



Media Release

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SOLIDARITY FUND

Healthcare trains converted into mobile Covid-19 testing units as the Solidarity Fund partners Transnet to save lives

14 May 2020: The Covid-19 testing capacity in some underserved areas in the Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal will receive a boost from two Transnet healthcare trains, which have been converted into mobile Covid-19 testing stations.

The Solidarity Fund, together with the Transnet Foundation and the National Health Laboratory Service have supplied testing kits and personal protective equipment to frontline healthcare staff on Phelophepa I and II, two of the Transnet Foundation's healthcare trains.

In an effort to increase testing rates for the deadly virus, dedicated doctors and nurses, with specialist training in Covid-19 testing, will visit underserved areas across KwaZulu-Natal on the 18th May and also in the Eastern Cape, using Transnet's rail network.

"As the Solidarity Fund we are particularly grateful of the spirit and care in which this cooperation with Transnet was formed to make it work for these two provinces. We also salute our medical professionals for the work that they do in protecting all South Africans from the threat of the coronavirus. This partnership is unity in action, with the Solidarity Fund playing a co-ordinating role with multiple stakeholders and making real interventions to support government efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19," says Gloria Serobe, Chairman of the Solidarity Fund.

The Solidarity Fund was set up as a quick response entity to augment the national effort in the fight against Covid-19 by helping to determine the magnitude of infections and support measures to flatten the curve by lowering infection rates.

Since 1994, Phelophepa I and II have provided basic medical help and healthcare education to vulnerable communities across the country. Each train has a permanent staff of 22 healthcare professionals, including nurses and healthcare educators.

"The Phelophepa trains are a well-known partner of rural communities in the provision of primary health services. It is a real privilege for us to now include COVID-19 testing at this critical time. We have been, and always will be there for our people," says Transnet Group CEO Portia Derby.

The Solidarity Fund has approved funding for 400 000 Covid-19 testing kits costing R250 million to support increased testing for the deadly virus across the country.

'This critical testing intervention comes at a time when we need it most. It will go a long way in mitigating development fault lines exposed by this novel Covid-19 and will help the provinces ramp up their massive screening and testing programs, especially in the rural parts of these provinces. We welcome it as a catalyst in the difficult war we are waging against this invisible enemy that has destabilised the whole world.' says Eastern Cape Premier, Oscar Mabuyane.

ENDS



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