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Agenda item 124

Strengthening of the United Nations system

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

Note by the Secretariat

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its resolution [75/17](#), adopted on 1 December 2020, requested 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 provide information to the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session through the International Maritime Organization report on the crew changes situation during the coronavirus disease (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*.
2. Pursuant to that request, the Secretariat has the honour to refer the General Assembly to chapter 5 of the *Review of Maritime Transport 2021* (UNCTAD/RMT/2021).¹
3. The report of the International Maritime Organization in response to General Assembly resolution [75/17](#) is presented as annex I to the present note.

¹ Available at https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/rmt2021ch5_en.pdf.



Annex I

Report of the International Maritime Organization submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/17

Crew changes situation during the COVID-19 pandemic based on the work of the Seafarer Crisis Action Team of the International Maritime Organization

Introduction

1. In April 2020, in response to growing concern over the crew change crisis that developed as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in particular the national travel restrictions introduced globally to prevent the spread of the virus, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Kitack Lim, established the Seafarer Crisis Action Team in the IMO Secretariat to address matters related to the crisis. The pandemic and the resultant restrictions severely affected the ability of shipowners to change crews and, consequently, put seafarers around the world in a precarious situation. During 2020, up to 400,000 seafarers on board ships were affected worldwide, not being able to leave ships and be repatriated to their home countries at the end of their contracts, while a similar number were waiting to join ships, unable to work in the meantime. Travel restrictions introduced by most countries for ports and airports meant that crews could not be exchanged and, in addition, getting urgent medical assistance for seafarers on board ships became and remains a major problem. Furthermore, many seafarers had their contracts unilaterally terminated or were quarantined on board ships or onshore, often for weeks, without getting paid.

2. In April 2021, the number of seafarers requiring repatriation after completing their contracts decreased to around 200,000, with a similar number waiting to join ships as part of crew change, but the number has been increasing owing to the impact of new COVID-19 variants, such as the Delta variant. It can be expected that there will still be a long way to go before the return to normal crew change regimes. During 2021, the Seafarer Crisis Action Team has collaborated with external stakeholders on issues related to the vaccination of seafarers. In addition, COVID-19-related cases of seafarer abandonment have increased dramatically, further exacerbating the crew change crisis.

Overview

3. The Seafarer Crisis Action Team comprises staff members from the Maritime Safety Division, the Legal Affairs and External Relations Division and the Technical Cooperation Division of IMO. It is very active, and all members carry out the Team's work in addition to their regular responsibilities. The Team is temporarily supported by a consultant funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Team continuously coordinates its work and cooperates with other United Nations organizations, in particular the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization, as well as a wide variety of industry organizations and social partners, such as the International Chamber of Shipping, the International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Maritime Health Association.

Major areas of activity

4. Over time, as described below and in annex III to the present document, the activities of the Seafarer Crisis Action Team have evolved and undergone a transition to four major areas, as follows:

(a) **Individual cases.** To date, the Team has been involved in approximately 500 individual cases and is dealing directly with several thousands of seafarers. Most cases concern individuals or small groups of 3 to 15 seafarers, while other cases involve cruise ships with 250 to 500 seafarers;¹

(b) **Policy development.** The Team is in charge of the development and communication of policies aimed at providing solutions to the crew change crisis, as well as of addressing issues such as the access of seafarers to medical care and vaccination. Examples of such policies can be found in the circular letter No. 4204 series (see annex II), available on the IMO document distribution platform (IMODOCS) and on the IMO website. The Team has developed resolutions and circulars addressing crew change issues and the vaccination of seafarers for consideration and adoption/approval by the Committee (MSC.473(ES.2), MSC.490(103) and MSC.1/Circ.1636). Likewise, the Team advised Member States during the development of General Assembly resolution [A/75/17](#), adopted on 1 December 2020, in which the Assembly called for the designation of seafarers as key workers and the implementation of the industry-recommended framework of crew change protocols (MSC.1/Circ.1636/Rev.1). In addition, ILO Governing Body340/resolution (rev.2) on maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic, adopted on 8 December 2020, is aimed at addressing the dire situation of seafarers trapped on board ships because of the pandemic. Furthermore, the Team coordinates with ILO, the International Civil Aviation Organization and WHO to urge Member States to prioritize seafarers in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes;

