

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9 DECEMBER 2021, 12AM SGT**

## **Multinationals Double Paid Paternity Leave for Employees in Singapore**

- *Nine multinationals, including H&M, AstraZeneca and Electrolux, join a pledge led by the Swedish Chamber of Commerce to **#DoubleUp** on paid paternity leave benefits in Singapore.*
- *To contribute to Singapore marking of 2021 as the Year of Celebrating SG Women, SwedCham launches **#candid**, a groundbreaking collection of testimonials from over 100 men in Singapore on why gender equality is essential.*

**Singapore, 9 December 2021** - The [Swedish Chamber of Commerce Singapore](#) (SwedCham), a non-profit organisation representing the Swedish business community in Singapore, announced today that nine of their member companies are joining forces in a pledge to **#DoubleUp** their paid paternity leave benefits in Singapore. This comes as part of the launch of the collection "**#candid: 100 Perspectives on Gender Equality in Singapore**", which features testimonies by men from all walks of life on why gender equality is important.

Inspired by IKEA who took the first steps to offer twice the amount of Singapore's two-week paternity leave in 2017, the nine multinational corporations - **ABB, AstraZeneca, Atlas Copco, Bolon x The Andrews Group, Electrolux, H&M, Mentor Media, Oriflame and SKF** - have decided to introduce a change to their current benefits package in Singapore. In 2022, fathers who work in these companies will be able to spend twice as much time with their newborns and partners as they will have four weeks of paid paternity leave.

"At H&M, we have clear goals and strategies set in all our markets with gender equality as one of our key priorities. By being part of this pledge to **#DoubleUp** on paternity leave in Singapore, we hope to also encourage more businesses to take gender equality seriously. A collective effort is needed to change mindsets," says **Oldouz Mirzaie, CEO & Regional Manager of H&M South Asia**.

"The pandemic has seen gender roles at home evolve, and with more people embracing these changes, it is timely for companies to take another step forward by encouraging fathers to take a more active role during the early months of a child's life," says **Vinod Narayanan, Country President of AstraZeneca Singapore**.

Further, the **EVP and Head of Electrolux APAC & MEA, Adam Cich**, comments: "The current disparity between paid paternity and maternity leave indicates an expectation that women should continue to shoulder most of the caregiving duties. By increasing paternity leave our aim is not only to empower fathers to contribute more at home, but also to highlight the important role of the business community to intentionally build corporate cultures that promote gender equality".

To act on the numerous studies demonstrating the positive impact of championing gender diversity at the workplace and recognising that the business community has a crucial role to play to make gender equality a reality, the companies that have signed the pledge to **#DoubleUp** paid paternity leave are inviting other firms to join in. The group urges

businesses to take paternity leave seriously and encourage men to participate actively in caregiving roles allowing women a more equal footing in the workplace.

Championed by **SwedCham**, conceptualised by creative agency **Dilucidar** and supported by 20 partners and sponsors including **IKEA, H&M, ABB, Electrolux, Atlas Copco, the Swedish Embassy in Singapore, and Business Sweden**, “**#candid: 100 Perspectives on Gender Equality in Singapore**” features personal stories and reflections from men from all walks of life – the stay at home dad, the CEO, the entrepreneur and the civil servant – all seem to say the same thing; gender equality is key to a harmonious family, a prosperous business and a thriving society.

“We were inspired by the activities Singapore launched this year with regards to gender equality and wanted to contribute to The Year of Celebrating SG Women. With the book and pledge, we want to show that we are supporting the efforts to move the needle in Singapore even further towards a more equal and sustainable society,” says **Lisa Ferraton, General Manager of SwedCham Singapore**.

With **#candid**, SwedCham hopes to inspire real change, to contribute to shifting mindsets in the workplace and to broaden the conversation around the topic of gender equality. As one of the most significant issues faced by society today, the topic signals that opportunities exist for businesses and individuals alike to advocate for a more inclusive future.

SwedCham welcomes organisations that wish to join the **#DoubleUp** pledge to indicate their interest via [100perspectives.com](http://100perspectives.com). For more information on **#DoubleUp**, please refer to Appendix A. E-copies of **#candid** are available for download at [100perspectives.com](http://100perspectives.com).

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### **About Swedish Chamber of Commerce Singapore**

Swedish Chamber of Commerce (SwedCham), a non-profit and membership-financed organisation representing the Swedish business community in Singapore, has been active in Singapore for almost 40 years. Together with its big fleet of Swedish MNCs, SMEs and start-ups, the organisation promotes innovation, technology, sustainability, entrepreneurship and diversity in everything it does. With over 70 events a year and a number of innovative local outreach initiatives, SwedCham has established itself as one of the most active international Chambers in Singapore.

