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Circular Letter No.4304/Add.1
19 June 2020

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

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the United Mexican States**

The Government of the United Mexican States has sent the attached communication, dated 18 June 2020, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.



MÉXICO
EMBAJADA EN REINO UNIDO

Permanent Representation to the
International Maritime Organization

GBR1079

London, 18 June 2020.

Mr. Kitack Lim
General Secretary
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR

REF: Measures implemented by Mexican authorities against Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of Maritime Transportation.

Dear Secretary General,

Further to my previous communication No. GBR1019 (10-06-2020), please find attached herewith the English version of the document entitled "Measures implemented by Mexican authorities against Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of maritime transportation" prepared by the Mexican Navy -National Maritime Authority.

I would appreciate that this letter and its annex be disseminated as a circular letter in order to inform all IMO Member States and related maritime organizations the actions undertaken by the Mexican Maritime Authority to contain and mitigate the effects of the pandemic in the shipping sector and reduce unnecessary interference to traffic and international maritime trade.

I take this opportunity to reiterate to you, Mr. Secretary General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ambassador Aureny Aguirre O.Sunza
Chargé d'Affaires, *a.i.*
Deputy Permanent Representative to the
International Maritime Organization



EMBAJADA DE MEXICO
REINO UNIDO





COURTESY TRANSLATION

SECRETARIAT OF THE NAVY
NATIONAL MARITIME AUTHORITY

MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY MEXICAN AUTHORITIES AGAINST COVID-19 PANDEMIC, IN
TERMS OF MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

Last update: June 2th, 2020.

Introduction:

1. The Mexican government, facing the worldwide prevailing health emergency generated by the SARS-COV2 virus outbreak (COVID-19), and in order to mitigate its negative effects in the maritime transportation sector and in accordance with the Circulars issued by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which include recommendations issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) aimed at reducing the virus spreading and implement accurate health measures to reduce to the minimum the unnecessary interferences to international maritime traffic and commerce, has taken several steps.
2. In the same order, the National Health Authority issued an Agreement that establishes the preventive measures to be implemented for mitigating and controlling health risks that COVID-19 represents. The Agreement includes the adopted measures aimed at maritime transportation, maritime navigation, as well as the establishment of National Healthy Distance, which includes:
 - 2.1 Suspension of not-necessary activities,
 - 2.2 Rescheduling of mass-people-gathering events,
 - 2.3 Protección and care for the elderly people and who suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes, lung diseases, and cancer; as well as for pregnant or breastfeeding women,
 - 2.4 Establishing prevention measures:
 - 2.4.1 The use of hand sanitizer,
 - 2.4.2 Increase the frequency of hand wash,
 - 2.4.3 While coughing and sneezing cover the nose and mouth using the inner angle of the elbow,
 - 2.4.4 The increase of cleaning measures in all areas,





- 2.4.5 Airing out areas and letting sunshine in,
 - 2.4.6 Asking people who present respiratory disease symptoms to stay at home,
 - 2.4.7 Respect Health Social distancing rules,
 - 2.4.8 Implement body temperature taking at office entrances.
3. In this respect, the National Maritime Authority adheres itself to the taken actions by other member States of the Organization as to inform the maritime community about the taken measures to prevent, mitigate and stop the spreading of COVID-19.

