Response to the questionnaire from the Singapore National Trade Union Congress (SNTUC)

In January 2016, the Singapore National Trades Union Congress (SNTUC) Women’s Development Secretariat (WDS) and Family Development Unit (FDU) merged to form the new Women and Family (WAF) Unit, which aims to achieve a greater synergy in serving the needs of women and family. WAF does outreach, engagement and advocacy for working parents and single parents to ensure conducive workplace practices, including a positive and safe work environment, and fair employment opportunities for this group. WAF also looks into building women leadership to help lead the development of the women workforce to prepare for the future economy.

In June 2017, the SNTUC WAF piloted a Returners Programme to help Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs) returners who have been out of work for at least two years to ease back into employment and for employers to tap on this latent talent pool return to the workforce. This Programme partially contributed to the continued rise in the employment rate of women in Singapore, reaching 74.8% in 2018 for women aged 25 to 64[[1]](#footnote-1)[1].

This encouraging trend of increasing employment rate of women must be sustained by progressive workplace practices and policies to retain female talent.

There have been immense efforts by the tripartite partners (Singapore Government, SNTUC and Singapore National Employers Federation) to promote and encourage organizations to adopt effective work-life strategies, including flexible work arrangements (FWAs). Through the Work-Life Grant under the WorkPro[[2]](#footnote-2)[2] Scheme, a government funding scheme introduced in 2013, SNTUC has assisted more than 200 companies to implement FWAs and benefitted more than 10,000 employees, both male and female.

Further acknowledging the positive impact that FWAs have in supporting working mothers and caregivers, a new set of Tripartite Standards (TS)[[3]](#footnote-3)[3] on FWAs was launched in 2017. Employers who adopt the standards will further differentiate themselves as employers of choice. As of 2018, some 236 companies have adopted the TS on FWAs, with another 74 companies having adopted the TS on Unpaid Care Leave for Unexpected Care Leave[[4]](#footnote-4)[4]. There are also 272 collective agreements that cater for at least one type of family-friendly leave such as family care leave and eldercare leave.

In 2018, WAF had organised progression forums and Facebook live chats for professional women in growth sectors and traditionally male-dominated sectors like Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics to aid women’s advancement in their careers. Through the engagement, 80 professionals came onboard to be ambassadors to guide other women on Labour Movement’s programmes.

1. [1] Female Resident Labour Force Participation Rate in Singapore: <https://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/LabourForceParticipationandEmploymentrate.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [2]WorkPro: <http://www.mom.gov.sg/workpro/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [3]Tripartite Standards on FWAs: <https://www.tafep.sg/flexible-work-arrangements> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [4] Tripartite Standards on Unpaid Leave: <https://www.tafep.sg/unpaid-leave-unexpected-care-needs> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)