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Circular Letter No.3710  
17 February 2017

To: IMO Members and other Governments  
United Nations and specialized agencies  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **World Maritime Day and Day of the Seafarer, 2017**

The Secretary-General has the honour to advise that:

- .1 **World Maritime Day** this year will be celebrated at IMO Headquarters on 28 September 2017, when the traditional diplomatic reception will take place;
- .2 the **2017 World Maritime Day parallel event** will be celebrated in Panama City at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Panama, from 1 to 3 October; and
- .3 the annual **Day of the Seafarer**, as usual, will be celebrated on 25 June 2017.

Further information on these events will be circulated in due course.

### Themes and activities

This year's theme for **World Maritime Day** is "**Connecting Ships, Ports and People**" and was launched at the port of Felixstowe on 17 January 2017.

The press briefing is available [here](#).

You can watch the Secretary-General's video message [here](#).



The text of the Secretary-General's message on the occasion of World Maritime Day 2017 is annexed to this circular letter and a background paper on the year's theme will be circulated soon to assist Member Governments and international organizations in planning their own activities for the Day.

The message will be available for downloading in all of the Organization's official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and a video containing the Secretary-General's message (in English only) is now available on the IMO website at [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org) (click on the above link for direct access).

In order to promote the Day more widely, Member Governments and international organizations are encouraged to organize, wherever possible, suitable events throughout the year to celebrate the Day and inform the Secretariat as early as possible of any planned activities. Social media participation is also encouraged via Twitter, by using the hashtag #WorldMaritimeDay. Photographs of the events can also be sent to [media@imo.org](mailto:media@imo.org).

For 2017, the focus of the **Day of the Seafarer** campaign will be closely related to the World Maritime Day theme and a social media campaign will be organized to mark the Day. Details of the campaign and how to participate, together with a variety of materials and "content opportunities" to assist participation, will be posted on the IMO website ([www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)) in due course.

The **IMO Maritime Ambassadors** scheme, launched in 2015, will continue supporting and promoting World Maritime Day and Day of the Seafarer. There are currently 46 IMO Maritime Ambassadors representing 22 Member States and six international organizations. They have already made significant contributions to IMO's outreach efforts. All Member Governments and international organizations are invited and encouraged to participate in this programme by identifying and appointing IMO Maritime Ambassadors, who would effectively be spokespersons or advocates for the maritime and seafaring professions. Information can be found at <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/maritimeambassador/Pages/default.aspx>.

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**ANNEX**

**WORLD MARITIME DAY 2017  
CONNECTING SHIPS, PORTS AND PEOPLE**

**A message from Kitack Lim  
Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization**

Against a background of increasingly complex global challenges, the United Nations has established 17 Sustainable Development Goals which, together, have the potential to transform our world into a better place for us all.

As a United Nations agency, IMO has a strong commitment to helping achieve the aims of the Sustainable Development Goals. Shipping and ports can play a significant role in helping to create conditions for increased employment, prosperity and stability through promoting maritime trade. The port and maritime sectors can be wealth creators, both on land and at sea.

To highlight this potential, our theme for this year is "Connecting Ships, Ports and People". It will enable us to shine a spotlight on the existing cooperation between ports and ships to maintain and enhance a safe, secure and efficient maritime transportation system.

We will help our Member States to develop and implement maritime strategies that address a wide range of issues, including the facilitation of maritime transport, and increasing efficiency, navigational safety, protection of the marine environment, and maritime security.

Throughout the year, we will highlight the importance of "joined-up" maritime development across all sectors, both from a policy and a practical perspective. The benefits of a free and efficient flow of goods and trade extend far beyond the ships and ports themselves – and we will show how an effective interface between them can improve the lives of people everywhere, especially in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

IMO's role as the global regulator of the shipping industry can enhance this integration – as consistent, uniform regulation facilitates the free flow of commerce.

But, to be sustainable, human activities have to be balanced with the oceans' capacity to remain healthy and diverse in the long term. The so-called "blue economy" is a large and growing industrial sector; and, as it grows, it must remain safe and secure and not threaten the environment. IMO needs to ensure that shipping continues to make its contribution to the global economy without upsetting that delicate balance.

Ultimately, more efficient shipping, working in partnership with a port sector supported by governments, will be a major driver towards global stability and sustainable development for the good of all people.

This year, with our theme of "Connecting Ships, Ports and People" we aim to make a strong contribution towards these objectives – and I hope that you will join us, with your own activities and initiatives under this World Maritime Day theme for 2017.