Actions taken by the National Maritime Authority of the Mexican United States

- 4. In attention to the IMO Circular Letter 4204, on January 23rd, was issued the Circular 0021/DCPC/137/2020 was sent to the 98 Port Captaincies along the Mexican territory to spread, among the maritime community, the epidemiological warning issued by the National Committee for Epidemiological Monitoring (CONAVE, as per its acronym in Spanish).
- 5. In attention to the IMO Circular Letter 4204 Add.1, on March 23rd, 2020, was issued the Circular COVID-03/2020 to notify —through the Port Captaincies — the permits holders of maritime passenger transport and nautical tourism that in order to continue with port operations, high seas and coastal navigations would remain active at national ports. Therefore, personnel from the Port Captaincies and Maritime Affairs Unit (UNICAPAM, as per its acronym in Spanish) of this Secretariat has participated, in coordination with the three governmental levels in 12 events: Cozumel (03), Puerto Vallarta (01), La Paz (02), and Ensenada (03) in order to provide a humanitarian bridges to: disembarking passengers and crew who may need repatriation; to people with COVID-19 symptoms or to transfer passengers.
- 6. In attention to the IMO Circular Letter 4204Add. 2, on March 18th 2020, the Circular COVID.-SNCT / 013 / 076.- 2020 was issued to the Port Captaincies in order to reinforce preventive measures to forestall the spread of COVID-19 virus in seaborne trade ports, carrying out a Protocol of Action to implement a Free Practique based on the Guidelines for epidemiological surveillance by the Secretariat of Health in Mexico, accounting for the reception of more than 4,854 ships in high seas without delay from January 1st to June 2nd of this year.
- 7. In attention to the IMO Circular Letter 4204 Add. 3, on March 11th, 2020, the circular SNTC/011/062/20 was issued giving instructions to the aforementioned Port Captaincies for seaborne trade, so that in coordination with the Local International Health Authorities, ordain a ship in quarantine and, if necessary, evacuate infected people.
- 8. On the same date, Circular 063/DCPC/389/2020 was issued, giving instructions to the Port Captaincies to implement the Medical Evacuation procedure (MEDEVAC), for the management of people with probable exposure to COVID-19. The following actions were reported:





- 8.1 The Port Captaincy of Progreso informed the disembarkment of 03 people who tested positive for COVID-19, from a United Kingdom flag cruiser.
- 8.2 Three (03) national vessels (01 in Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz and 02 in Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche) were declared in quarantine by International Health. The information was provided by the corresponding Captains of the Ports.
9. In attention to the IMO Circular Letter 4204 Add. 4, on March 18th. 2020, Circular SNCT/013/076/2020 was issued to the Port Captaincies for seaborne trade, giving instructions to reinforce preventive measures in order to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus upon the arrival of ships. The actions performed are as follows:
 - 9.1 UNICAPAM receives a daily report from the Port Captaincies at 08:00 hrs and a 17:00 hours with information about the Free Practique.
 - 9.2 The Master of the vessel is responsible for the compliance of the dispositions on board, encouraging the implementation of the necessary measures for minimizing the risk of spread of COVID-19 for the crew and the passengers.
10. Within the actions carried out by this National Maritime Authority, pursuant to IMO Circular Letter 4204, Add. 5, Rev. I, the following are highlighted:
 - 10.1 The Secretarial Agreement 166/2020 was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF, as per its acronym in Spanish), which postpones up to June 1st, 2020 the validity of the types A, C and D Certificates of Competence for Seafarers with expiration dates in March and April of this year.
 - 10.2 On May 29th, 2020, the Circular UNICAPAM.- COVID.- 010/2020 was issued, where the Port Captaincies and the general public are informed about the postponement up to September 20th, of type B Certificate of Competence with a due date on March, April, May and June 1st-14th of this year.
11. In attention to the IMO Circular Letter 4204, Add. 6, on April 4th, 2020, the DIGACAP-COVID Circular - 19/2020 was communicated the "Criteria to be used, due to COVID-19 Sanitary contingency, in the exercise of the Maritime Authority for the authorization of arrivals and departures in the Mexican maritime ports". This communication was sent to the nationwide Port Captaincies, so that passenger and cargo transport services were considered as essential activities to be kept in function; and instructing that the replacement crews would be carried out in accordance with the Contingency Policies applicable to the governments of the 17 Coastal States.
12. In accordance with IMO Circular Letter 4204 Add. 7, Secretarial Agreement 166/2020 published in the DOF, it is informed to the community in general that the validity of all the issued certificates by the National Maritime Authority has a 60 calendar-day deferral starting on June 1st. Among these certificates are those for the construction of ships. In case of the existence of any request regarding to ships at shipyards will be dealt at single window in UNICAPAM and the Port Captaincies in the areas of proceedings management.





