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 2 December 2020; and


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 49 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  MARSHALL ISLANDS
BAHAMAS  MOLDOVA
BANGLADESH  MONTENEGRO
BARBADOS  MYANMAR
BELGIUM  NETHERLANDS
BRAZIL  NEW ZEALAND
CANADA  NIGERIA
CHILE  NORWAY
CYPRUS  PANAMA
DENMARK  PHILIPPINES
DOMINICA  REPUBLIC OF KOREA
FRANCE  ROMANIA
GABON  SAUDI ARABIA
GEORGIA  SINGAPORE
GERMANY  SOUTH AFRICA
GHANA  SPAIN
GREECE  SWEDEN
INDIA  THAILAND
INDONESIA  UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)  UNITED KINGDOM
JAMAICA  UNITED STATES
JAPAN  YEMEN
KENYA
KIRIBATI
LEBANON
LIBERIA

Associate Member:
HONG KONG (CHINA)