



## **Critical COVID-19 protective supplies delivered to frontline workers in Kingdom of Lesotho**

### **Press release**

25 August 2020, Maseru – A donation of 100,000 facemasks has been handed to frontline workers in the Kingdom of Lesotho today. The masks are an effort to urgently protect key workers, such as medics, police and boarder control staff from COVID-19 and are intended for use whilst local production is being ramped up.

The masks were presented to The Government of Lesotho by Salvator Niyonzima, UN Resident Coordinator, as a donation from the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries and the Organizing Committee of World Eco-Design Conference. Both organizations have recently formed a joint venture which supports the world's least developed countries to develop industrial design through south-south cooperation.

“COVID-19 is a global pandemic severely impacting every community and requiring action from each individual. In Lesotho we are proud of those serving on the frontline to help protect communities,” said Hon Mathibeli Mokhothu, Deputy Prime Minister. “Today’s generous donation will help these individuals continue their work, with increased protection, whilst we scale up manufacturing in-country.”

The World Health Organisation recommends the use of facemasks as an essential preventative and mitigation measure against COVID-19. Lesotho was the last country to record a case of COVID-19 in the African continent. Plans to scale up local manufacturing in the Kingdom are currently underway, but in the meantime the demand for protective gear persists.

“This donation will go a long way in ensuring that our front-line workers on whom we all depend, work under the safest conditions, as they continue to step directly into COVID-19’s path to support the afflicted and help curb the spread of the virus,” Said Thabo Khasipe, CEO, NACOSEC.

Transactions facilitated by the UN Technology Bank under its Tech Access Partnership initiative, for local manufacturing of personal protective equipment (PPE), are scheduled to be concluded in the coming weeks with 3 Basotho owned companies, producing for the local and regional markets. Such local production of PPE will not only aid in the fight against COVID-19 but will also improve cost effectiveness and boost job creation.

“The provision of these masks is a great step towards meeting the immediate health needs of the people of Lesotho. The UN Technology Bank is committed to forming partnerships that can respond quickly and efficiently to COVID-19, ensuring strong and sustainable health systems,” said Joshua Setipa, Managing Director of the UN Technology Bank “Local production of health technologies remains vital to fighting COVID-19, as well as for the Post-COVID-19 recovery.”

“WEDC aims to promote integration of design, ecology, and society as well as sustainable development worldwide, including in developing and least developed countries. The United Nations Technology Bank, World Eco-Design Conference and Lesotho Government have joined hands to fight the pandemic. This PPE equipment will serve to provide relief to where it is critically needed in Lesotho. It is my sincere hope that the government of Lesotho will defeat this pandemic soon”, said Mr. Ying Fangtian, President of the Organizing Committee of World Eco-Design Conference.”

In May this year The UN Technology Bank launched the Tech Access Partnership, as part of a UN coordinated approach to help countries like Lesotho develop local manufacturing expertise and capabilities for health technologies. In partnership with UNDP, UNCTAD and WHO, the Tech Access Partnership helps put those seeking access to lifesaving health technologies in touch with manufacturers and partners who can share information, technical expertise and resources to scale up production of these tools in country.

The Tech Access Partnership contributes not only to increasing countries’ capacity to fight COVID-19, but also reduces reliance on global supply chains, boosting resilience and underpinning sustainable health systems for the future, in line with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

----- END -----

### **About the UN Technology Bank**

The UN Technology Bank is a new global organisation, dedicated to enhancing the contribution of science, technology and innovation for sustainable development in the world’s 47 least developed countries. It supports national and regional technological efforts in least developed countries, reinforcing partnerships across sectors and helping nations identify and use appropriate technologies to transform their economies and improve livelihoods.

Website: [www.un.org/technologybank](http://www.un.org/technologybank)

### **About WEDC and the UN Technology Bank Eco-Design Promotion Centre**

WEDC is an industrial, academic and world-wide non-profit social organization voluntarily formed by enterprises, institutions, social organizations and workers all over the world who are committed to promoting sustainable development, as well as entrepreneurs and activists who support the concept of ecological design. It aims to promote the integration and sustainable development of design, ecology and society on a global scale, by strengthening exchanges and cooperation on eco-design among countries and regions, and effectively enhancing the industrial vitality and value proposition, all contributing to the achievement of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nations Technology Bank Eco-Design Promotion Centre is a partnership between the United Nations Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries and World Eco-Design Conference. It supports the least developed countries to develop industrial design solutions and enhance competitiveness through intellectual property support, training, and south-south collaboration.

**Media Contact:** Louise Stoddard, United Nations Technology Bank - [stoddard@un.org](mailto:stoddard@un.org)