

RESOLUTION MSC.490(103) (adopted 14 May 2021)  
RECOMMENDED ACTION TO PRIORITIZE COVID-19 VACCINATION OF SEAFARERS

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**ANNEX 15**

**RESOLUTION MSC.490(103)  
(adopted 14 May 2021)**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION TO PRIORITIZE COVID-19 VACCINATION OF SEAFARERS**

THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE,

RECALLING Article 28(b) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Committee,

RECALLING ALSO that the Council, 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,

RECALLING FURTHER the statement adopted by Council, at its thirty-second extraordinary session, on recognition of the importance of the flow of trade by sea during the COVID-19 pandemic,

RECALLING that, at its second extraordinary session, it adopted resolution MSC.473(ES.2) on *Recommended action to facilitate ship crew change, access to medical care and seafarer travel during the COVID-19 pandemic*,

RECALLING ALSO that, at its 102nd session, it approved a circular containing the *Industry recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic* (MSC.1/Circ.1636), recognizing the importance of the protocols and inviting Member States and relevant stakeholders to consider them and take them into account,

NOTING resolution A/RES/75/17 on *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,

NOTING ALSO 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 Organization on 8 December 2020,

NOTING FURTHER the *Resolution concerning the implementation and practical application of the MLC, 2006, during the COVID-19 pandemic*, and the *Resolution concerning COVID-19 vaccination for seafarers*, adopted by the ILO Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006) on 23 April 2021,<sup>1</sup>

REAFFIRMING the unique and essential work of seafarers for international shipping and for the world, contributing to the uninterrupted transportation of vital medical supplies, food and other basic necessities during the COVID-19 pandemic,

NOTING the Joint Statement of 25 March 2021 issued by ICAO, ILO, IMO, WHO and IOM (Circular Letter No.4204/Add.38), urging all United Nations Member States to prioritize seafarers and aircrew in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes, to protect them through vaccination as soon as possible and to facilitate their safe movement across borders,

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/events/WCMS\\_679152/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/events/WCMS_679152/lang--en/index.htm)

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NOTING ALSO the *Statement on the seventh meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*,<sup>2</sup> recommending IHR States Parties to prioritize vaccination for seafarers and aircrews in line with the aforementioned Joint Statement,

NOTING FURTHER that, given the limited period of time ships are in port, single dose COVID-19 vaccines for seafarers would be preferable,

BEING CONSCIOUS of the limited and highly uneven access to COVID-19 vaccines around the world,

BEING ALSO CONSCIOUS of the need to protect seafarers through vaccination, as soon as possible, to facilitate their safe movement across borders,

BEING CONSCIOUS of the importance of cooperation among Member States,

NOTING that the UN Crisis Management Team for COVID-19, under the leadership of WHO, recognized that all countries should consider seafarers for essential allocation of vaccines,

BEING AWARE OF the possibility that countries may introduce requirements for proof of COVID-19 vaccination for international travel of seafarers as a condition of entry, notwithstanding WHO's recommendations,<sup>3</sup>

1 RECOMMENDS that Member States and relevant national authorities:

- .1 prioritize their seafarers, as far as practicable, in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes, noting the advice of the WHO SAGE Roadmap<sup>4</sup> for prioritizing the use of COVID-19 vaccines in the context of limited supply published in November 2020. Proper consideration of extending COVID-19 vaccines to seafarers of other nationalities is also recommended, taking into account their national vaccines supply;
- .2 consider exempting seafarers from any national policy requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination as a condition for entry, taking into account that seafarers should be designated as "key workers", as they travel across borders frequently;
- .3 develop appropriate plans, where feasible, to provide necessary infrastructure and facilities to support COVID-19 vaccination of seafarers;

2 INVITES Member States, international organizations, shipping companies and other stakeholders to inform seafarers about the safety and possible benefits of the COVID-19 vaccination, bearing in mind that taking the vaccination is a decision made on an individual basis;

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.who.int/news/item/19-04-2021-statement-on-the-seventh-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-pandemic](https://www.who.int/news/item/19-04-2021-statement-on-the-seventh-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-pandemic)

<sup>3</sup> Statement on the sixth meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: [https://www.who.int/news/item/15-01-2021-statement-on-the-sixth-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-pandemic](https://www.who.int/news/item/15-01-2021-statement-on-the-sixth-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-pandemic)

<sup>4</sup> WHO SAGE Roadmap For Prioritizing Uses Of COVID-19 Vaccines In The Context Of Limited Supply: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/who-sage-roadmap-for-prioritizing-uses-of-covid-19-vaccines-in-the-context-of-limited-supply>

3 REQUESTS Member States and international organizations to bring this resolution to the attention of all parties concerned.

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