

5 March 2021

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Sang
Viet Nam Maritime Administration
Administrator

Email: vpimo@vinamarine.gov.vn

Dear Mr. Sang,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter, dated 26 February 2021, and I would like to thank you for your suggestions to accelerate the vaccination of seafarers, as well as for Viet Nam's efforts to address the crew change crisis.

I recognize that the vaccination of seafarers, together with the designation of seafarers as key workers, are two essential actions to facilitate crew changes and I have, therefore, drawn the attention of Governments and UN organizations to the need for an urgent response to these matters. I am of course also aware of the challenges connected with the vaccination of seafarers, brought on by the limited access of many countries to COVID-19 vaccines and by the logistical problems to vaccinate seafarers who spend long periods of time away from their home countries.

Therefore, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is coordinating with its sister UN agencies, like ILO, ICAO and WHO, a call on Governments to prioritize seafarers in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes to facilitate their safe movement across borders, and to identify and prepare for the challenges of the vaccination of seafarers who spend long periods of time away from their home country. A joint statement of several UN agencies is currently under development and is expected to be released shortly.

Furthermore, we will facilitate discussions with IMO Member States, representatives of the maritime industry, UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders to discuss a coordinated strategy on vaccination.

In order to further progress on our common goal, I would encourage you to participate in the discussions ahead of and during the 103rd session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) with a view to have a productive discussion at the next MSC session.

I look forward to your continued support as we facilitate developing global solutions to vaccinating seafarers and solving the crew change crisis.

Your sincerely,

Kitack Lim
Secretary-General

