

Media Release**Embargoed till 19 April 2020, 4 PM****DONORS, NGOs, PRIVATE SECTOR UNITE TO PROVIDE
1.3 MILLION MASKS TO MIGRANT WORKERS IN SINGAPORE**

- *650,000 migrant workers and domestic helpers will receive mask kits*
- *Each mask kit contains two reusable cloth masks and one surgical mask, which can be used as a filter*
- *Individuals and companies donated more than \$3 million in cash or kind, towards the production of the reusable cloth masks and the surgical masks; and the provision of other useful items*
- *Singapore-owned clothing manufacturers produced 1.3 million reusable masks over the last two weeks in record time*
- *Masks are being distributed by the Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC) from 20 April onwards*

Singapore, 19 April 2020 – Donors, non-governmental organisations and private sector companies have generously stepped forward to donate 1.3 million reusable cloth masks that have a filter pocket and 650,000 surgical masks that can be used as a filter.

A community-led initiative, MaskForce, was formed to rally donors and galvanise volunteers to help with the distribution of these masks to 400,000 migrant workers (mostly living in dormitories) and 250,000 domestic helpers in Singapore.

Reusable masks reduce the spread of germs when one speaks, coughs, or sneezes. The filter insert in these masks provide additional filtration.

Providing reusable masks to migrant workers will complement increased efforts in recent weeks by the Singapore Government to enhance the safety of migrant workers. Together, the use of these mask kits, combined with the earlier distribution of masks to this community by the Government, complement the important safe distancing measures and hand hygiene practices that are widely encouraged.

As of 14 April, the Singapore Government has made it mandatory for everyone to wear a mask when they leave their homes¹. Given recent clusters of outbreaks of COVID-19, it is important to provide our migrant workers with additional mask supplies for their protection.

MaskForce is spearheaded by Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Sim Ann who rallied the partners to support the initiative. Connecting MWC, Centre for Domestic Employees (CDE), the Textiles and Fashion Federation (TaFF), Singapore's clothing manufacturers, and other partner organisations, MaskForce developed the plan to produce and distribute the masks.

"Migrant workers are an integral part of the Singapore's workforce. They contribute in many ways, from building our infrastructure, providing essential services to taking care of our communities. Singapore is committed to ensuring their safety and well-being during the current COVID-19 outbreak.

"MaskForce has been propelled by well-wishers who want to help protect our migrant worker community from the virus. Many willing partners stepped forward without any hesitation to help provide an additional supply of masks, building on the allocation that has already been made by the Government. In fact, MaskForce is now prepared to look beyond masks to equip migrant workers with even more items that are practical and helpful. This is very much a #SGUnited effort, and we'll keep going as long as we have public support," Sim Ann said.

Most of the reusable masks were produced by Singapore garment manufacturers Bodynits, Spring Knitwear, and Teo Garments; with participation from another 10 local apparel companies². Homegrown tailoring company CYC contributed fabric for the sewing of 20,000 masks, while Brother International Singapore contributed 12 sewing machines and repair services.

Donations from 13 corporates and individuals³, and in-kind contributions from 8 sponsors, were applied towards the cost of producing the cloth masks and acquiring the surgical masks.

Temasek Foundation (TF) supported MaskForce as part of its *Stay Prepared* initiative to enhance the resilience of the Singapore community during the current COVID-19 outbreak, assisting with logistics and information materials for users.

¹ <https://www.gov.sg/article/when-should-i-wear-a-mask>

² These are: A Craft Initiative, Common Suits, Danovel, Esta, Estil, Fuschia Lane, Hock Joo Tex, Justmen, and Looms and Meizi

³ Please see Annex A for full list of donors and sponsors-in-kind

The mask kits will be distributed in phases to migrant workers from the week of 20 April. MWC will inform dormitory operators about collection details. Masks for domestic helpers will be progressively sent to their residential addresses from late May onwards.

Mr Richard Magnus, Chairman, Temasek Foundation Cares, said, “Temasek Foundation stands solidly with the partners of the MaskForce initiative to do our part to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This important initiative complements the Government’s actions and plans to keep Singapore’s migrant worker community safe and healthy. We were pleased to do our bit to help, but the thanks must go to Sim Ann and her enthusiastic group of volunteers who made this initiative possible.”

Mr Yeo Gwat Kwang, Chairman of MWC and CDE, said, “The MWC and CDE volunteered for this initiative as we wish to do our part to protect the health and safety of our migrant workers through our partners such as the dormitory operators. We are heartened that many organisations and individuals have also come forward to help in various ways to ensure that the needs of our migrant brothers and sisters are taken care of during this COVID-19 pandemic. We are thankful to everyone for their well-wishes to this community of workers during this difficult time.”

Ms Ho Semun, CEO of TaFF, said, “It is heartening to see the spirit of gotong royong amongst local apparel companies, unified by a common goal to help Singapore get through this pandemic. And TaFF is grateful to have the chance to be part of it.”

For media enquiries, please contact:

Joshua Wong
Associate Director
Temasek Foundation
Mobile: 8180 0741
Email: joshuawong@temasekfoundation.org.sg

About MaskForce

MaskForce is a community led initiative spearheaded by Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Sim Ann. The initiative connects partners to rally support from across Singapore to produce and distribute reusable masks to those in need, supplementing existing supplies.

Visit for more information: <https://www.stayprepared.sg/MaskForce>

MaskForce is supported by the following partners and sponsors:

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About Temasek Foundation

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For more information, visit www.temasekfoundation.org.sg.

About the *Stay Prepared* Initiative

Stay Prepared helps to prepare the Singapore community for emergencies like major accidents, natural disasters, pandemics or severe haze. It is supported by the Temasek Emergency Preparedness Fund, managed by Temasek Foundation, and seeded by an endowment from Singapore-headquartered investment company, Temasek.