

### **Joint Media Statement by project partners**

The project partners of the shoe recycling programme were first informed about Reuter's observations in January 2023. Upon being told, an investigation led by Alba-WH – the project's collection partner in this programme - was commenced immediately to look into the issue. At the same time, measures were immediately taken by Alba-WH to tighten up the process chain in the interim.

The investigations were completed on 31 January 2023, and it showed that there were vulnerabilities in the process chain with Alba-WH's subcontractor, which led directly to the collected shoes not being sent for recycling.

Alba-WH had subcontracted the collection of the shoe recycling bins in selected parts of Singapore to Yok Impex (an aggregator for recyclables and reusables) in January 2022. These collection bins were then aggregated and sorted at Yok Impex's premises before being sent to Alba-WH's warehouse for registering and weighing, after which the shoes would be subsequently delivered to the B.T. Sports grinding facility to convert the shoes to granules for use as building materials. The findings had confirmed that the supply chain was compromised at Yok Impex's premises where the aggregation of the shoe bins in parallel with Yok Impex's sorting activities resulted in some shoes being extracted for resale instead of recycling. This was likely how the shoes tagged by Reuters – and possibly others - were extracted from the programme's recycling bins at Yok Impex's premises for reuse and exported to other countries. The investigations show that this error occurred only at Yok Impex's facility, and no other.

The project partners do not condone any unauthorised removal or export of shoes collected through this programme. Alba-WH has since stopped collection bins from being sent to Yok Impex's premises, and will not be renewing Yok Impex's services. We will also be taking further steps to tighten up the process chain based on our learning from this incident.

The project partners sincerely apologise to the public for this lapse. We thank Reuters for flagging this matter to us so that we could take immediate steps to remedy the situation. We have learnt from this incident and hope that the public will continue to support this important and meaningful programme. To date, 10,000kg of used shoes have been recycled into infrastructure such as Kallang Football Hub and a sport facility under construction in Jurong Town. There are also plans to use the rubber granules for jogging tracks, fitness corners, and playgrounds around Singapore. We wish to assure the public that we remain strongly committed to initiatives that protect our planet.