(c) **Bilateral and multilateral engagement.** To date, the Secretary-General of IMO and Team members, supported by industry partners, have held more than 20 bilateral meetings to address country-specific matters regarding the crew change crisis, including to learn of best practices in countries where crew changes occur. IMO is conducting a series of regional webinars to identify solutions and disseminate best practices for crew change. In particular, a regional meeting to discuss options for creating regional hubs in the Pacific to aid in the repatriation of stranded seafarers was held in February 2021;

(d) **Outreach.** Ensuring that key national decision makers, in particular transport and health officials, are aware of the implications of and the human suffering caused by the crew change crisis is a key facet of the work of the Team. Team members have participated in more than 100 webinars to communicate the issues and the work of the Organization regarding the crew change crisis. Furthermore, Team members have provided information and given interviews to a broad range of media outlets, including many of the major global networks (see annex IV).

Activities undertaken by the International Labour Organization

5. In addition to the above-mentioned joint activities, ILO continued to engage in a number of initiatives to support governments, seafarers and shipowners in the context of the ongoing crisis. In particular, ILO Governing Body 340/resolution (rev.2) was aimed at addressing the dire situation of seafarers trapped on board ships because of the pandemic. Furthermore, in December 2020, the Committee of Experts

¹ Examples of Team intervention in specific cases can be found at www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Support-forseafarers-during-COVID-19.aspx.

on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations of ILO adopted the general observation on matters arising from the application of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended during the COVID-19 pandemic.² The general observation, which took into account observations submitted by the International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Chamber of Shipping, information provided by governments and individual complaints received by the Seafarer Crisis Action Team, contains an urgent call to restore the protection of seafarers' rights. In February 2021, ILO published a revised version of its information note on maritime labour issues and COVID-19.³ It has continued to update the information available on its website dedicated to COVID-19 and maritime shipping and fishing.⁴ At the request of the International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Chamber of Shipping, ILO has addressed a number of urgent communications to Member States drawing attention to their obligations under the Convention. In April 2021, the Special Tripartite Committee established under the Convention adopted two resolutions, one on action to be taken in relation to the implementation and practical application of the Convention during the COVID-19 pandemic⁵ and another on COVID-19 vaccination for seafarers.⁶ Following a request by the Special Tripartite Committee, the issue of seafarers and COVID-19 has been included on the agenda of the Executive Committee to discuss further action in order to ensure full compliance with the Convention.

Coordinated strategy meetings

6. Seafarer Crisis Action Team members participate in the biweekly meetings of the Coordinated Strategy Group on COVID-19, which is led by ILO and IMO, together with representatives of the International Transport Workers' Federation, the International Chamber of Shipping and United Nations Global Compact, with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and WHO frequently attending. Team members also participate in the biweekly meetings of the Corona Welfare and Strategy Group, which is led by the industry, including the International Chamber of Shipping, the International Transport Workers' Federation, the International Christian Maritime Association and other non-governmental organizations. Both groups were established in April 2020, the Coordinated Strategy Group on COVID-19 to coordinate strategic actions in the United Nations system regarding the crew change crisis and related issues and the Corona Welfare and Strategy Group to address matters related to seafarers, shipping and COVID-19. The meetings of the groups have continued.

² See www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/WCMS_764384/lang--en/index.htm.

³ See www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/WCMS_741024/lang--en/index.htm.

⁴ See www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_742026/lang--en/index.htm.

⁵ See www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/special-tripartite-committee/WCMS_782881/lang--en/index.htm.

⁶ See www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/special-tripartite-committee/WCMS_782880/lang--en/index.htm.

