Circular Letter No.4271/Add.1
14 May 2020

To: All IMO Members
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: Communication from the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has sent the attached communication, dated 13 May 2020, with the request that it is circulated by the Organization.

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The Secretary-General, 
International Maritime Organization 
4 Albert Embankment 
London SE1 7SR 
United Kingdom 

His Excellency, 

DECLARATION TO KEEP NIGERIAN PORTS OPEN AND OPERATIONAL AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC 

The office of the Alternate Permanent Representative (APR) of Nigeria to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) presents its compliment. 

Recognising that the maritime sector plays a critical role in transporting more than 80% of the world's goods via sea-lanes, and in its drive to support and facilitate shipping, the Nigerian Ports Authority has declared to keep its ports open and operational by adopting safe and best industry practices in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic. We wish to remark that the Managing Director/Chief Executive, Nigerian Ports Authority, Ms Hadiza Bala Usman, holds the current Vice-Chair of IMO's Facilitation (FAL) Committee. The declaration (attached with this letter), was forwarded to the Nigeria's APR-IMO Office by the supervising Ministry of Transportation (also attached with this letter) for conveyance to the International Maritime Organization for communication to IMO Member States. 

Yours faithfully, 

Engr Anas K. SULEIMAN 
(Nigeria’s Technical Adviser/Deputy-APR to IMO) 
For: APR-IMO
Engr. Anas K. Suleiman,
Office of the Alternate Permanent Representative to
International Maritime Organisation,
Nigerian High Commission,
9 Northumberland Avenue,
London WC2n 5BX,
United Kingdom.

RE: DECLARATION TO KEEP NIGERIAN PORTS OPEN TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN PORT OPERATIONS ADOPTING SAFE AND BEST INDUSTRY PRACTICES AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of the Nigerian declaration by the Managing Director, Nigerian Port Authority (MD, NPA) to keep the Ports open in complete agreement and harmony with the Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members for onward submission to International Maritime Organisation (IMO). This is in order to sustain maritime trade and shipping activities so that vital goods, including essential medical supplies, can continue to flow seamlessly in view of the COVID-19 situation.

2. Please accept the warm regards of the Honourable Minister.

Adaji A.S (Mrs)
Deputy Director, Marine Pollution
For: Honourable Minister
Dear Sir,

DECLARATION TO KEEP NIGERIAN PORTS OPEN TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN PORT OPERATIONS BY ADOPTING SAFE AND BEST INDUSTRY PRACTICES AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Reference is to Circular No. 42041/Add.12 dated 27th April 2020 from the International Maritime Organisation in relation to the global Covid-19 situation.

The Nigerian Ports Authority recognises the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as a serious global crisis that has far-reaching impact on many fronts, including global trade. Considering that more than 80% of the world’s goods are transported via sea-lanes, the ports and maritime sectors all over the world play crucial roles in keeping these goods and sea trade to flourish by adopting safe operations and best industry practices in the midst of the global fight against COVID-19.

The recent Circular Letter (No. 4204/Add.12) by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) highlights a declaration by twenty (20) Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global COVID-19 situation. The declaration seeks to maintain and facilitate shipping activities during the COVID-19 global pandemic in order to sustain the
global supply chain. In the IMO Circular Letter, the PAR members are motivated by the need to:

- Keep global supply chain and trade/cargo going, and that merchant ships can continue to berth at terminals to carry out cargo operations.

- Facilitate closer coordination by establishing an open communication channel so that like-minded port and maritime authorities can share experiences/exchange information in combating COVID-19 while safeguarding unimpeded maritime trade.

- Continue to adopt best industry practices according to national circumstances, including precautionary measures for shipping community, advisories and assistance for shore personnel and ship crew, safe handling cargo and measures taken in dealing with COVID-19 cases.

Recognizing that we share the above-mentioned motivations put forward by the members of the Port Authorities Roundtables (PAR), the Nigerian Ports Authority, hereby declare to keep our ports open through the adoption of safe operations and best industry practices in complete agreement and harmony with the PAR members, in order to sustain maritime trade and shipping activities so that vital goods, including essential medical supplies, can continue to flow seamlessly in view of the COVID-19 situation.

This declaration is referred for your information and for onward transmission to the Nigeria’s Technical Advisor/Deputy-APR to IMO for further necessary action, please.

Kindly accept the assurances of my esteemed regards

Hadiza Bala Usman
Managing Director