



**Bumitama Agri Ltd**

**10 Anson Road #11-19**

**International Plaza, Singapore 079903**

**Tel : +65 6222 1332**

**Fax : +65 6222 1336**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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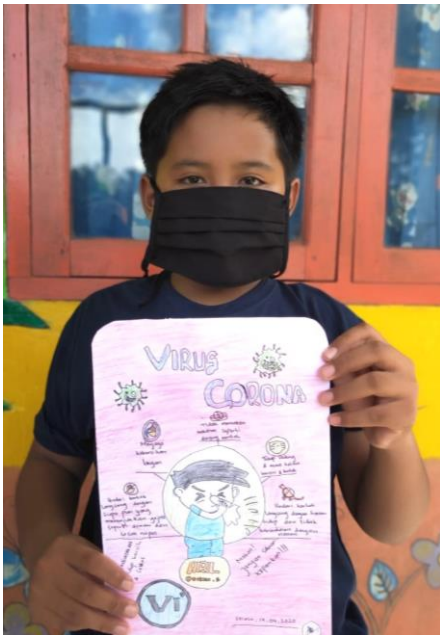
### **Curbing the Pandemic through Learning From Home Programme**

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Jakarta, 6 May 2020 – The Covid-19 pandemic infected almost 200 countries globally, with almost all affected nations restricting free movement and setting up border controls. Indonesia whose infection initially detected in its major cities also followed the steps of its counterparts. While urban areas have been affected first because of high mobility and dense population, the rural communities around our estates may be more vulnerable due to generally lower level of understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and limited access to healthcare services for containing pandemic-scale infectious diseases. Observing and analysing the rapidly developing situation, Bumitama took the initiative and started introducing emergency policies, set up crisis management centres and anticipatory measures for its operations and surrounding areas to avoid the outbreak as early as beginning of March 2020.



In Bumitama, the protection of children and educational facilities is particularly important. Prioritizing the well being of our students, we have implemented preventive measures, including suspending all in-class education and other extracurricular events across all 38 schools operated by the Yayasan Bumitama foundation, prior to the instruction from the Indonesian Ministry of Education. During this time, it is crucial that awareness on the Covid-19 and necessary steps to ensure public health and safety are well communicated. Our teachers rose to the occasion and met the challenge head on by adopting social media and other conventional ways to educate on the prevention of virus contamination, sharing interactive instructions in form of photos and videos on appropriate methods of washing hands, wearing personal protective equipment and implementing social distancing. Our children quickly became the ambassadors of clean and healthy lifestyle for their families, composing educational poems and putting up artistic posters about the virus prevention and making facemasks as part of their vocational activities. These facemasks are donated to the local communities around our plantations, thus ensuring that they are also safe from the virus.



To reduce the impact of the temporary school closures on our children, we implemented a home schooling programme called **Learn from Home** for all education facilities managed by the Yayasan Bumitama. Our teachers have set up online chat groups and started using other e-learning tools to share schoolwork and to monitor progress of their students. Delivering lectures online has proven as an effective substitution for the direct engagement in class, with positive feedback from both the teachers and students. It also takes away the concern of the parents over the progress of education and helps to keep an eye on their children while they are at work, with the nationwide implementation of large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) lasting for over a month now.



We are mindful of the limitations to this method of teaching as our plantation operations are widespread and mostly located in rural areas. Approximately 2,400 children - nearly 50% of all our students, live in areas without 3G or similar phone signal coverage, thus are unable to join the online education. Our alternative is the most direct way; a group of the teachers, with the support of the plantation operational teams personally deliver the schoolwork to the students in their houses. Following an agreed toolkit of set rules to avoid potential contamination, they visit each student at least once a week, going from door to door, making sure the coursework is well understood and completed.



In celebration of 2<sup>nd</sup> May as the Indonesian Education Day, Bumitama acknowledges the importance of nurturing the personal development of our children, for they are our potential future colleagues, partners and customers. It is therefore important that despite the on-going crisis, our students would continue their education and not skip school. This has been only possible thanks to our teachers, who would go the extra mile and often use their own resources to make sure our children can receive their tuition, even in the midst of the global pandemic. We applaud their dedication. It is thanks to their hard work and cooperation that until today we have not had a positive case of the Covid-19 virus in our schools, mills and plantations or immediate surrounding communities.



For further information, please email:

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Christina Lim

Email: [clim@bumitama-agri.com](mailto:clim@bumitama-agri.com)

Lim Sian Choo

Email: [lim.sian.choo@bumitama-agri.com](mailto:lim.sian.choo@bumitama-agri.com)

Glenn Ho

Email: [glenn.ho@bumitama-agri.com](mailto:glenn.ho@bumitama-agri.com)

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