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Circular Letter No.4323
15 September 2020

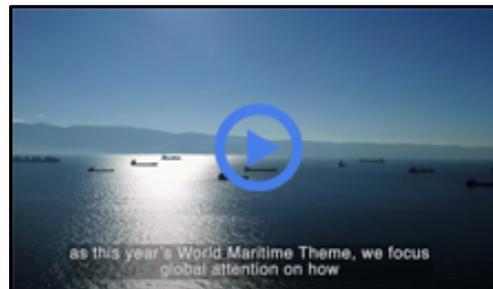
To: IMO Member States and other Governments
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **World Maritime Day 2020**

Further to [Circular Letter No.4198](#) of 31 January 2020, which included a background paper on the year's theme "Sustainable Shipping for a Sustainable Planet", the Secretary-General has the honour to enclose herewith the text of his message on the occasion of World Maritime Day 2020. This year's celebration will take place on 24 September 2020 in the form of an online event, due to social distancing measures put in place at IMO Headquarters as a result of the current situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The message will be available for downloading in all of the Organization's official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and the background paper is available in the Organization's three working languages (English, French and Spanish). Additionally, a video containing the Secretary-General's message is now available on the IMO website at www.imo.org.

You can watch the Secretary-General's video message [here](#)



In addition, the Secretary-General wishes to remind all Member States and international organizations of the Calendar of Events on the IMO website, which can be accessed at www.imo.org/en/About/Calendar.

The Calendar of Events provides the opportunity for greater visibility of the many events held around the world in support of World Maritime Day and the Day of the Seafarer. In the current situation caused by the pandemic, it presents an effective and easy-to-use platform to inform other Member States and international organizations, in advance, of relevant celebrations in support of both days, particularly online events that may be more widely attended. More information on the Calendar of Events is enclosed in [Circular Letter No.3889](#).

In order to promote the Day more widely, the Secretary-General encourages the authorities concerned to organize suitable events throughout the year to celebrate the Day, and inform the Secretariat of any such activities, including listing them on the calendar as described above. The information will then be included in a report to be prepared for submission to the Council.

Social media participation is also encouraged via Twitter, by using the hashtag #WorldMaritimeDay. Photographs of any events can also be sent to: media@imo.org.

ANNEX

WORLD MARITIME DAY 2020 SUSTAINABLE SHIPPING FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET

A message from Kitack Lim Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us, with unprecedented impacts on our lives, our economies and our societies. At IMO we have observed and attempted to address the impacts on the shipping industry and especially seafarers. In these challenging times, the ability of shipping services and seafarers to deliver essential goods, including medical supplies, food and fuel is central to responding to, and overcoming this crisis.

The pandemic has shown that shipping, the most reliable, efficient and cost-effective method of international transportation that carries more than 80% of global trade, remains the leading facilitator of the global economy. Therefore, shipping and maritime will be at the heart of the economic recovery and future sustainable growth far into the future, both at sea and ashore, supporting an inclusive and resilient economy to underpin the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

"Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet", our theme for 2020 couldn't be more relevant now and for years to come.

In the post-COVID world, much focus will be directed at the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by all UN Member States in 2015.

These goals are as relevant as ever, and shipping is essential for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda will only be realized with a sustainable transport sector supporting world trade and facilitating the global economy.

But shipping also needs to secure its own sustainability. Shipping activities must be balanced with safety of life at sea and the long-term health and diversity of the oceans. A major part of IMO's role is to ensure that shipping continues to make its contribution to the global economy without upsetting nature's delicate balance.

Supported by IMO's regulatory framework, shipping is engaged on a journey of transformation towards this sustainable future.

IMO's actions are:

- enhance maritime safety and digital shipping;
- ensure and enhance the professionalism, competence and workplace environment of the world's seafarers;
- decarbonization of international shipping and reduction of sulphur in ships' fuel oil;
- protect the polar regions and reduce marine litter;
- facilitation of maritime traffic in collaboration with port industry;

- technical cooperation and capacity-building of developing countries;
- enhance gender equality in the maritime community; and
- maintain a robust response system to meet threats to safety and security at sea, and protect the marine environment.

All form the foundation for shipping's part in securing a sustainable future for all of us. We must now look to see what more should be done to achieve these goals.

At the start of 2020, alongside our UN sister entities, we marked the beginning of a decade of action and delivery for the SDGs. In choosing "Sustainable Shipping for a Sustainable Planet" as this year's World Maritime Theme, we focus global attention on how IMO, the Organization's Member States, civil society and the shipping industry are working together to ensure that shipping continues and strengthens its contribution towards sustainable growth.

As the global pandemic has turned all our lives upside down, I have been encouraged by the unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration in the maritime world. I have spoken many times of our "voyage together", encompassing Member States, NGOS and multiple maritime stakeholders. Though this year, the spirit of those words has been more important than ever. We need to capitalize on this willingness to work together as we move forward, supporting shipping, seafarers and the maritime sector to fulfil their responsibilities.

Thank you.