Annex II

Joint statements, guidance and other information issued through the circular letter No. 4204 series of the International Maritime Organization

<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4204 (IMO, WHO)	31 January 2020	Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)	WHO guidance on precautions to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships.
4204/Add.1 (IMO, ILO)	19 February 2020	COVID-19 – Implementation and enforcement of relevant IMO instruments	Avoiding unnecessary restrictions on or delay of port entry to ships, persons and property on board.
4204/Add.2 (IMO, WHO)	21 February 2020	Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak	Health measures introduced to minimize interference with international traffic and trade.
4204/Add.3 (WHO)	2 March 2020	Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/ outbreak on board ships prepared by WHO	WHO guidance on managing cases and outbreaks on board ships.
4204/Add.4/Rev.3 (ICS)	16 July 2021	ICS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers	ICS guidance for ship operators on protecting the health of seafarers.
4204/Add.5/Rev.1 (IMO)	2 April 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers and fishing vessel personnel	Extension of certificates, including medical certificates, and endorsements under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended, and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995.
4204/Add.6 (ICS and others)	30 March 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Preliminary list of recommendations for Governments and relevant national authorities on the facilitation of maritime trade during the COVID-19 pandemic	Industry recommendations on the facilitation of maritime trade. Refers to the statement from the Group of 20 leaders' summit on addressing international trade disruptions and the statement from the Secretary-General on the flow of commerce by sea.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4204/Add.7 (IMO)	3 April 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance concerning unforeseen delays in the delivery of ships	Invites Member States to consider the application of two unified interpretations (MSC-MEPC.5/Circ.8 and MSC.1/Circ.1247) to ships whose delivery is delayed beyond 1 July 2020.
4204/Add.8 (PSC agreements)	14 April 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Video meeting with Port State Control (PSC) regimes	Promotes harmonized action, assistance and a pragmatic approach with respect to PSC inspections. Includes a joint statement by the 10 global PSC regimes.
4204/Add.9 (IMO, WCO)	16 April 2020	Joint Statement IMO-WCO on the integrity of the global supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic	Customs administrations and port State authorities are urged to establish a coordinated and proactive approach.
4204/Add.10 (IMO, WHO, ILO)	22 April 2020	Joint Statement IMO-WHO-ILO on medical certificates of seafarers, ship sanitation certificates and medical care of seafarers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic	Requirements/recommendations concerning medical care and extensions of the medical certificates of seafarers. Exempts from national restrictions on movement the inspectors and key personnel responsible for ship inspections and the issuance of ship sanitation certificates.
4204/Add.11 (EC)	24 April 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – EC Guidelines on protection of health, repatriation and travel arrangements for seafarers, passengers and other persons on board ships	Repatriation, changeover of crews (green lanes), designated ports for crew changes, sanitary recommendations and ship supplies and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) reporting for ships approaching European Union ports.
4204/Add.12/Rev.1 (PAR, Singapore)	29 May 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Declaration by Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global COVID-19 situation	Commitment to working together to keep the global supply chain going, to facilitating closer coordination by establishing an open communication channel and to continuing to adopt best practices in line with national circumstances.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4204/Add.13 (IMCA and others)	5 May 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommendations for Governments and relevant national authorities on facilitating the movement of offshore energy sector personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic	Member States are encouraged to exercise a practical and pragmatic approach to the offshore energy sector workforce with regard to issues such as personnel changeovers, resupply, repairs, survey and certification. Offshore energy sector personnel are designated as key workers.
4204/Add.14/Rev.1 (ICS and others)	5 May 2020 6 October 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommended Framework of Protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic	Sets out general measures and procedures that should be implemented by Member States and all stakeholders concerned, and modified as appropriate, to facilitate safe ship crew changes during the pandemic. Superseded by MSC.1/Circ.1636.
