

Media Release

Alternate Authority for the Minister for National Development Instructs POFMA Office to Issue Correction Directions and Targeted Correction Direction

Singapore – 4 July 2020: The Alternate Authority for the Minister for National Development has instructed POFMA Office to issue Correction Directions¹ to The Online Citizen Asia with respect to an article on their website and Facebook page, as well as to the Facebook pages of “Peoples Voice Political Party”, “Singapore Democratic Party (SDP)” and “Sin Rak Sin Party”.

2 This is with regard to false statements of fact claiming that a statement made by Dr Cheong Koon Hean at the IPS-Nathan Lectures in 2018 suggested that our population would increase to 10 million by 2030. Dr Cheong made no statement suggesting that our population would increase to 10 million by 2030.

3 The Government has also clarified Singapore’s population plans on multiple occasions: **(i)** in Parliament in March 2018, when it stated that Singapore’s total population is likely to be significantly below 6.9 million by 2030, **(ii)** in two Factually articles (“What is the aim of Government population policies?”² on 4 March 2020, and “Does the Government have a population target e.g. 10 million?”³ on 1 July 2020), **(iii)** in a media statement⁴ issued by the National Population and Talent Division (NPTD) on 1 July 2020, and **(iv)** in a Factually article (“Corrections and clarifications regarding posts of falsehoods from an article by The Online Citizen”⁵ on 3 July 2020). The media statement also stated that the publication of such falsehoods damages the public interest by undermining legitimate and honest discussion, and that appropriate action may be taken against any further publication of such falsehoods. Despite the latest clarification, the falsehood continues to be repeated.

¹ A **Correction Direction** is a Direction issued to a person who has communicated a falsehood (i.e. the recipient) that affects the public interest. It requires the recipient to publish a correction notice, providing access to the correct facts. The Direction does not require the recipient to take down their post or make edits to their content, and does not impose criminal sanctions.

² <https://www.gov.sg/article/what-is-the-aim-of-government-population-policies>

³ <https://www.gov.sg/article/does-the-government-have-a-population-target>

⁴ <https://www.strategygroup.gov.sg/media-centre/press-releases/clarification-regarding-recent-statements-on-singapore-population-target>

⁵ <https://www.gov.sg/article/factually030720a>

4 In addition, a Targeted Correction Direction⁶ has also been issued to Facebook to apply a correction notice on Facebook posts with a picture carrying the same falsehoods.

5 For facts of the case, please refer to the Factually article, “Correction and clarifications regarding falsehoods on population target and HDB CEO’s remarks on living density” (www.gov.sg/article/factually040720a).

The POFMA Office

The POFMA Office, situated within the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), is responsible for the administration of the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA). For more information about POFMA Office, visit www.pofmaoffice.gov.sg.

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⁶ A **Targeted Correction Direction** is a Direction issued to an Internet Intermediary (“II”), whose service was used to communicate a falsehood that affects the public interest. The Direction requires the II to communicate a correction notice by means of its service to all users in Singapore who access the falsehood through its service. This is so that users who see the falsehood on a platform also see the correction notice on that platform.