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Mercedes-Benz South Africa contributes to the fight against COVID-19 in the Eastern Cape

- Starting 4 May 2020, Mercedes-Benz South Africa began the gradual re-opening of its manufacturing plant under the Level 4 regulations in accordance to its stringent occupational health and safety risk management systems and protocols.
- Decision to begin manufacturing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the form of 3D printed face shields
- Additionally, MBSA to manufacture breathing aids from its manufacturing plant, pending regulatory approval from local medical licencing authorities.
- Using over 70 years of manufacturing excellence to lend its support to the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Health to fight the COVID-19 pandemic

East London, South Africa – Mercedes-Benz South Africa Limited (MBSA) is pleased to announce that it will assist in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic in the Eastern Cape, by manufacturing the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the form of 3D printed recyclable plastic face shields for use in mass screening, clinics and hospitals. In addition, and pending quality assurance regulatory approval, MBSA will also manufacture and supply Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) breathing aid devices from its East London Manufacturing Plant for the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Health.

The MBSA East London Manufacturing Plant re-opened under Alert Level 4 restrictions, on 4 May 2020 in accordance to stringent occupational health and safety risk management systems and protocols and will use its capacity to manufacture face shields and CPAP devices, which deliver oxygen to the lungs without needing a ventilator. The CPAP breathing aid devices have been used extensively in hospitals in countries hardest hit by COVID-19 to assist patients with serious respiratory problems to breathe more easily, when oxygen via a face mask alone has proven insufficient. CPAP devices are non-invasive breathing aid devices, which provide a constant, steady pressure to keep the lungs expanded. Reports from Italy indicate that approximately 50% of patients given CPAP have avoided the need for invasive mechanical ventilation.

It is anticipated that the CPAP devices provided by MBSA will also assist with reducing the burden on public health facilities based in the Eastern Cape, which is expected to experience a surge in coronavirus patients.

Commenting on this development, the CEO of MBSA & Director of Manufacturing, Andreas Engling said: *“As a symbol of solidarity with the Eastern Cape provincial government and its people, MBSA saw the need to use its over 70 years of manufacturing excellence to produce medical equipment in the form of 3-D printed face shields for essential medical services personnel working on the front-lines of the COVID-19 pandemic in public hospitals. The CPAP devices announced today will also assist coronavirus patients by keeping them out of intensive care with breathing support and reduce the burden on public health facilities based in the Eastern Cape.”*

During the non-production period of the lockdown, MBSA explored the feasibility of developing CPAP devices for manufacture. With this decision, MBSA is following example of the Mercedes-AMG Petronas

Formula One Team based in the UK by preparing its machines, which under normal circumstances would produce automobile components, to develop these breathing aids.

Pending regulatory approval from local medical licencing authorities, MBSA will manufacture CPAP breathing devices from its manufacturing plant. Once approved, MBSA anticipates that it will be able to manufacture more than 1000 face shields and CPAP devices per month.

“The dimensions and complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic require every member of society to pool its resources and capabilities to inhibit further contagion. As a responsible corporate citizen, we recognise the importance of supporting the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Health to be as prepared as possible to provide the best adequate treatment to patients. We are constantly monitoring the situation related to COVID-19 and will take further action as required in order to safeguard the health and safety of the people of the Eastern Cape during this challenging time,” concluded Engling.

■ Ends.

Notes to editors:

About Mercedes-Benz South Africa

Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the global company, Mercedes-Benz AG which is owned by Daimler AG. Established in 1948, MBSA is one of the largest automotive groups in South Africa. The production of Mercedes-Benz passenger cars at the East London plant began in 1958, with the model series of the W121. Today, MBSA manufactures Mercedes-Benz C-Class cars in both left- and right-hand drive for the local and export markets.

MBSA cemented its position as one of the top manufacturing plants in Daimler AG, getting recognition for six years in a row with J.D. Power and Associates (a US-based company) quality awards for vehicles produced at its East London. The East London plant is an important part of the C-Class global production network. The network includes the Mercedes-Benz plants in Tuscaloosa (USA), BBAC (China), and lead plant in Bremen (Germany). As announced in June 2018, further investments into the expansion of the East London plant for the production of the next generation C-Class constitute R10 billion.

For further information, please visit <https://corporate.mercedes-benz.co.za/>.

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