4204/Add.15 (WHO)	6 May 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Personal protective equipment	Provides WHO information and guidance on the safe and effective use of personal protective equipment.
4204/Add.16 (ICS and others)	6 May 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – COVID-19-related guidelines for ensuring a safe shipboard interface between ship and shore-based personnel	Addresses the major concerns and expectations of ships' crews and shore-based personnel through the implementation of practical, risk-based measures to address COVID-19 risks for all personnel involved in the ship-shore interface.
4204/Add.17 (IPCSA)	21 May 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Preparing for post-COVID-19 operations: considerations and practicalities for port community systems, single window and other electronic exchange platforms	Key points for consideration by sea and airport community systems operators, single window operators, port and airport authorities and other electronic exchange platform operators when planning and preparing for recovery and normalization of operations.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4204/Add.18 (IMO, ICAO, ILO)	26 May 2020	Joint Statement IMO-ICAO-ILO on designation of seafarers, marine personnel, fishing vessel personnel, offshore energy sector personnel, aviation personnel, air cargo supply chain personnel and service provider personnel at airports and ports as key workers, and on facilitation of crew changes in ports and airports in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic	Addresses actions to facilitate crew changes in ports and airports in the context of COVID-19 and refers to relevant useful resource material of the three agencies.
4204/Add.19/Rev.3 (IMO, IACS, ILO)	8 February 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance for flag States regarding surveys and renewals of certificates during the COVID-19 pandemic	Provides guidance regarding the extension of statutory certificates beyond the limitations prescribed by IMO treaties.
4204/Add.20 (ICS and others)	5 June 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Accelerating digitalization of maritime trade and logistics – A call to action	Calls for intergovernmental collaboration to drive the acceleration of digitalization of maritime trade and logistics.
4204/Add.21 (IMO, UNCTAD)	8 June 2020	Joint statement IMO-UNCTAD – Call for collaborative action in support of keeping ships moving, ports open and cross-border trade flowing during the COVID-19 pandemic	Encourages Governments to take all measures necessary to keep ships moving, ports open and cross-border trade flowing.
4204/Add.22/Rev.2 (Singapore)	25 June 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Singapore Crew Change Guidebook	Provides guidance to the shipping community on how to effect crew change in Singapore.
4204/Add.23 (ICS and others)	2 July 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommendations for port and coastal States on the prompt disembarkation of seafarers for medical care ashore during the COVID-19 pandemic	Provides recommendations to the relevant authorities in port and coastal States on the prompt disembarkation of seafarers from ships to receive medical care ashore during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular when suspected or confirmed cases are involved.
4204/Add.24/Rev.1 (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)	9 September 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Outcome of the International Maritime Virtual Summit on Crew Changes organized by the United Kingdom	Reports on the International Maritime Summit on Crew Changes, held on 9 July 2020 to address the impact of COVID-19 on crew changes. Includes a joint statement issued.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4204/Add.25 (ICS, ITF)	24 July 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Outcome of surveys by ICS and ITF on health protection measures onboard ships in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic	Presents results of surveys on health protection measures introduced by companies on board their ships during the pandemic and derived recommendations.
4204/Add.26/Rev.1 (EMSA, ECDC)	19 May 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance on the gradual and safe resumption of operations of cruise ships in the European Union in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic	Provides guidance to facilitate the safe restart of operations of cruise ships in the European Union by recommending minimum measures expected to be implemented by all concerned.
4204/Add.27 (ICS, INTERTANKO, IMHA)	26 August 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Protocols to mitigate the risks of cases on board ships	Contains two tools to help ship operators to manage cases on board: a flow chart, to identify the process for a larger number of cases, and a polymerase chain reaction testing procedures matrix.
