

MEDIA RELEASE

S\$3M ASSISTANCE TO HELP SHIPPING COMPANIES AND SEAMEN CURB DOWNTURN

The Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) will provide an additional S\$3 million over the next 2 years to help shipping companies defray overheads while ensuring members' employment security and training opportunities during the global shipping downturn.

The announcement was made by Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and NTUC Secretary General, Chan Chun Sing, on 1 December 2016 at the SOS 45th / Seacare 22nd joint Anniversary celebration at the Resorts World Convention Centre.

The funding will spread across the union's 3 existing schemes namely:

- A. Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme (SSS) : S\$1million**
- B. Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS) : S\$1million**
- C. Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS) : S\$1million**

These schemes form part of the SOS's collective agreements with shipping companies and cover the Accommodation, Medical and Training needs of members and shipping companies.

**Details of the scheme on the following page*

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A) Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme (SSS) - S\$1 Million

Starting 1 January 2017, S\$1million worth of multi-purpose vouchers will be given to shipping companies over the next 2 years to further reduce their accommodation expenditures.

These multi-purpose vouchers entitle shipping companies to the following benefits:

- Free accommodation at The Seacare Hotel,
- Free usage of the hotel facilities for their training, seminar, workshop and corporate functions.

****Editor's Note:** Under the current scheme, SOS gives out S\$250,000 worth of hotel-only vouchers to shipping companies every year (since 2013) for free accommodation at the union-owned, The Seacare Hotel.*

The enhanced SSS will also entitle SOS members to 8 nights of free accommodation per year, at any of the 8 SOS-owned hotels world-wide:

- 1 in Singapore
- 1 in KL; and
- 6 in the UK (including 1 in Scotland)

****Editor's Note:** The announcement is an extension of the 5-day free hotel stays offered to SOS members since 2014. The free accommodation aims to promote family bonding for members and their families.*

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B) Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS) - S\$1 Million

Starting from 2017, SOS will provide an additional funding of S\$1 million over a period of 2 years to promote members' well-being and assist shipping companies to reduce medical expenditures during the shipping downturn. Details will be announced in 2017.

****Editor's Note:** Under the current scheme, SOS provides free medical examinations for members, their dependants and management staff of shipping companies through union-owned medical centre (The Seacare Maritime Medical Centre) in Singapore and appointed clinics in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.*

C) Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS) - S\$1 Million

Starting from 2017, SOS will provide an additional funding of S\$1 million over a period of 2 years to provide more training and re-training opportunities to help members stay relevant in the rapidly evolving industry. The funding will also help shipping companies reduce their training expenditures during the shipping downturn.

Details will be announced in 2017.

****Editor's Note:** Under the current scheme, members and shipping companies enjoy training grants when they enroll into courses approved by the union.*

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Background information

Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS)

The Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) is a global maritime trade union commissioned by the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) to promote good industrial relations between seafarers and their employers (shipping companies).

Since its establishment in 1971, SOS has been actively representing seafarers in unfair treatments in the shipping industry such as piracy, unpaid wages and substandard living and working conditions - through the Collective Bargaining Agreements with the shipping companies that employ them.

The union's strong tripartite affiliation with the local, regional and the international maritime community, such as the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and the International Transport Worker's Federation (ITF) has also benefitted its members – which have grown to over 20,000 locals and foreigners.

In 1994, SOS with the NTUC founded the Seacare Co-operative, an economically viable enterprise that further fulfills the obligations of SOS. With its own family of business enterprises, the co-operative assists local seamen who have been displaced from their jobs (due to automation and the use of Flag of Convenience vessels) through training grant schemes, work opportunities and investment projects.

SOS's mission:

- To promote employment opportunities as well as good industrial relations.
- To assist and encourage local seamen to retrain and upgrade themselves in a competitive employment market.
- To help and ensure all seamen, including foreign seamen, receive their just reward for their hard work.

For more information, please visit www.sosea.org.sg

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Seacare Co-operative Limited (Seacare)

Seacare Co-operative was formed by the NTUC and the Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) in 1994.

Its founding mission is to help and benefit job-displaced Singapore seamen through more work opportunities, welfare schemes and investment projects.

Seacare set up 2 wholly-owned subsidiaries - Seacare Holdings Private Limited and Seacare Foundation Private Limited - to engage in effective business commitments and incorporated affiliated companies within the co-operative framework to form an umbrella for its commercial activities.

There are 5 clusters under the Seacare Group of companies:

- Hospitality
- Property & Environment
- HR & Lifestyle
- Medical & Maritime
- Investment

For its contributions to both the Co-operative and Labour Movement, Seacare was presented the Plaque of Commendation by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation in 2005 and the NTUC in 2008.

For more information, please visit www.seacare.com.sg

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Hotels owned by SOS (By Year)

1. The Seacare Hotel (Singapore)	2013
2. Citin Seacare Pudu (Kuala Lumpur)	2014
3. The Big Sleep Hotel (Cardiff)	2015
4. The Big Sleep Hotel (Cheltenham)	2015
5. The Big Sleep Hotel (Eastbourne)	2015
6. The Victoria Hotel (Manchester)	2016
7. Columba Hotel (Inverness, Scotland)	2016
8. Best Western Milford Plus Hotel (Leeds)	2016

Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC)

Located at the Amara Corporate Tower, SMMC is a SOS-owned one-stop medical centre that specialises in:

- Ship Call and Office Consultation
- Medical Specialist Services
- Digital Imaging Facilities including X-ray and Ultrasounds
- Medical Referral and Crew Hospitalisation Management
- Pre-employment Medical Examination for Seafarers and Offshore Personnel
- Vaccination and International Travel Advisories
- Medical Evacuation and Repatriation
- Dental services

SMMC has a network of 19 affiliated clinics in Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Shanghai.

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