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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.12
27 April 2020

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

Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Declaration by Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global COVID-19 situation**

The Secretary-General has received the attached ***Declaration by Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global COVID-19 situation***, signed by a group of leading port authorities from around the world and forwarded by Singapore with a request for circulation.

Recognizing that the maritime sector plays a critical role in keeping trade flows open in the global fight against COVID-19, 20 PAR members from Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America came together on 24 April 2020 in Singapore to declare their commitment to ensuring their ports remain open amidst the current pandemic. The Declaration, initiated by Singapore, calls for port authorities to collaborate and share best practices in ensuring that port operations can remain undisrupted.

In this connection, the Secretary-General wishes to emphasize again that it is crucially important that the flow of commerce by sea should not be unnecessarily disrupted. At the same time, the safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment must also remain paramount. One of the goals of IMO, as stated in its Convention, is to ensure availability of shipping services to the commerce of the world, for the benefit of humanity, and the Secretary-General wishes to urge all IMO Member States to bear this in mind when framing their policy decisions with regard to the coronavirus. Defeating the virus must be the first priority, but global trade, in a safe, secure and environmentally friendly manner, must be able to continue too.

Member States and international organizations are encouraged to take similar initiatives at national and regional levels, and are invited to circulate this information to all interested parties, as deemed appropriate.

ANNEX

DECLARATION BY PORT AUTHORITIES ROUNDTABLE (PAR) MEMBERS IN VIEW OF THE GLOBAL COVID-19 SITUATION

Members of the Port Authorities Roundtable¹ (PAR) recognise the COVID-19 pandemic as a serious global crisis that has far-reaching impact on many fronts, including global trade. As more than 80% of goods are transported via sea-lanes, we recognise that the port and maritime sector play a crucial role in keeping trade flows open in our global fight against COVID-19.

We also acknowledge the recent Statement made by International Maritime Organization (IMO), emphasising the importance of minimising the disruption to maritime trade and shipping activities so that vital goods, especially necessities and essential medical supplies, can continue to flow seamlessly across different regions in the world. No one country can win the fight against COVID-19 on its own without having continued access to these vital goods in our inter-connected world.

As a multilateral platform consisting of leading port authorities across Asia, Middle East, Europe and the America, members of the PAR would like to declare a commitment to collaborate closely, through the sharing of best practices and implemented measures, such that the ports remain open to seaborne trade to help sustain the world and support the fight against COVID-19.

We therefore are committed to work together and strive to:

- i. Keep global supply chain and trade/cargo going, and that merchant ships can continue to berth at terminals to carry out cargo operations.
- ii. Facilitate closer coordination by establishing an open communication channel so that like-minded port and maritime authorities can share experiences/exchange information in combating COVID-19 while safeguarding unimpeded maritime trade.
- iii. Continue to adopt best practices according to national circumstances, including precautionary measures for shipping community, advisories and assistance for shore personnel and ship crew, safe handling of cargoes and measures taken in dealing with COVID-19 cases.

¹ The Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) was initiated in 2015 with the aim of networking and sharing of best practices amongst leading port authorities. Till date, five editions of PAR have been held in Singapore, Rotterdam, Ningbo China, Long Beach USA and Kobe Japan.

Finally, we would also like to express our deepest appreciation to seafarers, harbour pilots, shore-based workers and the maritime community who have worked tirelessly amidst the on-going pandemic in enabling international trade to continue during these challenging times. Together, we can do our part to help the world defeat COVID-19!

Signed by:

Name & Designation	Port Authority
Capt. Maktoum Al Houqani Chief Corporate Authority Officer	Abu Dhabi Ports
Mr Jacques Vandermeiren CEO	Antwerp Port Authority
Ms Hiromi Furuya Director General	Bureau of Port and Harbor, Tokyo Metropolitan Government
Mr Ki-chan Nam President	Busan Port Authority
Mr Chen Hongxian Director General	Guangzhou Port Authority
Mr Jens Meier CEO	Hamburg Port Authority
Ms Quah Ley Hoon Chief Executive	Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore
Sylvie Vachon CEO	Montreal Port Authority
Mr Xu Qiang Director General	Ningbo Municipal Port Administration Bureau
Mr Bundit Sakonwisawa Managing Director	Port Authority of Thailand (Bangkok Port)
Mr Santiago Garcia-Mila Subdirector General	Port of Barcelona
Mr Hiroya Nakano Director General	Port and Harbor Bureau, City of Yokohama
Mr Hideyuki Tsuji Director General	Port and Harbor Bureau, Kobe City Government
Captain K Subramaniam General Manager	Port Klang Authority
Mr Baptiste Maurand CEO	Port of Le Havre
Mr Mario Cordero Executive Director	Port of Long Beach
Mr Eugene D. Seroka Executive Director	Port of Los Angeles
Mr Allard Castelein President & CEO	Port of Rotterdam
Mr Peter Steinbrueck Commission President	Port of Seattle
Mr Xie Feng Director General	Shanghai Municipal Transportation Commission

Date: 24 April 2020