



15 December 2020

▶ **Statement of the Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee<sup>1</sup> on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) regarding increased collaboration between shipowners and charterers to facilitate crew changes**

Facilitating crew changes utilising high quality health protocols is a shared responsibility, which benefits all by minimizing the risk of spread of COVID-19 on vessels and disruptions to global supply chains while contributing to maritime safety and the well-being of seafarers. Shipowners and charterers should jointly and transparently share relevant information and collaborate to ensure that necessary crew changes can be conducted in a cost effective and prompt manner. The shipowner should provide the charterer with advanced notice of intended crew changes, while the charterer should ensure all reasonable efforts to accommodate crew changes including when the vessel has to deviate.

No charter contracts should contain clauses preventing necessary crew changes from being conducted, as such clauses could negatively affect the safe operation of maritime trade and the protection of the well-being and contractual rights of seafarers. Meeting the terms of a charter which prevents necessary crew changes may not be possible without putting the shipowner and seafarer in a position of non-compliance with international legislation, including the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006).

By implementing high quality health protocols, shipowners reduce trade disruption due to COVID-19, which also creates benefits to charterers. These benefits should be reflected in chartering decisions to incentivise shipowners to

<sup>1</sup> The Special Tripartite Committee (STC) is the tripartite body established under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, to keep the working of the Convention under continuous review. The Officers of the STC have been appointed by the ILO Governing Body for a period of three years. They are currently: Ms Julie Carlton from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Chairperson), Mr Martin Marini from Singapore (Government Vice-Chairperson), Mr David Heindel from the United States of America (Seafarer Vice-Chairperson) and Mr Max Johns from Germany (Shipowner Vice-Chairperson). In the framework of this unprecedented crisis, the ILO reached out to them to build the most appropriate responses to the challenges faced by the maritime sector.

implement high quality health protocols and be transparent about actions taken and costs incurred.