

46 Nestlé workers sent home amid restructuring exercise

Sixteen Nestlé Trinidad and Tobago workers have been retrenched while another 30 have accepted voluntary separation packages as the multinational food company moves ahead with restructuring its local distribution operations.

The company confirmed yesterday that 46 employees across its sales and warehousing departments have been affected by the decision to introduce a third-party distribution model, with changes to their employment taking effect between November and December.

The development comes as the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union (OWTU) continues efforts to save additional jobs, while uncertainty remains over the future of more than 100 workers at Nestlé's Valsayn manufacturing facility, which is being considered for sale.

In a statement, Nestlé confirmed that separation notices had been issued following consultations with the union and non-unionised employees.

"In total 46 employees across our sales and warehousing teams have been affected. Of these employees, 30 (65 per cent) have opted for voluntary separation packages, while 16 have been retrenched," the company said.

Nestlé maintained that separation benefits were in keeping with its policies and collective agreements, while assistance, outplacement support and extended benefits were being made available to affected employees.

However, OWTU first vice-president Sati Gajadhar-Inniss said discussions were continuing, with the union hoping to secure alternative arrangements for some employees facing displacement.

Asked about the reaction among employees, she said workers had been prepared for the possibility of retrenchment through earlier consultations.

“The workers were expecting it because we have been speaking to them about it,” she said.

Nevertheless, she remained hopeful that negotiations could result in further reductions in the number of compulsory separations.

The restructuring follows Nestlé’s October 1 announcement that Massy Distribution Division would become its main local distributor from January 2027.

At the time, Nestlé’s head of communications, Siti Jones-Gordon, confirmed that the arrangement would have employment implications but said the company was engaging with the union to minimise job losses.

Meanwhile, Gajadhar-Inniss said the union was also closely monitoring developments surrounding the proposed sale of Nestlé’s Valsayn manufacturing operations.

She said management had indicated that its preferred option was to identify a buyer willing to retain the existing workforce.

The factory’s future remains a separate concern from the distribution restructuring.

Nestlé announced a strategic review of its Trinidad and Tobago operations in July, citing changes to its global business strategy and a renewed focus on nutrition, food, coffee, pet care and confectionery.

While Nestlé has stressed that the factory sale and the distribution changes are separate exercises, the union maintains that retaining as many workers as possible must remain central to both processes.

— Otto Carrington