programmes, or CCPs, can help them get back into jobs with good prospects. But MOM also wants to ease their dilemma upfront, by making work and caregiving sustainable. This is where Flexible Work Arrangements, or FWAs, come in.

B3. FWAs are much more than just working from home. They also include flexible load arrangements and flexible working hours. These arrangements give employers and workers more options to organise work in sustainable and productive ways.

B4. Mr Ng Chee Meng and Mr Abdul Malik have highlighted the pressures faced by sandwiched caregivers who care for both children and seniors. Both members asked for stronger support for this group, through measures like financial support and leave.

a. On financial support, eligible working caregivers can boost their income and CPF savings through the Workfare Income Supplement and the Earn and Save Bonus under the Majulah Package. Non-working caregivers who have taken extended breaks can also benefit from other measures. For instance, they can boost their CPF savings in their senior years through the Matched Retirement Savings Scheme and the Budget 2026 CPF top up.

b. On leave, many employers have voluntarily introduced caregiving-related leave provisions as part of their strategy to attract and retain talent. In 2024, around 6,100 employers offered paid family care leave. This represents about 36% of private companies with at least 25 employees.

c. FWAs offer caregivers the flexibility they need to stay in work. If a family member needs help with daily routines like medication or meals, caregivers need flexibility across the work week, not just a single block of time off. FWAs are thus more sustainable for caregivers to stay in

employment. By staying in work, caregivers can secure a reliable foundation for their longer-term financial security.

B5. Mr Abdul Malik has asked for the Government to collect data on caregiver employment. We already do, and our data suggest that as FWA provision has risen, more women and caregivers have been able to stay in, or return, to work.

a. Based on MOM's surveys, one in two firms offered scheduled FWAs before the pandemic. When the pandemic hit, this changed our working norms and increased the provision of work-from-home and flexi-load FWAs. Now, around seven in ten firms offer FWAs, even as firms adapt to new post-COVID norms and adjust provision.

b. And this has supported our labour force participation rate. The share of caregivers who were neither working nor looking for work among residents aged 25 to 64 fell from 28.2% in 2019 to 17.2% in 2025. Similarly, the female labour force participation rate among those aged 25 to 64 had also risen, from 76.1% to 80.5% over the same period.

B6. FWAs not only benefit workers, they are a competitive advantage for employers. They widen the talent pool, strengthen retention, and support productivity.

B7. Dementia Singapore, a leading social service agency, knows this well. It has fully integrated FWAs such as staggered working hours into their workplace culture. For example, all employees can start their preferred working hours, allowing working parents to start and end work earlier to pick up their children. This has led to high levels of staff satisfaction and a low attrition rate.

B8. But conversations about FWAs can be difficult. That is why we launched the Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangement Requests in 2024.

B9. The Guidelines replace uncertainty with clarity, guiding structured conversations on requests for FWAs.

a. Let me illustrate how Dementia Singapore has used those Guidelines. A cancer survivor in her late 50s required a reduced workload arrangement, or flexi-load, to manage her health. She submitted a formal FWA request in line with the Tripartite Guidelines. Dementia Singapore then considered it, by weighing its operational requirements. Her work responsibilities were reviewed and redeployed, in consultation with other teammates. Her request was approved and she is now on a three-day work week.

B10. If employers do not consider requests in line with the Guidelines, workers can seek assistance from TAFEP. TAFEP will engage the employer to align its processes. This could include requiring the employer to attend educational workshops on FWA implementation. Ms Eileen Chong proposed making the Tripartite Guidelines into law, and also making the provision of FWAs a presumptive right for working parents with young children. Such a move is too blunt as business needs differ across industries and roles. For instance, working from home is not possible for frontline jobs. Rigidly mandating FWAs across the board can stifle business operations and competitiveness. In the long run, this could hurt employment opportunities for Singaporeans. Instead, we have focused on more sustainable ways to enable companies to implement FWAs, through initiatives such as job redesign support, and providing a fair process for employers and workers to discuss mutually workable and beneficial arrangements.

B11. Ms Diana Pang spoke about the challenges SMEs face when implementing FWAs. I wish to assure the Member that support is available. Firms, including SMEs, can utilise the Enterprise Workforce Transformation Package, or EWTP, set to be launched later in March. The EWTP provides funding and advisory support to help companies adopt new work models like FWAs.