4204/Add.28 (WHO, IMO, ILO; ICS, IAPH, INTERTANKO; IMHA, ITF)	26 August 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – WHO guidance to promote public health measures on cargo ships and fishing vessels	Guidance for shipowners, seafarers, unions, associations and competent authorities for health and transport on protecting seafarers working on cargo ships and fishing vessels from transmission of COVID-19 and management of cases.
4204/Add.29 (IMO)	4 September 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Communication from the Secretary-General regarding the crew change crisis	Statement by the IMO Secretary-General on the crew change crisis.
4204/Add.30 (United Nations organizations)	11 September 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Joint Statement calling on all Governments to immediately recognize seafarers as key workers, and to take swift and effective action to eliminate obstacles to crew changes, so as to address the humanitarian crisis faced by the shipping sector, ensure maritime safety and facilitate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic	Statement on the crew change crisis by ILO, UNCTAD, IOM, FAO, OHCHR, ICAO, WHO, the United Nations Global Compact and IMO.
4204/Add.31 (United Nations organizations)	17 September 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Joint Statement on the contribution of international trade and supply chains to a sustainable socioeconomic recovery in COVID-19 times	Statement on sustainable socioeconomic recovery in post-COVID-19 times by UNCTAD, ICAO, ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and IMO.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4204/Add.32 (ICAO)	25 September 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – ICAO Harmonized guidance on facilitating passenger flights, including repatriation flights, using public health corridors during the COVID-19 pandemic	Provides a framework for harmonizing public health measures implemented by States to facilitate passenger and repatriation flights using public health corridors.
4204/Add.33 (IMO, UNWTO)	5 November 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Joint Statement IMO-UNWTO to support the safe resumption of cruise ship operations following the COVID-19 pandemic	Facilitation of the recovery of the cruise sector under safe conditions for the health of the crew, passengers and population of port States during the pandemic, including the designation of key workers.
4204/Add.34 (WHO)	19 November 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – WHO e-learning courses on “Promoting public health measures in response to COVID-19 on cargo ships and fishing vessels” and “Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases and outbreaks on board ships”	Distribution of two e-learning courses with guidance on promoting public health measures on cargo ships and fishing vessels.
4204/Add.35/Rev.7 (IMO)	20 May 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Designation of seafarers as key workers	List of Member States having notified IMO that they have designated seafarers (and other marine personnel, as appropriate) as key workers, updated regularly (to date, 60 Member States and 2 associate members).
4204/Add.36/Rev.1 (IMO, ILO)	23 December 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – “No crew change” clauses in charterparties	Expresses IMO and ILO concerns regarding “no crew change” clauses (Rev.1 includes the ILO Director General).
4204/Add.37 (PSC agreements)	23 December 2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Third video meeting for Port State Control (PSC) regimes on harmonized actions at the time of pandemic of COVID-19	Report on the third video meeting with nine PSC regimes, held on 18 December 2020, with a view to promoting harmonized action with respect to PSC inspections during the pandemic. Includes calls for unified solutions by representatives of memorandums of understanding.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>
4204/Add.38 (ILO, IOM, IMO, ICAO, WHO)	26 March 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Joint Statement calling on all Governments to prioritize COVID-19 vaccination for seafarers and aircrew	Urges all States Members of the United Nations 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.
4204/Add.39 (IMO)	26 April 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Communication from the Secretary-General regarding the crew change crisis	IMO Secretary-General statement regarding the current status of the crew change crisis, urging designation of seafarers as key workers and their prioritization for vaccination.
4204/Add.40 (United Nations)	10 May 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Due Diligence Tool to support seafarers' human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic	Tool developed by United Nations Global Compact, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ILO and IMO, intended to help businesses to uphold their responsibility to respect human rights during the COVID-19-related crew change crisis through urgent measures.
4204/Add.41 (ICS and others)	18 May 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Roadmap for vaccination of international seafarers	Procedures for a programme that can be implemented by all stakeholders concerned to facilitate safe ship crew vaccination.