Actions taken by the General Directorate of Merchant Marine, agency of the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation (SCT)

13. In accordance with the provisions issued by the National Maritime Authority, various instructions have been issued within the scope and attributions of the General Directorate of the Merchant Marine, in order to avoid delays in national and international maritime traffic.
14. In this sense, it was published in the DOF the “Agreement for the identification of essential activities to the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation, within the realm of the sanitary emergency provoked by **SARS-CoV2**”, containing the following considerations in terms of port operation:
 - 14.1 The operation of arrival and departure of ships, loading and unloading of goods and passengers unnecessary for the continuity in the provision of supplies, as well as the minimum/basic required port services for the attention of ships and their crew, shall observe the established healthy protocols.
 - 14.2 The pilotage and those activities inherent to the operation of ships in port, that require their immediate attention by the Merchant Marine Services Offices.
 - 14.3 The authorization of maneuvers to amend and anchor vessels in ports by the Merchant Marine Services Offices.
15. Regarding maritime transport, various actions have been taken as following:
 - 15.1 Granting of permissions and authorizations to naval vessels or devices that provide services related to the transportation of passengers and cargo, as well as the production and distribution of gas, oil, gasoline or turbine fuel.
 - 15.2 Processing and granting of authorizations to act as a general shipping agent or a ship consignee.
 - 15.3 Humanitarian bridges.
 - 15.4 The essential port constructions to ensure the proper the good functioning of the ports.
16. Regarding to the validity of the Certificates of Competence (COC), the Certificates of Special Competence and the endorsement of valid titles, it was established a deferral for a period of three-months.
17. As well, the holders of the Special Competence Certificates, Competence Titles and the Endorsement of Titles issued or granted, may continue performing their functions as personnel of the Mexican Merchant Marine, even if their Comprehensive Psychophysical Aptitude Certificate could be expired.





18. Disinfection, cleaning and prophylactic measures have been reinforced in ferries and maritime terminals in compliance with the guidelines issued by the Mexican Sanitary Authority, the IMO and the WHO with the full acceptance of operators and passengers.
19. The implementation of institutional measures has led to the compliance with the guidelines issued by the WHO and the IMO in order to provide facilities to ships which want to visit our ports, as well as want disembark passengers and crew in a safe environment under international safety protocols.
20. In accordance with the last point, it has been allowed the stay in anchor and berth zones to the tourist cruises that are no longer operating, in order to facilitate ships supplies for their way back to the origin port.
21. Since cargo ships are operated by crews of maximum 25 seafarers, shipping lines cancellations have not taken place. In order to enter national ports and carry out loading and unloading of goods, the corresponding sanitary authority at port shall provide them in advance with the corresponding authorization.
22. However, basic and extraordinary recommendations have been made for seafarers who come from other country or navigate in direction to the ports that have been affected by coronavirus, in order to give them accurate, timely and updated information aimed at restraining the propagation, the exposition and the contagion of COVID-19.
23. The sanitary authority spread the Protocol and the Preventive and Control Measures at the airports, maritime ports and border crossings in land in order to detect suspicious cases of COVID-19, and thus guarantee public safety and prevent the propagation of SARS-COV2 along port localities.
24. The elaboration of a model protocol used for operating a humanitarian bridge ship-airport to be used at ports nationwide, counted on the close collaboration of authorities from the three governmental levels and various agencies from the Federal Public Administration.
25. It was created a Protocol of action to pilots to be observed in order to make piloting maneuvers at national ports easier and contributes the establishment of safety and welfare.
26. It was established the suspension of face-to-face sessions and teaching activities at Merchant Nautical Schools in Mazatlán, Veracruz and Tampico; as well as at the Nautical Educational Center in Campeche and came into effect from March 18th until further notice. Finally, in order to avoid academic lag, it was implemented the use of digital and electronic resources that allow the continuity of the online training and the education of seafarers.

Mexico City, June 5th, 2020.

ADMIRAL
SECRETARY OF THE MEXICAN NAVY
JOSÉ RAFAEL OJEDA DURÁN

