



PRESS RELEASE

## SEAFARERS COVID RELIEF FUND HITS US\$1 MILLION TARGET

***Substantial donations from NYK Line and other donors pushes total funds past US\$1 million goal; funds urgently distributed to support COVID relief efforts for seafarers and families***

**LONDON, 17 August, 2021** – The Seafarers International Relief Fund (SIRF) has reached its goal of raising US\$1 million to provide vital relief for seafarers and their families affected by COVID.

The target was reached thanks to a substantial donation from NYK Line, plus many other personal and corporate donors, including most recently the TK Foundation. The total raised by SIRF currently stands at US\$1.17 million. Further donations are very welcome and will enable SIRF to extend its crisis welfare response to the COVID pandemic.

The SIRF appeal was launched in May this year when the catastrophic scale of the latest wave of the pandemic in India became clear. Several leading seafarer welfare charities, including The Seafarers' Charity, The Mission to Seafarers, ISWAN, Sailors' Society and Stella Maris, as well as other shipping industry players, came together to explore ways to deliver urgent support to seafarers and their families. Together, they rapidly formed SIRF as an emergency relief initiative to raise funds to deliver rapid assistance, initially in India and with the potential to expand to other countries.

In less than three months, SIRF has raised more than US\$1 million, all of which goes towards supporting seafarers and their families from the threat of COVID. The latest SIRF grants include funding for Stella Maris to provide food parcels to more than 1,000 seafaring families in Kochi, Kerala, plus funding for support workers to deliver post-COVID medical care, counselling, and therapy, including specialist care for children.

Speaking on behalf of SIRF, Catherine Spencer, Chief Executive of The Seafarers' Charity, commented:

*"We are thrilled to have exceeded our target of US\$1 million. This was an ambitious goal, but one that reflected the catastrophic impact of the pandemic, particularly in India, where many seafaring communities have been badly affected, through lives lost and severe health impacts, as well as the personal costs for the livelihoods of seafarers. To have reached this goal in less than three months is a wonderful testament to shipping's global community. All our donors, big and small, have mobilised in support of seafarers and every dollar has helped to deliver urgent, life-saving support to those most in need.*

*"We would also like to express our deep gratitude to NYK Line for its substantial donation, which is a wonderful expression of its support and solidarity for the world's seafarers. It is no exaggeration to say that thanks to NYK Line and our other donors, including the TK Foundation, lives will be saved."*



Tomoyuki Koyama, Senior Managing Executive Officer, NYK Line, commented:

*"We are excited to hear that SIRF has exceeded its goal of raising \$1 million in a span of only a few months to aid seafarers and their families during the COVID pandemic. This effort truly exemplifies the solidarity of the industry. Although our activity may have been small considering the impact that the pandemic has had on seafarers, we believe that all stakeholders within the international shipping industry should stand hand in hand with our seafarers, essential workers who are vitally needed to keep the worldwide supply chain in operation."*

Susie Karlshoej, Managing Director of the TK Foundation, said:

*"In response to the unfolding crises for seafarers in India during the latest wave of COVID-19, the TK Foundation is pleased to have made a grant to the Seafarers International Relief Fund to support a number of projects supporting seafarers and their families in India. This grant is in line with the TK Foundation's mission to fulfil the legacy of J. Torben Karlshoej by supporting the welfare needs of seafarers worldwide and we are proud to support seafarers in India with a grant to the SIRF at this time."*

SIRF wishes to express its sincere thanks for all the corporate and personal donations that have been received in recent weeks, including those from GasLog, ADNOC Logistics & Services, Bureau Veritas and Denholm Group.

### **Further donations welcome**

Although the COVID situation in India is stabilising, many other parts of the world are suffering from further waves of infection, including other seafaring nations, such as Indonesia, South Africa, and the Philippines. SIRF is looking at how it can extend its support to seafaring communities in other countries and, as Catherine explains, it remains grateful for further donations to fund its vital work:

*"The funds raised will continue to support our work in India, where thanks to our delivery partners, we have been able to respond rapidly to the needs of those at risk. This has included funding for oxygenators, COVID care kits, food aid, and post-COVID support, as well as supporting a vaccination drive for seafarers. However, the pandemic is far from over, and the situation remains bleak in many nations. SIRF is looking at what we can do to help support seafarers in other countries, but this relies on your help. The SIRF appeal remains open for donations and we continue to ask you to dig deep in support."*

The SIRF Fund is administered and overseen by The Seafarers' Charity (formerly Seafarers UK), a grant funder with well-established governance mechanisms and processes for monitoring and evaluation to ensure efficiency and transparency. 100% of the SIRF donations will help seafarers and their families affected by COVID.

SIRF continues to welcome support from individual or corporate donors. To donate please visit <https://donate.theseafarerscharity.org/sirf>. Alternatively, email [keziah.cunningham@theseafarerscharity.org](mailto:keziah.cunningham@theseafarerscharity.org) or call +44 (0) 20 7932 0000.

**ENDS**

**Image Captions**

Image 1: ISWAN vaccination drive in Bengaluru, India, supported by SIRF.

**Notes to Editors**

**About Seafarers International Relief Fund:**

The Seafarers' International Relief Fund is an emergency appeal coordinated by The Seafarers' Charity and supported by The Mission to Seafarers, ISWAN, Sailors' Society, Stella Maris, ICMA and other welfare organisations. The funds raised by the appeal will be distributed to the supporting organisations to support their vital work in support of Indian seafarers and their families. The Fund will also be responsive to the needs of seafarers affected by the pandemic elsewhere in the world, in line with the international remits of the charities involved.

The Fund is being administered and overseen by The Seafarers' Charity (formerly Seafarers UK), a grant funder which has embedded and well-established governance mechanisms and processes for monitoring and evaluation to ensure efficiency and transparency.

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