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Circular Letter No.4198/Add.1  
17 June 2020

To: All IMO Members  
United Nations and specialized agencies  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Day of the Seafarer, 2020 and Webinar "Seafarers are Key Workers: Essential to Shipping, Essential to the World"**

1 The Secretary-General has the honour to advise that:

- .1 the annual **Day of the Seafarer** will be celebrated on 25 June 2020. The theme of the campaign has been updated to reflect the role of seafarers and the need for them to be declared "key workers" in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- .2 A public access webinar will be held on 24 June 2020 on the theme: **"Seafarers are Key Workers: Essential to Shipping, Essential to the World"**.

2 Seafarers are on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic, playing an essential role in maintaining the flow of vital goods, such as food, medicines and medical supplies. However, the crisis has led to difficult working conditions for seafarers, including uncertainties and difficulties about port access, re-supply, crew changeovers and repatriation.

3 This year, the **Day of the Seafarer** campaign calls on Member States to recognize seafarers as key workers – and to provide them with the support, assistance and travel options open to all key workers during the pandemic.

4 The 2020 **Day of the Seafarer** campaign pays tribute to seafarers, acknowledging their sacrifice and the issues they face. Many seafarers have been away from home for months and are unsure when they will be able to return home due to travel restrictions. The campaign also seeks to raise awareness of the work achieved by seafarers in response to the pandemic and to thank them for their contribution. Everyone is invited to recognize that the ability of seafarers to deliver vital goods is central to responding to, and eventually overcoming, this pandemic. The campaign encourages everyone to treat seafarers with the respect and dignity they deserve so that they can continue to provide their vital services to keep world trade moving.

5 As in previous years, the **Day of the Seafarer** campaign is centred on social media. The 2020 campaign hashtag is: #SeafarersAreKeyWorkers. This hashtag can be used by anyone engaging in the campaign to pay tribute to seafarers and thank them for their important role in these unusual times. Further details including downloadable material which can be used on social media can be found on the IMO web page:

<http://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/dayoftheseafarer/Pages/Day-of-the-Seafarer-2020.aspx>.

6 The Secretary-General's message for the **Day of the Seafarer** is attached in annex 1.

7 To support the **Day of the Seafarer** campaign, the IMO Secretariat has organized a webinar on the theme "**Seafarers are key workers: Essential to shipping, essential to the world**", to be held online on 24 June. The webinar will be open to the public.

8 A provisional programme for the webinar is attached in annex 2. Further details and how to join will be posted on the IMO website.

9 The annual World Maritime Day will be celebrated on 24 September. Updated information will be available in due course. Updated information on the World Maritime Day Parallel Event, which is scheduled to be held in Durban, South Africa, will also be made available in due course.

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## ANNEX 1

### DAY OF THE SEAFARER 2020

#### Message from Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, IMO

Seafarers are at the heart of everything IMO does. And every year we celebrate seafarers with our Day of the Seafarer campaign.

Even in good times, seafarers are the unsung heroes of the global economy. More than 80% of global trade is delivered by sea. Seafarers' work is physically and mentally demanding, lonely and remote.

But this year, we are in the unprecedented situation of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Ships are continuing to trade, and most ports are still open to deliver and load vital supplies. But the global pandemic has plunged many seafarers into desperate situations. I have been amazed and impressed with the dedication, professionalism, resilience and perseverance of seafarers as they have faced the inability to conduct crew changes, inability to be repatriated, inability to get passports and visas to get to and from their ships, lack of access to medical care, lack of personal protective equipment and denial of shore leave – all as a result of well-intentioned efforts to protect public health and safety, but with overly restrictive consequences to shipping. Despite all these challenges, seafarers have stayed on the job 24/7.

IMO has worked with trade unions, seafarer welfare organizations, shipping industry representatives and other United Nations agencies, to find solutions to these problems. I have written to all our Member Governments, urging them to recognize all seafarers as "key workers".

Seafarers' work is unique and essential. Just like other key workers, seafarers are on the front line in this global fight. They deserve our thanks. But they also need – and deserve – quick and decisive humanitarian action from Governments everywhere, not just during the pandemic, but at all times.

That's why our 2020 campaign theme is "**#SeafarersAreKeyWorkers**". Follow, use and share this hashtag across social media platforms to join this global call for proper recognition – and action – for seafarers. Seafarers continue to deliver for all of us. Now, let's ensure that we deliver for them!

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ANNEX 2

# DAY OF THE SEAFARER

WEBINAR • 24 June • 10:30-11:30 GMT+1 (London)

**Seafarers are key workers:**  
essential to shipping, essential to the world

- 10:30** Opening remarks by **Mr. Kitack Lim**, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- 10:40** **Mr. Guy Platten**, Secretary-General, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
- 10:50** **Mr. Stephen Cotton**, General Secretary, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)
- 11:00** **Fr. Paulo Prigol**, Stella Maris Manila and South East Asia Regional Coordinator
- 11:10** **Mr. Niels van de Minkelis**, Head Operational Affairs, Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KNVR)
- 11:20** Q&A
- 11:30** Closure

**#SeafarersAreKeyWorkers**



**DAY OF THE  
SEAFARER**  
— 25 JUNE —

