

ICS welcomes UN resolution on key worker status for seafarers

- Resolution urges Member States to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers
- Indonesia leads coalition of 71 countries demanding global government action
- Pressure grows on countries who do not recognise maritime personnel as key workers

London, December 1st. The [International Chamber of Shipping](#) (ICS) has today welcomed a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which calls for all countries around the world to designate seafarers as key workers.

The resolution, put forward by Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani of the Republic of Indonesia, encourages governments to immediately implement measures to allow crew change, and to ensure access to medical care for all maritime personnel.

This is a significant step in recognising the crucial role that 2,000,000 sailors play in transporting food, medicine, energy supplies and other essential raw materials across the globe amidst the height of a global pandemic.

The resolution, entitled “International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains”, was presented at the 75th Session of the UN’s General Assembly.

Guy Platten, Secretary General of the ICS, commented:

“We welcome the news that the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution urging the classification of all seafarers as key workers and commend the Indonesian government for spearheading this resolution.

“The inability to rotate crew from their ships and provide safe, frictionless transport through international borders risks the passage of trade that all our economies rely on.

“The International Chamber of Shipping understands that 44 UN member states currently classify seafarers as ‘key workers’. While this resolution is a positive step, clearly there is much more to be done. Governments must now leverage their considerable power to persuade others to follow suit and classify their seafarers as key workers.

“As we head towards the holiday season the shipping industry is doing its bit with the launch of the Seafarers Delivering Christmas campaign. We now call on all governments to answer the seafarers’ Christmas wish and designate them as key workers and end the crew change crisis.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

The ICS estimates that nearly 400,000 sailors are stranded at sea due to being unable to safely disembark their ships as a result of COVID-19. The UK was one of the first nations to recognise seafarers as key workers, but nearly three quarters of IMO member states do not. Many sailors have been at sea for more than a year (and some up to 17 months), serving far beyond the scope of their contract. [See here](#) for more information on how the ICS is supporting seafarers during the pandemic.

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About ICS

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the principal international trade association for merchant shipowners and operators, representing all sectors and trades and over 80% of the world merchant fleet.



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Strengthening of the United Nations system: strengthening of the United Nations system

Belgium, Cambodia, Croatia, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tuvalu and Vanuatu: draft resolution

International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [74/270](#) of 2 April 2020, [74/274](#) of 20 April 2020 and [74/306](#) and [74/307](#) of 11 September 2020,

Noting with concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has spread all around the globe, as well as the unprecedented and multifaceted effects of the pandemic, including the severe disruption to societies, economies, global trade and travel and the devastating impact on the livelihoods of people,

Recognizing the importance of international cooperation and effective multilateralism in helping to ensure that all States have in place effective national measures and access to and flow of vital medical supplies, medicines and vaccines, as well as the importance of exchange of information, scientific knowledge and best practices, in order to minimize negative effects in all affected States and to avoid relapses of the pandemic,

Acknowledging that shipping has continued to transport more than 80 per cent of world trade essential to the normal functioning of society, including vital medical supplies, food and other basic goods that are critical for the COVID-19 response and recovery,

Acknowledging also that there are approximately 2 million seafarers working on a fleet of more than 98,000 commercial ships, transporting more than 11 billion tons of seaborne trade in 2019,

Emphasizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the normal functioning of open markets, global supply chain connectivity and the flow of essential goods and services and that these disruptions hinder the fight against poverty, hunger and



inequality, ultimately undermining efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹ and reaffirming that emergency measures must be targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary and that they must not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption to global supply chains,

Recognizing the efforts made by Governments, as well as health-care workers and other essential workers around the world, to deal with the pandemic through measures to protect the health, safety and well-being of their people,

Noting with concern that seafarers and fishers continue to face very difficult working conditions at sea,

Noting that the challenging labour conditions of seafarers and fishers have been further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related response measures, including personal safety and health, conditions of work and the ability of seafarers and fishers to join and leave vessels, the inability of vessel operators and owners to change crews, in addition to other social and economic hardships arising from COVID-19,

Recalling that the International Labour Organization Maritime Labour Convention, 2006,² as amended, requires Members to cooperate with each other for the purpose of ensuring decent living and working conditions for seafarers,

Deeply concerned about the significant challenges being faced by the global shipping community to effect crew change and repatriation of seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,

