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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.35  
14 December 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) – 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 the 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;"

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 had received 46 notifications from Member States and Associate Members that 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.

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**ANNEX**

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

AZERBAIJAN	MOLDOVA
BAHAMAS	MONTENEGRO
BANGLADESH	MYANMAR
BARBADOS	NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM	NEW ZEALAND
BRAZIL	NIGERIA
CANADA	NORWAY
CHILE	PANAMA
CYPRUS	PHILIPPINES
DENMARK	REPUBLIC OF KOREA
FRANCE	ROMANIA
GABON	SAUDI ARABIA
GEORGIA	SINGAPORE
GERMANY	SOUTH AFRICA
GHANA	SPAIN
GREECE	SWEDEN
INDONESIA	THAILAND
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
JAMAICA	UNITED KINGDOM
JAPAN	UNITED STATES
KENYA	YEMEN
KIRIBATI	
LIBERIA	<b>Associate Member:</b>
MARSHALL ISLANDS	HONG KONG (CHINA)