Abbreviations: EC, European Commission; ECA, Economic Commission for Africa; ECDC, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; ECE, Economic Commission for Europe; ECLAC, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; EMSA, European Maritime Safety Agency; ESCAP, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; ESCWA, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; IACS, International Association of Classification Societies; IAPH, International Association of Ports and Harbors; ICAO, International Civil Aviation Organization; ICS, International Chamber of Shipping; ILO, International Labour Organization; IMCA, International Marine Contractors Association; IMHA, International Maritime Health Association; IMO, International Maritime Organization; INTERTANKO, International Association of Independent Tanker Owners; IOM, International Organization for Migration; IPCSA, International Port Community Systems Association; ITF, International Transport Workers' Federation; OHCHR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; PAR, Port Authorities Roundtable; PSC, Port State Control; UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNWTO, World Tourism Organization; WCO, World Customs Organization; WHO, World Health Organization.

Annex III

Overview of highlighted Seafarer Crisis Action Team activities

Ad hoc activities

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
April–May 2020	Development and refinement of Seafarer Crisis Action Team terms of reference, forging partnerships with key stakeholders (in particular, industry groups), initial case intake and resolution.
June–July 2020	Ministerial bilateral meetings with the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
Identification and approach of over 20 Member States in which seafarers encounter significant problems regarding crew changes and repatriation, and identification of best practices in Member States in which crew changes occur.	
26 June 2020	Day of the Seafarer webinar
Webinar “Seafarers are key workers: essential to shipping, essential to the world” in support of the IMO Day of the Seafarer 2020.	
September 2020	IMO Maritime Safety Committee resolution on crew change
In an extraordinary session, the Maritime Safety Committee-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.	
October 2020–present	Regional webinars
Regional webinars on challenges faced by seafarers and identification of best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Completed: Asia, West and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, the Arab States and the Mediterranean, Western Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Planned: East and South-East Asia and the Pacific Islands.	
November 2020	Formalization of crew change protocols
The IMO Maritime Safety Committee approved a circular (MSC.1/Circ.1636) recognizing industry-developed protocols that set out general measures and procedures designed to ensure that ship crew changes and travel could take place safely during the pandemic.	
13 November 2020	Industry round table to address follow-up action regarding the crew change crisis
Industry round table enabling a frank exchange of views on the crew change crisis, with a view to arriving at new ideas and solutions. Attended by 72 participants representing 23 industry stakeholders and international organizations.	
24 February 2021	High-level meeting on regional hubs in the Pacific
Regional round-table meeting to discuss options for creating regional hubs to aid repatriation of stranded seafarers from the Pacific Islands region who were unable to be repatriated at the end of their contracts. Participants: Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga, as well as the International Chamber of Shipping, the International Labour Organization (ILO), IMO, the International Organization for Migration, the International Transport Workers’ Federation, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, United Nations resident coordinators in the Pacific, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization (WHO).	
March 2021	COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) presentation/meeting

Date

Activity

Discussions in the United Nations framework are led by WHO. IMO continues to engage with WHO and the COVAX programme in relation to the distribution of vaccines to countries around the world, taking into account that the United Nations has come together to support the programme for the global distribution of vaccines.

April 2021 New Global Integrated Shipping Information System module on crew change and repatriation of seafarers

Announced in circular letter No. 4398, issued in April 2021, the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System module on crew change and repatriation of seafarers is available for the notification and dissemination of information on ports that facilitate crew changes and on national focal points on crew change and repatriation of seafarers. Following the deployment of the module, the MSC.7 circular series that had been used to disseminate information on the designation of national focal points on crew change and repatriation of seafarers was discontinued.

14 May 2021 IMO Maritime Safety Committee resolution on recommended action to prioritize COVID-19 vaccination of seafarers

Resolution MSC.490(103), in which the Maritime Safety Committee recommended that Member States and relevant national authorities:

- (a) Prioritize their seafarers, as far as practicable, in their national vaccination programmes;
- (b) Give proper consideration to extending vaccines to seafarers of other nationalities, taking into account their national vaccines supply;
- (c) Consider exempting seafarers from any national policy requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination as a condition for entry;
- (d) Develop appropriate plans, where feasible, to provide necessary infrastructure and facilities to support the vaccination of seafarers.

