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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5

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To: All IMO Member States
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers**

1 The Secretary-General has been made aware of a number of concerns regarding seafarers' training and certification as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

2 The actions taken worldwide as a result of the outbreak pose a serious challenge for Administrations to allow the continued training of seafarers, revalidate certificates, including medical certificates, and issuance of endorsements attesting recognition of certificates in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW Convention), 1978, as amended.

3 In light of the foregoing, issuing Administrations are encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach with regard to the extension of the above-mentioned certificates and endorsements, as strictly necessary, and to notify ships, seafarers and relevant Administrations accordingly.

4 Port State control authorities are also encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach in relation to these certificate and endorsement extensions, and their acceptance in the exercise of control procedures in accordance with article X (Control) and regulation I/4 (Control procedures) of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended.

5 Members States are invited to communicate to the Organization general information on the practices adopted by the issuing Administrations and port State control authorities. The Organization will circulate this information.

6 Member States and other stakeholders are invited to bring the contents of this circular letter to the attention of all concerned, especially issuing Administrations and port State control authorities.