**Technical Note:**
Port responsiveness in the fight against the “invisible” threat: COVID-19

**Introduction:**
In the current unprecedented times of a global threat posed by a coronavirus pandemic that has triggered dire consequences for whole societies and nations, the maritime industry is playing an essential role in the response. Around 80% of global trade is transported by commercial shipping. This includes currently most-needed items such as vital medical supplies and equipment, as well as food, energy, raw materials and manufactured goods and components. These are essential for addressing people’s basic needs and for preserving many jobs in manufacturing, maintaining international trade and, in the end, sustaining the global economy.

In view of this, it is important to keep supply chains open and to allow maritime trade to continue. This requires that the world’s ports remain open for ship calls and that ship crews’ changeover is allowed. Further, in these challenging times, some additional measures should be undertaken to protect the staff working in port communities and to ensure continuity of ports’ operations.

**Best Practices:**
Based on several documents received from ports that are part of the UNCTAD TrainForTrade Network, the following measures have been implemented/observed and could serve as generic guidelines:

- Constantly promote and enforce preventative hygiene measures (handwashing)
- Limit physical interaction between onboard and onshore staff. Ship crew should communicate with quayside staff by radio or telephone
- Encourage/restrict ship crew to stay onboard. Establish a clear protocol if disembarkation is necessary (check body temperature, involve immigration department, track movements and potential human contacts)
- Respect **physical** distancing rules – stay 2 metres apart
- Increase the use of digital documentation to limit human contact to the minimum
- Provide adequate and sufficient protective equipment to the staff (face masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, glasses)
- Augment the sanitation of surfaces that come in contact with hands
- Establish a point of control in the perimeter of the port area to monitor temperature and related symptoms (automated temperature screening) and equip it with anti-bacterial solutions and sanitizers
- Establish a waste disposal policy for “suspicious” cases
- Fumigate and disinfect all passenger terminals/areas
- Disinfect and monitor cargo
• Have a passenger information system for easy contact tracing and an isolated holding and testing area for COVID-19 symptomatic port users
• Institute a protocol for disembarking passengers/crew requiring immediate medical care in coordination with the national health authority (1)
• Identify decontamination areas in the port buildings

(1) Under the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention of 2006, flag States must ensure that all seafarers on ships flying their flag are covered by adequate measures for the protection of their health and that they have access to prompt and adequate medical care whilst working onboard. The Convention also requires port States to ensure that seafarers on board ships in their territory who are in need of immediate medical care are given access to medical facilities onshore.

**Recommendations:**

It is crucial to keep the country's borders open for all forms of freight transport, in particular ports considered to be essential national assets. Governments need to ensure that health measures are implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade; in particular, by respecting the requirements of "free pratique" for ships under the International Health Regulations (IHR). The principles of avoiding unnecessary restrictions or delay in port entry for ships, persons and property on board are also embodied in articles I and V and section 6 of the annex of the Convention of the Facilitation of Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention). This is underscored by the International Labor Organisation (ILO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

**Crisis Protocol (Example):**

The following section presents an example of a crisis protocol that can be used as a guide on actions that should be implemented in relation to strictly defined crisis levels.

| LEVEL 1 | o International emergency declared  
| PARTIES INVOLVED | Collaborators, Clients, Partners |
| CRISIS COMMITTEE/ LEADERS | Names |
| ACTIONS | • Test communication channels  
| | • Identify isolation areas throughout the port  
| | • Engage in preventive campaigns against COVID-19 and follow WHO recommendations  
| | • Communicate key messages internally  
| | • Prepare messages to answer customer concerns  
| | • Maintain direct communication with relevant national authorities (Public Health, Migration, Navy, etc.) |
**LEVEL 2**
- International emergency declared
- Confirmed cases in the country
- No cases in the port

**PARTIES INVOLVED**
Collaborators, Clients, Partners, Media

**CRISIS COMMITTEE LEADERS**
Names

**ACTIONS**
- All actions mentioned in Level 1, and in addition:
  - Organise the distribution of antibacterial gel dispenser in all access points and critical areas of the port
  - Strengthen an internal campaign that promotes the importance of COVID-19 prevention and follow WHO recommendations
  - Suspend guided visits to the port (for students, clients, etc.)
  - Inform clients about compliance with security protocols in relation to their cargo
  - Maintain direct communication with community leaders

**LEVEL 3**
- International emergency declared
- Confirmed cases in the country
- Suspicious cases detected in the port (crew or staff)

**PARTIES INVOLVED**
Collaborators, Clients, Partners, Media

**CRISIS COMMITTEE LEADERS**
Names

**ACTIONS**
- All actions mentioned in Level 1 and 2, and in addition:
  - Introduce remote work when possible in relation to the area concerned
  - Isolate a suspected person in the designated area and organize transfer to a dedicated medical centre
  - Disinfect the area of interaction of the isolated person
  - Notify the suspected person's relatives
  - Send a statement to the company's employees informing them of the situation and measures adopted by the authorities, and if operations continue as normal
  - Issue a press release to the media

**LEVEL 4**
- International emergency declared
- Increased number of cases in the country
- Confirmed cases in the port (crew or staff)
- Several staff are sick

**PARTIES INVOLVED**
Collaborators, Clients, Partners, Media

**CRISIS COMMITTEE LEADERS**
Names

**ACTIONS**
- All actions mentioned in Level 1, 2 and 3, and in addition:
  - Limit access to port premises only to critical staff
  - Trace working contacts of confirmed cases in the previous two weeks
  - Deploy remote communication for all employees
  - Inform national health authorities of sick staff members and seek their advice
- Manage confirmed cases among staff in line with recommendations from national health authorities and WHO

