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Circular Letter No.4220/Add.8
19 July 2021

To: All IMO Members
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status
Liberation movements

Subject: **Update on the status of the International Maritime Organization Headquarters building and telecommuting arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic**

1 Further to Circular Letters No.4220/Add.1 of 18 March 2020, No.4220/Add.2 of 10 September 2020, No.4220/Add.3 of 2 November 2020, No.4220/Add.4 of 2 December 2020, No.4220/Add.5 of 6 January 2021, No.4220/Add.6 of 9 April 2021 and No.4220/Add.7 of 17 May 2021 providing information on the status of the IMO Headquarters building at 4 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7SR; the purpose of this Circular Letter is to update Member States, international organizations and other interested persons regarding access to the Headquarters building.

2 The IMO Secretariat has been closely monitoring developments of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at local and global levels and has followed advice provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Government of the United Kingdom (as the host government) and actions taken by other UN agencies.

3 The host government is no longer instructing people to work from home, however, during this period of high prevalence, the host government is expecting and recommending a gradual return to offices over the summer. In order to protect staff and visitors and to contribute to wider efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, the Secretary-General would like to advise on the following measures regarding access to the Headquarters building, effective from 19 July 2021.

4 The IMO Headquarters building will be open for limited access, superseding the guidelines in Circular Letter No.4220/Add 7, as follows:

- .1 for Secretariat staff, working remotely making full use of remote working and teleconferencing continues to be the main working modality until 31 August 2021. However, staff may work in the Headquarters building. Staff may also be available to meet with delegates and other visitors in the Headquarters building. During the summer period, social distancing measures will remain in place throughout the building and to ensure social distancing can be maintained, meetings will be limited to a maximum of fifteen people depending on the available meeting rooms. It is anticipated that on 1 September 2021 IMO staff will return to work in the building and working from home as the primary modality of work will cease;

- .2 delegates and other visitors wishing to visit the Headquarters building may do so. To take into account the gradual return of the Secretariat to the building, advance appointments are strongly encouraged. To schedule a visit, please contact the person or division/department you intend to meet and copy IMO Security in all communications (security@imo.org);
- .3 delegates and visitors are requested to limit their movement to the ground, first and second floor meeting room areas, the Maritime Knowledge Centre (MKC) on the third floor and the cafeteria on the fourth floor only. The MKC will be available for physical access from 1 September 2021 and those wishing to conduct research should contact the MKC at mkc@imo.org for assistance;
- .4 the cafeteria will remain open with a limited service and will be accessible for external visitors. A full service is expected from 1 September 2021 and further confirmation will be provided in due course;
- .5 the Delegates Lounge will be closed for upgrade work to the lighting until 1 August 2021 at the earliest, and further information will be shared when the Lounge is again available for access;
- .6 should any visitor/delegate develop any COVID-19 related symptoms up to seven days after visiting the Headquarters building, such visitor/delegate is requested to report the symptoms to NHS 111 and/or their GP and report for a COVID-19 test. They are also requested to inform the Organization as soon as possible. Visitors/delegates are also requested to inform the Organization of the results of the test. The Staff Nurse, Ms. Audrey Courtney (hws@imo.org), should be notified, with a copy to security@imo.org and lspataro@imo.org. Any visitors/delegates who have been in close contact with a person who developed symptoms will be contacted and advised to self-isolate for the next 14 days:
 - .1 if the COVID-19 test result is negative, those informed to self-isolate will be contacted as no further action is necessary; and
 - .2 if the COVID-19 test result is positive, those informed to self-isolate will be contacted and advised to report for a COVID-19 test.

5 Delegates will be able to follow the 108th session of the Legal Committee, to be held from 26 to 30 July 2021, from the IMO building and participate in its remote session. The Chair intends to conduct the meeting from the Main Hall, and the Vice-Chair will also be present. Delegate attendance is subject to the following requirements:

- .1 for logistical reasons and as a gradual return to the building is implemented as stated above, attendance will be limited to 100 delegates, on a first come, first served basis, and restricted to those who have registered to attend LEG 108;
- .2 delegates must register to attend LEG 108 in the usual manner through the OMRS; those wishing to attend should have the "physical" option enabled on OMRS;
- .3 an email was sent during the week of 12 July with instructions on how to register your place at the IMO building. If you have registered for LEG 108 and not received this email by 23 July, please email led@imo.org if you wish to follow the meeting from the IMO building;

- .4 further information on COVID-19 safety measures to be complied with will be provided to the delegates registered to attend from the IMO building;
- .5 delegates will need to bring their own IT equipment, including headset, and will use the IMO Wi-Fi to follow the meeting; and
- .6 delegates will be required to arrive at the IMO building after 0900 UTC+1 and to vacate the building no later than 16.00 UTC+1 to ensure that cleaning can take place.

6 All individuals granted access to the Headquarters building will be subject to the following requirements:

- .1 all IMO entry passes for delegates have been deactivated, therefore it will be necessary to be screened before going through the security gates for entry. It is expected that all passes will be reactivated on 1 September 2021;
- .2 access to the building is only possible through the front lobby. Persons coming from the car park should walk up the designated ramp to reach the front lobby;
- .3 upon entry into the building (i.e. at the security desk), all persons will have their body temperature read by non-contact means. Any person with a reading above 37.8°C will not be allowed access to IMO Headquarters building;
- .4 all delegates and visitors must sign in and out at the Security Desk and provide name, telephone number/email address as part of the track and trace measures. All data provided will be destroyed after 30 days;
- .5 all persons should observe social distancing guidance (currently 2 metres, if not possible, stay 1 metre plus apart) in all parts of the building; and
- .6 all persons are recommended to wear face masks whilst in the building, unless eating or drinking. All persons should bring their own masks. A limited number of masks may be available at the Security Desk for those who forget to bring them. Persons should wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed throughout the building for easy access.

7 Staff members remain available to assist with any queries, as usual. However, given the limited access to the Headquarters building as described in this Circular Letter, delegations are requested to continue to use electronic means of communication with the Secretariat as much as possible. The programme of remote IMO meetings is not affected by these new measures and will continue as scheduled in document PROG/129/Rev.2 of 9 July 2021.

8 The Secretary-General requests your forbearance in these unique circumstances and looks forward to continued cooperation and collaboration. Full normal operation of the IMO Headquarters building will resume as soon as feasible.

9 This guidance will remain under review and will be updated as appropriate.