

**ASEAN Seminar on Unemployment Insurance, Income Security Measures and
Active Labour Market Policies
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, 20-22 March 2012**

Building National Consensus on UI and employment services

- Perspectives from governments on relevance of unemployment protection and the role of the public employment services: by the Government of Brunei Darussalam (tbc), Indonesia (tbc), Philippines (tbc), and Singapore (tbc)

Proposed talking points

Employment as best form of security

1. The Government believes that employment is the best form of financial security. Hence, we focus on job creation to minimise unemployment. For those who lose their jobs, our focus is to help them find employment quickly.

2. We have been successful in keeping unemployment low. For the whole of 2011, the unemployment rate averaged 2.0% overall, the lowest recorded in 14 years. The resident long-term unemployment rate¹ in 2011 was 0.6% (12,200 unemployed residents).

3. The Government introduced the Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) in 2007 to encourage low-wage workers to find work and stay employed. WIS is a permanent social transfer mechanism that helps supplement the wages and retirement savings of older low-wage workers, while encouraging work and self-reliance. The total annual WIS payouts are as high as 25% of the total annual income for some workers.

¹ Defined as looking for work for at least 25 weeks.

4. Career centres located at the Community Development Councils (**CDCs**) and the Employment and Employability Institute (**e2i**) help the unemployed with both training and job referrals. These services are provided free.

Training to ensure employability

5. The Singapore government believes in the training of its workers to ensure that their skills remain relevant, to improve their employability. We invest heavily in our national Continuing Education and Training (**CET**) infrastructure for adult learning.
6. Our national CET system comprises of training in fundamental capabilities (e.g. literacy, numeracy and workplace skills under the **Employability Skills System**), industry and occupational skills (under the **Workforce Skills Qualifications**), partnering best-in-class training institutions in the public and private sectors to raise the standards of skills training (i.e. **CET institutions**) and the setting up of **CET campuses** which will act as one-stop gateways for workers and employers to access our National CET system.

Funding support for training

7. Training subsidies are generous, with up to 95% of the course fees being paid for by the government. Unemployed lower-skilled Singaporeans may also be eligible for a training allowance, which they can use to support themselves while they train. This is particularly important for those who go for extended training because they need to acquire new skills. We also have a Work Support Programme to assist workers from low-income households to upgrade their skills by providing them with temporary financial, medical and educational assistance.

Other financial assistance

8. For the unemployed who need even more support, the Government provides financial assistance on a case-by-case basis through our Public Assistance Scheme and other social assistance schemes.