## Appendix A: #DoubleUp Pledge

The business community has an important role to play to make gender equality a reality. We must continue to make strides toward ensuring women are well represented in our organisations, promoted fairly, and not penalised for taking the time they need for the essential task of giving birth. In addition, we must move towards recognising that fathers too have an important role during the early months of a child's life. Parental leave for both mothers and fathers is one of the levers to building a more equal society.

As business leaders, we can make a difference.

We have the choice to intentionally build a corporate culture that does not simply tolerate, but encourages fathers to be there for their baby, to savour the joys and moments of fatherhood. By promoting paternity leave, we can create a ripple effect towards equality. A truly equal workplace will ultimately level the playing field for both men and women, at home and at work.

### #DoubleUp

With a commitment towards equality and inclusion, we are making a collective pledge to promote gender equality.

**Starting 2022, we will extend the prevailing two weeks of paid paternity leave for all male employees in Singapore to four paid weeks.**

As business leaders from many different industries, we have a myriad of visions of what our thriving businesses can look like, but we also have a vision of how we, collectively, can contribute to society.

This pledge is also about coming together through business alliances and collective action. That is why this pledge is not only an announcement of our shared vision. **It is an invitation to the broader business community to come onboard, to join forces and share solutions that will pave the way.**

We have a long way to go but every step counts.  
We do not have all the solutions at hand but we can figure it out together.

Let's come together to make our companies a forward-thinking frontier for business, not just in our operational ambitions but also with our drive to lead the way toward a more equitable society for all.

Join us in the #DoubleUp initiative. Join us in taking this step together!

## **Appendix B1: List of Companies Participating in the #DoubleUp Pledge in Singapore**

- ABB
- AstraZeneca
- Atlas Copco
- Bolon x The Andrews Group
- Electrolux
- H&M
- Mentor Media (Member of Elanders Group)
- Oriflame
- SKF

## **Appendix B2: List of Companies Sponsoring the #candid: 100 Perspectives in Singapore Collection**

- ABB
- Alfa Laval
- AstraZeneca
- Atlas Copco
- Axis Communications
- Bolon x The Andrews Group
- Business Sweden
- Dilucidar
- Electrolux
- Embassy of Sweden in Singapore
- H&M
- IKEA
- Jebsen & Jessen Group
- KHL Printing
- Mentor Media (Member of Elanders Group)
- Oriflame
- Saab
- Scania
- SKF
- Swedish Women's Educational Association Singapore (SWEA).

**Appendix C: Selection of testimonials from the #candid collection, available for download on [100perspectives.com](https://100perspectives.com)**

**NICLAS KVARNSTRÖM, Sweden’s Ambassador to Singapore 2018-2021 & Head of Department for Asia and the Pacific, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs:** “In Sweden, feminism is not really a controversial term. It is understood simply as shorthand for gender equality and equal opportunities for men and women.”

**HORST WASEL, Vice President, Atlas Copco, Southeast Asia & Oceania Holding:** “Diversity helps us better understand our business and markets and it brings creativity and innovative solutions to all of our stakeholder’s challenges and needs. It’s easier to attract and retain the best competence if we have a diverse workforce with a good gender balance.”

**MUHAMMAD ZAHID ZIN, Founder, Muslim Youth Forum:** “The world is changing and we need to trust the younger generation, that is more progressive and inclusive. Being stagnant is not the way forward. I believe in movement, embracing change and that if we all contribute to this ‘work in progress’, we can all drive change together.”

**DINGSON PRESBITERO BALAHADIA, Visual Merchandiser, IKEA:** “They say that a “mother’s love is endless” — but mothers also get tired. Our paid paternity leave gave me a new perspective and taught me that I can say, “Let me take over.”

**NUR ‘AINI BINTE MOHAMAD YASLI, Team Singapore Powerlifter:** “When we see other women doing something out of their comfort zone, we should lift them up and celebrate, that way we are lifted too. It pushes us all forward.”

**JERRICA CHOOI, Country Holding Officer, ABB Singapore:** “I was raised by these amazing women and the equally supportive men in the family. All I knew growing up was that a person’s gender does not predetermine one’s success in life, only hard work, street smarts, and integrity.”

## **Appendix D: About 'candid on' by Dilucidar**

'candid on' by Dilucidar is a collaborative project that compiles human stories around relevant topics that matter to people. The aim is to capture a snapshot of candid stories that offer real perspectives of people from all walks of life that are taking place and help drive meaningful conversations on issues that have impact on our society and the environment.