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

Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Designation of seafarers as key workers**

1 In view of the ongoing crew change crisis, which is impacting seafarers as well as other marine personnel,* the Secretary-General wishes to draw the attention of Member States to the matter of designation of these professionals as key workers, referring in particular to the provisions of:

- .1 resolution MSC.473(ES.2) – *Recommended action to facilitate ship crew change, access to medical care and seafarer travel during the COVID-19 pandemic*, adopted by MSC on 21 September 2020;
- .2 resolution A/75/L.37 – *International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains*, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 1 December 2020; and
- .3 resolution GB.340/Resolution(Rev.2) – *Resolution concerning maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic*, adopted by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office on 8 December 2020.

2 Resolution MSC.473(ES.2) states, in operative paragraph 1.2:

- "1 URGES Member States and relevant national authorities to: ...
- .2 designate seafarers as "key workers" providing an essential service, in order to facilitate safe and unhindered movement for embarking or disembarking a vessel and consider legal possibilities for accepting internationally recognized documentation carried by seafarers as evidence of their status as "key workers", and for the purpose of their travel and movement for crew change;"

* Other marine personnel may include, inter alia, fishing vessel personnel, marine pilots, marine surveyors, marine superintendents, offshore energy sector personnel, offshore support personnel and port workers.

3 Resolution A/75/L.37 states, in operative paragraph 3:

"3. Urges Member States to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers;"

4 Resolution GB.340/Resolution(Rev.2) states in operative paragraph 1, inter alia:

"1. Urges all Members, in accordance with applicable national laws and regulations, to: ... designate seafarers as "key workers", for the purpose of facilitation of safe and unhindered movement for embarking or disembarking a vessel, and the facilitation of shore leave, and when necessary, to shore-based medical treatment;"

5 By the date of this Circular Letter, the Secretary-General has received 64 notifications from Member States and two from Associate Members that they have designated seafarers as key workers, as listed in the annex.

6 Member States that have not yet done so are strongly encouraged to take action to address this issue and designate seafarers as key workers as a matter of urgency.

ANNEX

**LIST OF MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
THAT HAVE DESIGNATED SEAFARERS AS KEY WORKERS**

EUROPE	ASIA	AMERICAS	AFRICA	MIDDLE EAST	OCEANIA
Azerbaijan Belgium Bulgaria Croatia Cyprus Denmark Finland France Georgia Germany Greece Ireland Italy Moldova Montenegro Netherlands Norway Poland Portugal Romania Russian Federation Slovenia Spain Sweden Turkey United Kingdom	Bangladesh India Indonesia Japan Maldives Myanmar Pakistan Philippines Republic of Korea Singapore Thailand	Bahamas Barbados Brazil Canada Chile Dominica Jamaica Panama Peru United States Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Egypt Gabon Gambia Ghana Kenya Liberia Nigeria South Africa	Iran (Islamic Republic of) Lebanon Saudi Arabia United Arab Emirates Yemen	Kiribati Marshall Islands New Zealand
Associate Members					
Faroes	Hong Kong (China)				