B12. We are also looking to enhance support for flexi-load arrangements.

a. Flexi-load arrangements like part-time work, job sharing and fractional roles may be suitable for caregivers who need to work at a reduced load to fulfil their caregiving duties. However, in 2024, less than half of employees who required part-time work arrangements were provided with it, compared to over 70% of employees who were provided with time-related FWAs like staggered hours arrangements, and location-related FWAs such as scheduled tele-working.

b. Today, we have the Part-Time Re-employment Grant which provides up to \$125,000 to employers who offer part-time employment, FWAs and structured career planning to our senior workers.

c. Ms Mariam Jaafar asked about grant uptake and outcomes, and the strengthening incentives to employers. Employers have responded positively to the grant. More than 7,600 have taken it up, benefitting more than 66,000 senior workers. As SMS Koh mentioned, we are extending the grant to end-2027 to continue supporting employers.

d. Given the grant's success, we are reviewing how we can enhance it to help employers provide flexi-load jobs to more workers. This could potentially benefit other segments of workers who rely on flexi-load jobs such as caregivers.

C. Supporting Persons with Disabilities to Enter the Workforce

C1. Moving on to persons with disabilities. They too benefit from inclusive workplace practices.

C2. Imagine Daniel, a wheelchair user, applying for a job. He has the skills and qualifications. But some employers hesitate, unsure of his capabilities or concerned about additional costs.

C3. This is where the Enabling Employment Credit, or EEC, comes in. The EEC helps employers take that first step by covering up to 20% of Daniel's wages, easing cost concerns.

C4. The results of our efforts have been encouraging. In 2025, 6,800 employers received the EEC for hiring 10,800 Singapore residents with disabilities, up from 6,600 and 10,000 in 2022. To sustain this momentum, we extended the EEC last year to run until end-2028.

C5. At the same time, Daniel needs support of his own. While the EEC may help employers overcome hesitation, the Open Door Programme supports both the employer and Daniel as he navigates the job search and workplace.

C6. Through the programme, Daniel is matched with a suitable role. He also receives ongoing support to help him settle into work, such as personalised job coaching at his workplace. And if Daniel needs workplace modifications, like a wheelchair ramp to move around the office, the programme also covers up to 90% of the cost.

C7. The programme has delivered strong results. It has supported over 2,400 persons with disabilities into employment in the past four years. More than 80% remain employed for the last six months. This shows that with the right support, persons with disabilities are not just employable, they are valuable, long-term contributors to their employers.

C8. But work is both about earning today's income, and long-term financial security. While employment helps Daniel through regular contributions to his CPF, additional support can go a long way in easing his financial worries. That's why, starting this January, we expanded the Matched Retirement Savings Scheme to include eligible Singaporeans with disabilities of all ages.

C9. With this expansion, around 24,000 Singaporeans with disabilities below the age of 55 can benefit from the scheme this year.

C10. But inclusive workplaces cannot be built on incentives alone. They require clear norms and practical guidance.

C11. That is why MOM is working with tripartite partners and social service agencies on a new Tripartite Advisory on Reasonable Accommodations. The Advisory will provide practical guidance on how reasonable accommodation can be implemented at the workplace. This gives employers clarity, and, for workers, confidence to raise accommodation needs early.

C12. Nevertheless, workplace demands are evolving, and many families wonder if their loved ones with disabilities can adapt. That's why last December, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong announced the formation of the Taskforce on Assurance for Families with Persons with Disabilities, chaired by Minister of State for Social and Family Development Goh Pei Ming, and supported by myself and colleagues from the ministries of education and health.

a. MOM will work closely with MSF to examine how to better support persons with disabilities in our changing job market: through upskilling, reskilling, expanding opportunities, strengthening employer support, and building career resilience.

C13. MOM will continue working with our partners to scale employment and strengthen post-employment support for persons with disabilities.

D. Mandarin Speech

D1. Mr Chairman, let me recap in Mandarin.

D2. 俗话说：“海纳百川，有容乃大”。在这个瞬息万变的时代，政府的目标非常明确：我们要协助每一位员工不断进步，迈向成功。我们坚信，一个具包容性的职场环境将有利于所有国人。员工能更好地发挥所长，企业也能招聘更多优秀的人才。人力部将继续全力以赴，加强新加坡的劳动力市场。

D3. 虽然我们在推动职场包容性已经取得了一些成果，但我们理解，部分国人在求职时仍然面临挑战。接下来，人力部将进一步改善制度，为他们创造更多的就业机会。

D4. 我们会从这三方面着手:

- a. 提升行业标准: 人力部将通过劳资政三方的紧密合作, 设定更高的标准, 鼓励更包容性的职场。
- b. 推广灵活办公: 让女性和需要照顾家庭的员工能够更好地兼顾事业与家庭责任。
- c. 支持残障人士就业: 人力部会积极引导雇主, 缓解他们的顾虑, 帮助残障人士找到良好及合适的工作、发挥所长。

D5. 这些措施不仅实际可行, 而且相辅相成, 致力于打造一个让所有新加坡人都能接受的工作环境。让我们携手努力, 让每个国人都可以贡献所长, 共同分享成功的喜悦!

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