27 and 28 May 2021 Intersessional discussion on sharing best practices on crew change and seafarers' repatriation, including national vaccination programmes and well-being for seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic, under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Maritime Transport Working Group

Meeting of ASEAN, hosted by Thailand, with support from the ASEAN member States, dialogue partners (China and the Republic of Korea) and affiliated organizations (the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners Associations and IMO). Given that the region is one of the major global seafarer suppliers and crew change hubs, ASEAN raised concerns over the ongoing crew change crisis at the fortieth meeting of the ASEAN Maritime Transport Working Group and agreed to conduct an intersessional discussion on sharing best practices on crew change and seafarers' repatriation, including national vaccination programmes and ensuring the well-being of seafarers during the pandemic.

Recurring activities

Activity/forum

Biweekly inter-agency meeting on the seafarer crisis

Biweekly meeting of representatives of the International Chamber of Shipping, ILO, IMO, the International Transport Workers' Federation and the United Nations Global Compact to coordinate strategic actions in the United Nations system regarding the crew change crisis and related issues. The Secretary-General of the United Nations and WHO representatives frequently attend.

Biweekly meeting of the Corona strategy and welfare group

Biweekly meeting of ILO, IMO and the maritime industry to coordinate strategic actions regarding the crew change crisis and related issues.

Individual interventions in seafarer cases

Provision of assistance on a case-by-case basis to seafarers in distress or otherwise affected by the COVID-19 pandemic who are in urgent need of crew change, repatriation, urgent medical care (including evacuation) and/or improvement of their working conditions. Over 500 cases involving thousands of seafarers have been handled or reviewed thus far.

Measures taken by Member States on seafarers' certificates

Monitoring of actions and measures taken by Member States in response to circular letter No. 4204/Add.5/Rev.1 on guidance relating to the certification and update of the relevant tables.

Outreach activities

Participation in various industry, national and international events and in international/United Nations organization focus and working groups.

Promotion of activities through the International Maritime Organization Media Team

Press briefings on IMO and joint statements and webinars, regular updates to the dedicated COVID-19 page on the IMO website, engagement in social media, media interviews on television and radio (30-plus to date) (see annex IV), preparation of written interviews and replies to hundreds of media queries. Website "In Focus" pages created and updated. Frequently asked questions on crew change, seafarer testimonies (including video) and supporting seafarers. Liaison with the United Nations Global Compact and United Nations News on the latest initiatives.

Issuance of policy guidance and technical advice

Development and issuance of a variety of IMO policy guidance and technical advice through over 40 circular letters, in coordination with Member States and other United Nations and international organizations, addressing key issues such as health risk assessment and management, extension of certificates, repatriation and designation of seafarers as key workers (see annex I).

Annex IV

Media outlets covering seafarer issues as a result of Seafarer Crisis Action Team outreach

Seafarer issues, including crew change, have been covered widely by the mainstream media. The following is a non-exhaustive list of media outlets covering seafarer issues on at least one occasion following direct outreach and interviews with the Seafarer Crisis Action Team (arranged through the International Maritime Organization Media Team):

Al-Jazeera
 BBC Radio (national)
 BBC World Service
 Bloomberg
 China Global Television Network (closed circuit television) (Europe)
 CNN
 CNN News 18 (India)
Daily Telegraph
 Global Citizen
 Lloyd's List
Los Angeles Times
The Marine Insurer
Marketplace Radio (United States of America)
New York Times
 NTV (Russian Federation)
 "On the job" (podcast) (Australia)
 Radio Galicia
 Radio Islam (South Africa)
 Splash Television
 The Counter
The Guardian
The Monthly (Australia)
Washington Post
The World (public radio)
 TT News Agency (Sweden)
 United Nations News
 VRT (Belgium)
Wall Street Journal
