



SUNTEC CONVENTION CENTRE TO IMPLEMENT A BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PLAN, WORKS WITH
BATU CLOSELY TO ENSURE FAIR TREATMENT OF AFFECTED WORKERS WHILE PROTECTING THE
SINGAPOREAN CORE

27 August 2020 – Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre ("Suntec Singapore"), unionized under the Building Construction And Timber Industries Employees' Union ("BATU"), will be accelerating its business transformation to focus on evolving opportunities with a leaner workforce and a renewed business strategy.

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industry has been severely impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and events have been suspended since April 2020. From early February, Suntec Singapore began working with BATU on cost control measures, including the elimination of non-essential spending, hiring freezes, internal and external redeployment of staff, clearing of annual leave, shorter work weeks, and temporary salary reductions (in the form of unpaid leave) with management leading the way by taking up to 40 percent in pay cuts.

With uncertainty on when the situation could improve and after considerable deliberation and review between Suntec Singapore and BATU, a one-off workforce rationalisation plan has now been announced. This will affect 85 roles across the company including sales, operations and support functions such as finance and HR.

Preserving jobs and protecting Singaporean Core

This retrenchment exercise has been considered in close consultation with BATU, in compliance with the NTUC Fair Retrenchment Framework, tripartite advisories as well as the collective agreement with the union, to ensure a caring, transparent, fair and responsible process. The well-being of all affected staff has been a priority throughout the process, with a focus on maintaining a strong Singaporean Core. At present, Suntec Singapore employs 149 locals and 29 non-locals (84% locals and 16% non-locals). With the retrenchment of the 85 roles comprising 60 locals and 25 non-local staff, Suntec Singapore will maintain a core of **89 locals and 4 non-locals (96% locals; 4% non-locals)** that possess the best fit of experience, qualifications, knowledge and skills to bring the business forward post-COVID. Due care has also been taken to ensure an ageless workforce, maintaining staff across the various age groups.

Arun Madhok, Chief Executive Officer of Suntec Singapore said, "This decision has not been taken lightly and does not in any way reflect the performance of any staff. Every individual in our team has contributed to the success of our company for many years and I am truly sorry to have to ask many of our wonderful and talented people to look for alternative employment."

Affected and eligible employees will be receiving a month's salary for every year of service as severance payment, in accordance with the collective agreement signed with the union. Eligible staff will also be paid their pro-rated Annual Wage Supplement for the year and be allowed to encash their remaining annual leave entitlements. All affected staff will also be allowed to use their entire notice



period¹ to focus on and plan for their future, such as taking time to attend job fairs, interviews and training.

Providing care and support to affected employees

Local staff will also receive assistance from the NTUC Job Security Council (JSC) to be matched to job openings based on their skills and experience. NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), as the ecosystem manager for the NTUC JSC, has successfully identified at least two job opportunities for every affected local staff. For example, affected workers in Food Production are being matched to similar roles in the Food & Beverage industry. Sales and Events staff could be matched to similar roles where their skills are transferrable. Together with e2i, BATU will also arrange for affected staff to attend virtual or physical job fairs and employability workshops, and offer further assistance with job applications and counselling where necessary. In addition, Suntec Singapore will be according a one-off training grant of \$25,000 to BATU, that will support union members' efforts in upskilling or re-skilling for new jobs.² Eligible union members would also be assisted in applying for the NTUC Care Fund (COVID-19), which provides additional one-off support worth up to \$300.

Commenting on BATU's efforts to ensure fair treatment of workers, Zainal Sapari, Executive Secretary of BATU, said, "For the past few months, BATU has been working very closely with Suntec Singapore to explore ways to help the business whilst protecting jobs. We are deeply appreciative to be able to maintain an honest and transparent discussion with Suntec from the start, especially so when the company has to inevitably conduct a retrenchment while keeping BATU in close consultation throughout. BATU and the Labour Movement stand ready to assist affected workers as best as we can, providing much-needed support, be it in terms of employment assistance or emotional support for our workers during such distressing times."

Suntec Singapore will continue to work with BATU, NTUC's e2i, Workforce Singapore, SGUnited and other relevant authorities to upskill the remaining workforce through training, job re-design, adoption of technology solutions and enhanced business processes. This will strengthen and expand the capabilities and skills of the individuals to create a resilient team to take on the challenges of the future.

-End-

About Suntec Convention Centre

Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre is Asia's preferred and most awarded international venue, gaining global recognition as the World's Leading Meetings & Conference Centre by World Travel Awards. The Centre has hosted over 30,000 events, including some of the world's largest exhibitions and conventions. For more information, visit www.suntecsingapore.com.

¹ Effective date of notice is on 27 August 2020, whereby affected employees will serve their notice period from 01 September 2020.

² Each union member is expected to receive approximately \$350 worth of training support.



About Building Construction and Timber Industries Employees' Union

The Building Construction And Timber Industries Employees 'Union (BATU) is a union affiliated to the National Trades Union Congress. It was formed in 1982 and represents employees in the building, property management, construction, cleaning and timber industries.

For more information, please contact:

Shazzharif Shamsudin

Jannah Ismaeil

Marketing & Communications, Suntec Singapore

Strategic Communications, NTUC

Email: shazzharif@suntecsingapore.com

Email: nurul_jannah@ntuc.org.sg

Contact: 9630 9533

Contact: 9660 8312