



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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International Tripartite Efforts Enabled Vaccination of More than 8,000 Foreign Sea Crew in Singapore

1 The Port of Singapore started vaccinating foreign sea crew, starting with resident foreign sea crew under the Sea-Air Vaccination Exercise (SAVE) since April 2021, and more recently non-resident foreign sea crew under the Sea Crew Vaccination (SEAVAX) Initiative since August 2021. Vaccinating sea crew against the COVID-19 virus provides them with an additional layer of protection as they continue to perform vital work behind the scenes from port to port. In Singapore, more than 37,800 frontline and essential maritime personnel are already fully vaccinated to ensure that Singapore continues to serve as a reliable node in global supply chains.

2 More than 8,000 foreign sea crew have received at least one dose of vaccination in Singapore, of whom 90% have been fully vaccinated, comprising some:

- (a) 5,200 resident foreign sea crew working onboard local harbour craft in our port; and
- (b) 2,860 non-resident foreign sea crew working onboard cruise ships, fishing and supply vessels, regional ferries, as well as yachts and pleasure crafts.

3 For the next phase of SEAVAX from 15 November 2021 till 30 June 2022, Singapore has made available at least 12,000 vaccine doses¹ to sea crew onboard

¹ Under the SEAVAX initiative, non-resident foreign ocean-going sea crew who wish to be vaccinated can receive one dose of the Moderna vaccine in Singapore during crew change or when their ships call at the Port of Singapore. This will be offered to unvaccinated or partially-vaccinated sea crew, as well as those who wish to receive a booster shot. The cost of vaccinating the sea crew will be fully borne by the industry. While the Moderna vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccine available under the SEAVAX initiative for now, the STAR Taskforce may also source for other WHO-EUL vaccines under the Special Access Route (SAR).

ocean-going vessels calling at Singapore and sea crew signing on to ships in Singapore. This vaccination effort will be undertaken by the Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience (STAR) Taskforce, an international tripartite alliance led by the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA).

4 Singapore will also continue to facilitate crew change together with the shipping community so that sea crew need not work beyond their contract duration or can sign on ships to work. Since March 2020, Singapore has facilitated close to 190,000 crew changes. This is expected to reach 200,000 before end-December 2021. As part of facilitating crew change in a safe manner, the STAR Taskforce has also developed a CrewSafe audit programme with more than 30 accredited facilities in crew source nations with quality control checks to crew change processes across quarantine, medical, and testing facilities.

5 Mr Kitack Lim, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), said, “I welcome with appreciation the continuing efforts of Singapore to support crew change during the COVID-19 pandemic and to vaccinate seafarers including foreign seafarers calling at Singapore. I am heartened to hear of the extension of the programme to make available at least 12,000 vaccine doses to vaccinate sea crew onboard ocean-going vessels calling at Singapore and signing on to ships in Singapore. Initiatives like this strengthen my belief that we will be able to overcome the crew change crisis and safeguard the health and well-being of our seafarers as we strive to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.”

6 SSA President, Ms Caroline Yang, said, “The SSA-led STAR Taskforce audited more than 30 facilities in the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, enabling crew change to facilitate global trade amid the global pandemic. We are heartened that our continued efforts to champion the well-being of our seafarers have made progress with wider groups of eligible sea crew arriving in Singapore able to be protected against the Covid virus.”

7 “As a hub port and international maritime centre, Singapore is glad to do our part in vaccinating seafarers and facilitating crew changes. These are key to protect the health and well-being of seafarers onboard vessels and to safeguard global supply chains. I thank our industry and union partners for working closely with MPA on this important tripartite initiative. Singapore is ready to provide more vaccines beyond the 12,000 doses if there is further demand from the shipping lines and seafarers,” said Mr Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Transport.

8 The STAR Fund was formed in August 2020 as the first global ground-up tripartite initiative to bring together like-minded international partners from the industry, unions and government to serve the well-being of sea crew. The STAR Taskforce is led by the SSA, and comprises MPA, the Singapore Maritime Officers’ Union (SMOU), the Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS), the International Transport Workers’

Federation (ITF), and the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC). With a total funding contribution of about SGD 2 million (about USD 1.5 million), it is one of the first international tripartite alliance to work with stakeholders in seafaring nations on solutions for safe crew change. Please refer to the quotes by other STAR Taskforce members at Annex.

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About Singapore Shipping Association (SSA)

The Singapore Shipping Association (SSA), formed in 1985, represents a wide spectrum of shipping companies and other businesses allied to the shipping industry. It is a national trade association to serve and promote the interests of its members and to enhance the competitiveness of Singapore as an International Maritime Centre. SSA engages and collaborates with the shipping industry's key stakeholders to promote the interests of shipping in Singapore and internationally. As a trusted advisor and partner to related government agencies and maritime organisations, SSA collaborates with relevant maritime stakeholders to protect the marine environment as well as promote freedom and safety at sea. Currently, the SSA represents over 470 member companies.

About the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) was established on 2 February 1996, with the mission to develop Singapore as a premier global hub port and international maritime centre (IMC), and to advance and safeguard Singapore's strategic maritime interests. MPA is the driving force behind Singapore's port and maritime development, taking on the roles of Port Authority, Port Regulator, Port Planner, IMC Champion, and National Maritime Representative. MPA partners the industry and other agencies to enhance safety, security and environmental protection in our port waters, facilitate port operations and growth, expand the cluster of maritime ancillary services, and promote maritime R&D and manpower development.

For more information, please visit www.mpa.gov.sg

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Annex: Quotes from the STAR Taskforce Members

Ms Mary Liew, General Secretary of Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU)

“SMOU is glad to be working with our tripartite partners to progress the SEAVAX initiative into its next phase, extending vaccination to international seafarers calling at the port of Singapore. It is important for Singapore as an International Maritime Hub to protect our key maritime workers as they work on board ships to keep the global supply chain moving. SMOU will continue to collaborate with tripartite partners to safeguard the welfare of seafarers so that they can fulfil their roles with a peace of mind, and return home safely and timely to their loved ones. This is a positive way forward to see our maritime industry recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Mr Kam Soon Huat, President of the Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS)

“SOS fully supports the initiative to make vaccination readily available and accessible for seafarers. We recognise the immense contributions of seafarers for keeping global trade moving despite the challenges they face amid the pandemic. Providing vaccination for seafarers is crucial and offering them the choice to receive the vaccine in Singapore is likewise an essential component of the global vaccination strategy. SOS will continue to work closely with maritime tripartite partners and global unions to protect the jobs and livelihood of seafarers.”

Mr Stephen Cotton, General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

“A big divide is emerging between those countries, mostly wealthy and mostly in the Global North who have vaccinated their populations twice and some even three times by now; and the rest of the world, who happen to be the people who keep our critical supply chains moving. Without more international seafarers getting offered more vaccines in more places, then we are really kneecapping the global recovery. I commend the Singaporean port authority, seafarers' unions and local shipping industry for being part of global solutions with this growing initiative.”

Captain Belal Ahmed, Chairman of the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC)

“I am delighted to hear that the Singapore Government and the shipping industry are taking this vital step to safeguard the seafarers' health, thus ensuring global supply chains run smoothly in this pandemic. IMEC is proud to be part of this tripartite cooperation.”