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Circular Letter No.4221/Add.3
24 April 2020

To: All IMO Members
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the People's Republic of China**

The Government of the People's Republic of China has sent the attached communication, dated 20 April 2020, with the request that it is circulated by the Organization.

中华人民共和国交通运输部

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

国际海事组织秘书长

林基泽先生

尊敬的林基泽秘书长，

新冠肺炎疫情发生以来，中方秉持人类命运共同体理念，积极分享中国抗疫经验，与国际社会团结应对疫情对国际航运带来的挑战。此前，中方先后通报了《船舶船员新冠肺炎疫情防控操作指南（V1.0）》和《船舶船员新冠肺炎疫情防控操作指南（V2.0）》，由IMO分别在3月18日和4月7日以4221号和4221/add1号通函信发布。

近日，中方结合全球疫情发展最新形势和对船舶疫情处置的实践经验，制定了《新冠肺炎疫情防控期间针对患病海员紧急救助处置指南（V1.0）》，并在该指南指导下成功处置“古杰多马士基”轮船员感染新冠肺炎事件。在保障船员健康和船舶安全前提下，使该轮得以及时复航。

建议将《新冠肺炎疫情防控期间针对患病海员紧急救助处置指南（V1.0）》分享给IMO各成员国、政府间和非政府间组织为荷。

中华人民共和国交通运输部副部长



（刘小明）

二〇二〇年四月二十日

Courtesy Translation

H.E. Mr. Kitack Lim
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization

20 April, 2020

Your Excellency,

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, guided by the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China has been more than ready to share our good practices and has worked with the international community to overcome the challenges brought on to the shipping industry. The above mentioned efforts were presented in the form of Circular Letters No. 4221 and No. 4221/add.1 issued by IMO on 18 March and 7 April 2020 respectively: the *Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 on Board (V 1.0)* and *Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 on Board (V 2.0)*.

Recently, in light of the latest development of the global pandemic and onboard experience, China has developed a *Guidance on How to Handle and Offer Urgent Assistance to Seafarers in Case of Sickness during the pandemic of COVID-19 (V1.0)*, and successfully handled the cases of seafarers on board MV “GJERTRUD MAERSK” infected the COVID-19.

I would be grateful if you would circulate this Guidance to all Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Yours sincerely,

Liu Xiaoming
Vice Minister
Ministry of Transport
The People’s Republic of China

Guidance on how to handle and offer urgent assistance to seafarers in case of sickness or injury during the pandemic of COVID-19 (V1.0)

This document makes reference to the *International Medical Guide for Ships* issued by ILO/IMO/WHO, the *Maritime Labour Convention, 2006*, the *International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979*, and the *IAMSAR Manual*, etc., aiming to provide guidance on how to safely and effectively handle the cases of seafarer being sick or injured during the pandemic of COVID-19.

China MSA will review and update this guidance depending on the development of the pandemic.

1. Whom and how to report the cases of seafarers on board being sick or injured?

1.1 The ship having such cases on board should report the situation to the shipping company immediately. Meanwhile, telemedicine service can be applied according to established procedures and relevant international guidance. The shipping company should timely report it to the flag state administration.

1.2 When seafarers need urgent shore assistance, the ship can seek help from the administration of the coastal state or port state. When necessary, locale embassy, consulate or relevant organizations from the flag state can be contacted for assistance. The specific needs, the gravity of the situation, the availability of local medical resources and international obligations should be taken into account when organizing the urgent medical treatment for the sick or the injured seafarers. The shipping company, as the responsible entity, is liable to provide necessary resources guarantee.

1.3 When any seafarers of non-flag nationals on board getting sick or injured, the shipping company should timely notify the recruitment and placement agency who should go-ahead to report it to the embassy, consulate or relevant organizations from the labour supplying state and request assistance, and timely report the situation to the administration of the labour supplying state.

2. What to do by the flag state administration?

2.1 Flag state administration should urge the shipping company to follow the emergency response procedures and provide the necessary guarantee for the urgent assistance needed by the sick or injured seafarers.

2.2 When confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases exist onboard and the coastal or port state refuses to offer assistance, the flag state administration should pursue the diplomatic channel to urge the coastal or port state administration to arrange the seafarers for urgent medical treatment at a nearby location.

2.3 When any seafarer of non-flag national getting sick or injured, the flag state administration should communicate the situation to the locale embassy, consulate or relevant organizations from the seafarer supplying state.

3. What to do by the coastal or port state administration?

3.1 When the ship seeks urgent assistance for sick or injured seafarers, no matter there is any COVID-19 case on board or not, the coastal or port state administration should make the utmost efforts to offer the medical assistance while taking the prevention and control measures. When necessary, the seafarers should be transferred to shore medical facilities nearby the port to ensure timely medical treatment for the sick or injured seafarers.

3.2 The coastal or port state maritime search and rescue facilities or relevant authorities should make themselves aware of the sick or injured seafarers' information and health condition of all other seafarers on board, coordinates the assistance rendering operation according to the emergency response procedures, timely circulate the situation to local quarantine and immigration department(s), and cooperate with relevant departments to verify whether the COVID-19 cases exist or not on board, for the benefit of safe and reasonable measures to be taken if the existence of the confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases is established.

3.3 The coastal or port state administration should keep the flag state administration or embassy/consulate/relevant organizations from the seafarer supplying state informed of the situation.

4. What to do by the administration of seafarer supplying state?

4.1 The administration of seafarer supplying state should urge the recruitment and placement agency to follow the emergency response procedures and provide the necessary guarantee for the urgent assistance needed by the sick or injured seafarers, and timely update the situation development.

4.2 When necessary, the administration of seafarer supply state may contact and seek the coordination from the flag state administration.
