

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE ON THE DAY OF THE SEAFARER

25 June 2020

Seafarers are among the world's unsung heroes.

The International Day of the Seafarer is a time to honour the world's two million seafarers whose dedication and professionalism keep the vast majority of world trade moving safely, delivering vital goods – including food, fuel and medical supplies.

Seafarers have continued to provide this essential service under the unprecedented and difficult conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even in the best of times, seafarers work for long periods away from home, their contributions largely unheralded. Yet in recent months, their burdens have grown exponentially with COVID-related travel restrictions that have prevented hundreds of thousands of seafarers from leaving ships. Fatigued and weary, their time at sea has been extended months beyond the standards stipulated in international conventions. This is an unsustainable humanitarian crisis.

This year, more than ever, all countries in the world must honour our seafarers by recognizing them as key workers and providing the necessary travel assistance to ensure safe crew changeovers and repatriations.

United Nations agencies — including the International Maritime Organization and the International Labour Organization — along with the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Transport Workers Federation — have developed protocols to do just that. I renew my call on all governments to urgently implement these protocols.

Without seafarers, the world's economy could not function. On this Day, let us all salute seafarers everywhere for their work and do everything possible to support them as we navigate the challenges of this pandemic together.