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Unseen, Unsung, Everyday Heroes – Helping Developing World Seafarers on the Frontline

London, 21 April 2020: If you are a seafarer stranded far from home what do you do? As one of the thousands of indispensable seafarers from developing countries caught in lockdowns enforced to limit the spread of COVID19 with no way home, where do you turn for help for you and your family?

"The outbreak of COVID-19 on a global scale has brought fear and uncertainty to key workers around the world. Those in the maritime sector have particular anxieties as they are displaced from home, friends, family and the other support mechanisms available to most. It has never been more important for these seafarers to have access to help in some form," states Captain John Lloyd, Chief Executive of The Nautical Institute.

For those seafarers, the Seafarers Emergency Fund (SEF), established a number of years ago by UK-registered charity the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), can provide vital financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the SEF, seafarers and their families who are directly involved in sudden or unforeseen crises can access immediate, essential aid to cover expenses such as psychological counselling, medical bills, repatriation and other unexpected costs. Already, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the SEF has paid out four grants totalling US\$35,048 (around £28,000) which has assisted 608 Indian and Filipino seafarers.

Roger Harris, ISWAN Executive Director, says "Many seafarers and their families are facing hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ISWAN is providing support around the world, like delivering food packages to 550 stranded seafarers in Manila with funding from the Seafarers Emergency Fund."

To support this vital financial lifeline, a group of maritime organisations has established a crowdfunding campaign to help these developing world seafarers and families most severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The campaign has until May 4 to reach its £25,000 target. You can donate here <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/emergency-support-for-developing-world-seafarers>

David Bolduc, Executive Director, Green Marine states, "This is a much-needed initiative in this time of crisis. As a global industry, we have a duty to show solidarity with seafarers, the men and women who are operating ships worldwide and who really are the backbone of global trade. Please consider supporting this campaign."

Paul Holthus, Founding President and CEO, World Ocean Council adds; "The men and women working in shipping and the other ocean industries that make up the ocean economy are vital to all of us in this time of crisis. They are essential to ensuring that supply chains of food, medicine, energy and other goods keep operating. Please help support them as they are faced by the additional challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic is imposing on them."

As many of these developing country seafarers and their families are facing very uncertain times ahead the financial support is understandably of great importance, however there is also a message of support and hope that is being shared by supporting this campaign.

"Much of the shipping industry are supporting their seafarers, these unseen and unsung heroes but unfortunately others do slip through the gaps and there is little in the way of a safety net, the SEF and ISWAN are helping those that do find themselves in dire need, and this sends a clear message of support." agrees Gavin Allwright, Secretary General of the International Windship Association.

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Carleen Lyden Walker, Co-Founder/Executive Director of NAMEPA and IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassador sums up the challenge perfectly; “While the shipping industry is the engine of global trade, our mariners are its heartbeat. Right now, they need our protection and help to navigate the constraints resulting from combating COVID-19. Remember, we are ONE Global community with the common goals of health, well-being, prosperity, and providing a global service in the best possible fashion. Please join us in support of the mariner with a donation of any size!”

The Crowdfunding page can be accessed here: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/emergency-support-for-developing-world-seafarers>

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PHOTO CAPTION: *Seafarers receiving food packages in Manila funded by the Seafarers Emergency Fund*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR JOURNALISTS

Supporting Organisations

The International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) www.seafarerswelfare.org

The International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) is a membership organisation which works to promote and support the welfare of seafarers all over the world.

Seafarers bring us 95% of the things we use every day and take care of us when we travel by sea, but their lives are often tough. They experience long periods away from family and friends with limited or no communication, fast turnaround of ships in ports with severely restricted shore leave, reduced crew numbers and increased workloads. Welfare services and facilities both on board and ashore can be a lifeline for seafarers. Our free, 24-hour, multilingual helpline, [SeafarerHelp](#), is one of the direct welfare services we provide to seafarers. Others include our [relief funds](#) for seafarers and their family members in need and a range of health information resources. We work with companies, unions, governments, welfare organisations and ports for the implementation of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. We support those who establish and provide welfare facilities and services in port and on ships. We are funded by membership subscriptions, grants from foundations, sponsorship and earned income. We are grateful to our main funders – the ITF Seafarers’ Trust, The TK Foundation, Seafarers UK and Trafigura Foundation – for their continued support.

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World Ocean Council www.oceancouncil.org

The World Ocean Council (WOC) is a global, cross-sectoral ocean industry leadership alliance committed to “Corporate Ocean Responsibility”, developed by and for the private sector, with a unique and multi-sectoral approach to address cross-cutting issues affecting ocean sustainable development, science and stewardship of the seas.

The WOC believes that responsible and coordinated Ocean Business Community efforts are essential to a healthy and productive global ocean and its sustainable use, development and stewardship by a responsible Ocean Business Community.

To this end, the WOC engages and brings together leaders from the various ocean industries, including shipping, oil and gas, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, renewable energy (wind, wave, tidal), ports, dredging, cables, as well as the maritime legal, financial and insurance communities, and others to

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collaborate on responsible use of the seas. We ensure that the Ocean Business Community's role in ocean sustainable development is understood by all relevant stakeholders (decision makers, policy makers, intergovernmental bodies etc.).

The WOC is growing steadily, as an increasing number and range of ocean industry companies from around the world are distinguishing themselves as leaders in "Corporate Ocean Responsibility" by joining the WOC. More broadly, the continually expanding global WOC network includes 35,000+ ocean industry and media stakeholders around the world.

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The Nautical Institute www.nautinst.org

The Nautical Institute is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with consultative status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Our aim is to represent seafarers' and practical maritime professionals' views at the highest level. As a representative body, the Institute fulfils its role in many different ways. Membership by proven qualifications and experience helps to set standards. The technical committees ensure that professional opinion and advice is fed back to the industry's decision making bodies. Publications written by practitioners for practitioners provide the best operational guidance available and the branches encourage professional development in local areas.

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Green Marine www.green-marine.org

Green Marine is a voluntary environmental certification program for the North American marine industry. It is a rigorous, transparent and inclusive initiative that addresses key environmental issues through its 12 performance indicators. Participants are shipowners, ports, terminals, Seaway corporations and shipyards based in Canada and the United States.

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North American Marine Environment Protection Association (NAMEPA) www.namepa.net

The North American Marine Environment Protection Association (NAMEPA) is a marine industry-led organization of environmental stewards preserving the marine environment by promoting sustainable marine industry best practices and educating seafarers, students and the public about the need and strategies for protecting global ocean, lake and river resources.

This proactive, industry-led initiative demonstrates to all our commitment to preserving our seas for the world to enjoy and present our industry in a positive light. The oceans, lakes and rivers are the cradle of life, but are seriously endangered by the actions of man. The most serious threat is pollution. Current environmental controls and regulations are inadequate to control it.

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International Windship Association (IWSA) www.wind-ship.org

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The IWSA facilitates and promotes the uptake of wind propulsion solutions for commercial shipping worldwide and brings together all parties in the development of a wind-ship sector to shape industry and government attitudes and policies. IWSA is a member driven, not-for-profit association with over 100 members, associates and supporting organizations including wind propulsion technology suppliers and ship development projects, shipping lines, shipbuilders, designers, naval architects, engineers, academics, NGO's and Class.

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