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國際運輸勞連

International Transport Workers' Federation
Federación Internacional de los Trabajadores del Transporte
Fédération Internationale des ouvriers du transport
Internationella transportarbetarefederationen
Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation
Международная федерация транспортников
الاتحاد الدولي لعمال النقل

To all Fisheries, Inland Navigation and Seafarer affiliates and the ITF FOC - POC Inspectorate

ITF E-Circular No. 031/F/IN/S/SS/2020

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3 February 2020

Dear Colleagues

Coronavirus; IMHA advice

You will be aware that in the last few days the World Health Organisation (WHO) have declared the coronavirus a public health emergency of international concern. The virus originated in Wuhan city, China, a major domestic and international transport hub.

The ITF has now called on all governments and transport companies to implement measures available to them to limit the risk of transmission of the deadly coronavirus to transport workers globally. This is particularly important for seafarers who are the frontline of the outbreak.

The first case of a seafarer falling victim to the coronavirus has just been detected by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore who are conducting health screenings at all sea checkpoints. The seafarer had travelled from Wuhan and he is now being treated at the Singapore National Centre for Infectious Diseases. The WHO has advised governments to prepare for containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation, case management, contact tracing and prevention of the onward spread of infection. More information is available on the WHO website.

For shipping companies and port operators they must provide workers with the latest information regarding the outbreak, follow best practice in regard to health and safety protocols and supply of personal protective equipment, put into effect procedures to identify symptomatic travellers, crew and/or workers, and set clear guidelines for workers managing suspected cases of infection. For cruise ships or passenger ferries this could mean managing a passenger who may be thought to have the coronavirus.

The International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) has produced specific advice for shipping companies and seafarers. Please note that the advice states that shore side visits for seafarers should not be unnecessarily restricted in countries who are not in the affected areas, nor should visits to the ship.

The situation is evolving rapidly, and so please be assured that we are in regular contact with industry partners so that if necessary we can quickly react to any developments.

The advice from the IMHA is attached for your information, and we would request that you share this as widely as possible.

In solidarity

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fabrizio Barcellona', is enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Fabrizio Barcellona
Assistant Secretary; Seafarers, Fisheries and Inland Navigation