

UNITED KINGDOM WRITTEN STATEMENT - *Draft resolution concerning maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic*

As the world has faced Covid-19 pandemic this year, collective international efforts have rightly prioritised the continued functioning of global supply chains to ensure the resilience of our national economies. Seafarers have been on the front line of those efforts. They are the key workers responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the maritime transportation system, which moves over 80% of global trade.

Seafarers, and those operating their ships, have faced unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, in particular as restrictions have hindered their ability to conduct ship crew changes, to return home, and to access medical care and assistance.

The UK would like to thank the seafarers and the shipowners for submitting the draft resolution and to all on the tripartite screening group for their collaborative and constructive approach during the negotiations. We would also like to thank Greg Vines for his direction as Chair and the members of the Office for their support and extensive knowledge of ILO protocols and procedures.

For the UK, a key element of the draft Resolution was the ability for a seafarer to access medical care ashore and we are therefore appreciative that this has been included in the draft Resolution.

Seafarers are the lifeblood of the world's economy. As a coastal, port and flag State the UK recognised the critical position that seafarers hold in both the UK and the global economy. More than ever, we need to ensure that freight is able to flow inwards and outwards of the country, and that global trade continues for the benefit of all citizens and the global economy.

We recognise and appreciate that governments will want to protect their domestic population but the crisis being endured by seafarers cannot be permitted to continue. It does not matter if a state is a net importer or exporter, every state relies on seafarers for the delivery of vital goods and services. For the sake of their physical and mental welfare, for their families, for the protection of the marine environment and for the protection of the global economy and supply chains we urge states to act now.

We welcomed the adoption on 1 December 2020 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains.

We are hopeful that we can also welcome the adoption of the draft Resolution concerning maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic by the Governing Body.