Recalling that the Council of the International Maritime Organization, at its thirty-first extraordinary session, urged flag and port States to ensure the welfare of seafarers, in particular that their rights to wages, shore leave, sick leave, access to medical care, food supplies and repatriation were preserved,

Recognizing that the situation of seafarers stranded at sea because of the pandemic requires an urgent and concrete response from all actors involved, including the private sector,

Noting with appreciation various initiatives of the International Maritime Organization on the protection of the rights and well-being of seafarers, including the establishment in April 2020 of the Seafarer Crisis Action Team by the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization in order to, inter alia, monitor developments, coordinate efforts, communicate with all relevant stakeholders and provide targeted support in seafarers' individual cases and particularly urgent situations regarding crew changes, repatriation, access to medical care and/or abandonment,

Conscious that the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation,

1. *Expresses its gratitude and support* to all front-line health-care workers, medical professionals, scientists and researchers, as well as essential workers around the world, who are working under difficult and challenging circumstances to deal with the pandemic;

2. *Calls upon* the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, to work with all relevant actors in order to mobilize a coordinated global response to the pandemic and its adverse social, economic and financial impact on all societies;

¹ Resolution 70/1.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2952, No. 51299.

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

4. *Encourages* Governments and relevant stakeholders to implement the protocols to ensure safe ship crew changes and travel during the COVID-19 pandemic as approved by the International Maritime Organization Maritime Safety Committee at its 102nd session, allowing stranded seafarers to be repatriated and others to join ships, taking into account the essential preventive measures taken by port States against COVID-19;

5. *Calls upon* Governments to promptly implement relevant measures designed to facilitate maritime crew changes, including by enabling embarkment and disembarkment and expediting travel and repatriation efforts as well as ensuring access to medical care;

6. *Calls upon* international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including relevant workers and employers organizations, to support Governments, upon their request, in the design and implementation of their responses and policies aimed at ensuring the integrity and increasing the resilience of global supply chains, decent working and living conditions and human rights of seafarers;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as well as other relevant entities of the United Nations system, to inform the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session through the International Maritime Organization report on the crew changes situation during the COVID-19 pandemic based on the work of the Seafarer Crisis Action Team and through a dedicated section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development *Review of Maritime Transport*.



Statement by

**H.E. Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia**

**The 32nd Plenary meeting of the General Assembly on Agenda item 128 (a):
“Strengthening of the United Nations system”**

**Joint debate and action on draft resolution A/75/L.37 on
“International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a
result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains”**

New York, 1st December 2020

Mr. President,

I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.37, entitled “International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains”.

The COVID-19 crisis has led to unprecedented challenges to the global economy. Nevertheless, the shipping industry continues to serve as the backbone of the international economy and global supply chain, transporting more than 80% of world trade.

It also plays an important role in ensuring the delivery of vital medical supplies, food and basic goods that are critical for COVID-19 response and recovery.

Behind this critical sector are two million seafarers who have shown their dedication and professionalism during this crisis, ensuring that world trade and logistics continue to move properly. Their work and commitment largely go unnoticed.

Unfortunately, seafarers continue to face significant challenges because of the pandemic. The travel restrictions have generated difficulties for crew changes, and prevent the seafarers from embarkation and disembarkation. As a result, hundreds of thousands are reported to be stranded at sea for months.

Mr. President,

Since the beginning of this pandemic, the United Nations General Assembly has recognized the role of essential workers around the world who have committed themselves and are risking their lives to protect the health, safety, and well-being of others.

In a real sense, seafarers are in that group.

In this crisis, we need to show our attention, commitment and support to these invisible heroes, who are working under difficult and challenging circumstances.

In this regard, the draft resolution urges Member States to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers.

It also calls upon governments to implement relevant measures to facilitate maritime crew changes, including by enabling embarkment and disembarkment, expediting travel and repatriation efforts, and ensuring access to medical care.

To sum up, the draft requests governments as well as international organizations and relevant stakeholders to provide the necessary attention and concrete action to ensure the well-being of seafarers.

Mr. President,

The draft resolution has been prepared through continuous engagement in an open and transparent manner.

I would like to thank all the countries that co-sponsored and supported the initiative, as well as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), for their commitment and assistance during the consultations.

We hope that this initiative will be one more step to enhancing our efforts to address the challenges confronting seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to support global supply chains.

In conclusion, I wish to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of all co-sponsor States, our sincere appreciation to all Member States of the United Nations for their constructive participation and flexibility on the draft resolution throughout the process.

I thank you, **Mr. President,**

Words: 469
