

## **S'pore Workers Want To Work Longer, Health Will Deteriorate Otherwise: Lawrence Wong**

He also encouraged Singaporean workers to keep a "consistent" job.

**Sudeshna Dhar**

**Must Share News**, 17 January 2023

### **Workers In Singapore Want To Work Longer As Health Will Decline If They Stop**

As long as they are healthy, the majority of people in Singapore want to continue working, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said on Monday (16 Jan).

He was speaking during a dialogue at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Singapore Perspectives Conference.

Mr Wong added that many recognised their health would decline quickly from the point that they stop working.

### **Workers in Singapore want to work longer**

According to Channel NewsAsia (CNA), Mr Wong was responding to a question by Professor Paul Tambyah on making the Silver Support Scheme more universal.

This would prevent senior citizens from experiencing a drastic drop in income when they stopped working, said the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) Chairman.

"The narrative seems to be that we need to keep working," he said. "And if we are unable to do a particular job, we've got to retrain."

In response, Mr Wong said surveys have shown that workers want to work longer, as long as they are healthy.

"There's obviously a limit to how long we can work," he stated. However, with rising longevity and lengthier lifespans, the majority of workers do want to remain working.

Mr Wong pointed out that many also realised that the minute they stopped working, their health would deteriorate rapidly. He added,

Work is more than a source of income, and provides dignity and purpose. There is something fundamental and important about work.

Mr Wong also noted that it was important to have a stable job and work "consistently".

"If you're a new entrant, you're a young adult entering the workforce, work consistently," he explained. "Whatever job you can do, you can be assured of a basic retirement sum."

Government spending expected to increase over next 10-20 years

During the dialogue, there was also a query about “rebalancing” contributions by the government and society over the next one to two decades for addressing key issues, CNA reports.

In response, Mr Wong said:

All of us will have to play a key role in changing mindsets and being prepared to pay more for services delivered by our fellow citizens, especially if we are concerned about uplifting the wages of lower income Singaporeans.

He also acknowledged that the government will have to review and update policies. “The ‘we’ is not just government efforts alone, but we also recognise that the government has a role to play and can do more,” he said.

Mr Wong said that Singapore currently spends about 18% of its gross domestic product (GDP), and noted that there’s scope for government spending to increase.

Considering its ageing population and an expected increase in the need for healthcare and social expenditure, the government is expected to increase its spending to about 20% of GDP by 2030.

“In other words, you have to find other ways of generating revenues,” Mr Wong said. “And Singaporeans must be prepared to do their part... for us to meet that increased expenditure and provide the necessary assurances and support for Singaporeans.”