**Relevant links:**

**World Health Organisation (WHO)**
Updated WHO recommendations for international traffic in relation to COVID-19 outbreak

Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships

**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**
Observatory on border crossings status due to COVID-19
[https://wiki.unece.org/display/CTRBSBC/Observatory+on+Border+Crossings+Status+due+to+COVID-19+Home](https://wiki.unece.org/display/CTRBSBC/Observatory+on+Border+Crossings+Status+due+to+COVID-19+Home)

**Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO)**
Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Implementation measures for sea transport

[https://www.bimco.org/covid19](https://www.bimco.org/covid19)

**European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO)**

**International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH)**
COVID-19 related updates of the IAPH member ports

**Wilhelmsen Group**
COVID-19 global port restrictions map

**SAFETY4SEA**
Other known hazards:
- Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic
- Ebola virus disease (EVD)
- Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)
- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

Information collected from the following entities:

**ENGLISH-SPEAKING**

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<th>COUNTRY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Dublin Port Company</td>
<td>• COVID-19 guidance for supply chain workers&lt;br&gt;• Emergency management plan&lt;br&gt;• Marine notice</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Port of Cork Company</td>
<td>• Operational contingency planning&lt;br&gt;• Business continuity actions list</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>JohorPort</td>
<td>• Communication to all shipping agents</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Philippines Ports Authority</td>
<td>• Memorandum circular for all ports in Luzon. Involvement of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases&lt;br&gt;• Memorandum on no sail policy</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Ghana Ports and Harbour Authority</td>
<td>• Letter to ship agents in Takoradi: Measures to curtail infection at the ship side&lt;br&gt;• Letter to all port stakeholders: Suspected case of COVID-19 on board a vessel at the port of Tema&lt;br&gt;• Standard operating procedures for COVID-19 in the ports of Tema and Takoradi&lt;br&gt;• Summary of emergency protocol – Flow chart</td>
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**SPANISH-SPEAKING**

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<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Haina International Terminals</td>
<td>• Protocolo de Crisis Coronavirus 2020&lt;br&gt;• Ejecución del Protocolo de Crisis Coronavirus 2020</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>Port Authority of Gijon</td>
<td>• Información para los trabajadores&lt;br&gt;• Información sobre la aplicación de protocolos COVID-19 en servicios esenciales del Puerto de Gijón&lt;br&gt;• Plan de actuación de la Autoridad Portuaria de Gijón ante el COVID-19&lt;br&gt;• Comunicación a los usuarios del puerto</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>Port Authority of Valencia</td>
<td>• Pautas de actuación a seguir por la dirección facultativa de las obras portuarias en curso de ejecución ante la situación de emergencia sanitaria creada por el covid-19.</td>
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<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Port Buenos Aires</td>
<td>Prevenção covid-19 en el transporte fluvial, marítimo y lacustre</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
<td>Autoridad Portuaria Nacional</td>
<td>Norma que dicta los lineamientos mínimos para la elaboración del plan de continuidad operativa de los terminales portuarios a nivel nacional</td>
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### FRENCH-SPEAKING

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<td>Benin</td>
<td>Port Autonome de Cotonou</td>
<td>Note de service portant suspension des missions dans le cadre de la prévention contre le coronavirus au PAC (French)</td>
<td>17/03/2020</td>
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<td>Benin</td>
<td>Société Béninoise de Manutention Portuaire (SOBEMAP)</td>
<td>Note circulaire portant sur règles préventives relatives au COVID-19 (French)</td>
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<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Port Autonome de Douala</td>
<td>Note d’Instruction portant sur les mesures additionnelles dans le cadre de la lutte contre la propagation de la pandémie du coronavirus au PAD (French)</td>
<td>24/03/2020</td>
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<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Port Autonome de Douala</td>
<td>Note d’Instruction portant organisation des activités pendant la période de restriction dans le cadre de la lutte contre la propagation de la pandémie du coronavirus au PAD (French)</td>
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<td>Note on preventive measures (English)</td>
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<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Port Autonome d’Abidjan</td>
<td>Note aux usagers : Dispositions sécuritaires face à la menace du coronavirus</td>
<td>25/02/2020</td>
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<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Port Autonome d’Abidjan</td>
<td>Message aux Consignataires et Armateurs : Contrôles sanitaires maritimes au PAA</td>
<td>05/02/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Marseille-Fos</td>
<td>Communiqué de presse « Continuité de l’activité du Port de Marseille Fos (COVID-19) » (French)</td>
<td>17/03/2020</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>Port de Nantes Saint-Nazaire</td>
<td>Communiqué de presse « L’activité portuaire maintenue à Nantes Saint-Nazaire » (French)</td>
<td>18/03/2020</td>
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<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Port Autonome de Nouakchott</td>
<td>Circulaire à tous partenaires portuaires sur les conditions d’escales de navires (French)</td>
<td>19/03/2020</td>
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<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Ministère des Pêches et de l’Économie Maritime</td>
<td>Circulaire concernant les équipages des navires étrangers touchant les ports sénégalais (French)</td>
<td>23/03/2020</td>
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<td>Senegal</td>
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<td>Note circulaire : Modifications des conditions d’accueil des navires (French)</td>
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