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EBOLA VIRUS – Update 4

As previously advised the situation in the various countries of West Africa regarding the Ebola virus is very fluid and is changing on a daily basis.

In this context and further to our advice of 19.08.2014 and subsequent updates of 22.08.2014, 27.08.2014 and 04.09.2014 please find below a summary of the latest information we have received from various TCI Africa Offices in West Africa.

GABON

Further to a notice issued by the Gabonese Ministry of Transport in Libreville to the Port Authorities in Gabon on the 14th August, 2014 advising that any vessel calling at a Gabonese port coming directly from a county affected by the current Ebola virus outbreak would not be allowed to enter or berth at the port a new communiqué has been issued jointly by the Gabonese Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Health on the 4th September, 2014.

According to this new order any vessel arriving at Gabon from an Ebola affected country will have to undergo a health / sanitary inspection following which OPRAG (Port Authorities of Gabon) will decide if the vessel can berth or not.

Herewith a free translation of the joint communiqué

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTS

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Libreville, 04 September 2014

JOINT RELEASE

From the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Transport, concerning the preventive measures taken against the Ebola virus in the maritime, port and lagoon sectors

In application of the preventive measures taken by the government and in addition to NOTE N°0490/MT/CAB/SG of 14th August, 2014 regarding the EBOLA virus, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Transport have decided to take the following measures, applicable immediately to the maritime, port and lagoon sectors.

I. At port level

A surveillance and response unit coordinated by the Institute of Epidemiology to combat an endemic has been set up, comprising of the Health Department of Seafarers, the General Directorate of Merchant Marine, the Departments of the Ministry of Health, the Department of Military Health and of OPRAG.

1. Before the berthing of the vessel

- 1.1. Twenty four hours (24) before the arrival at roads, the vessel must, through its agents, remit to the Harbour Master of the ports and to the contact points of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) for the surveillance and response unit's evaluation, in addition to the usual required documents :
 - The latest ship sanitation control exemption certificates
 - Copy of the consultation register for the previous twenty (20) days
 - Maritime Sanitary Declaration
 - Declaration of isolation measures taken for any suspected cases or any deaths on board the vessels
 - List of ports where crew changes have taken place
 - List of ports of call for the previous 30 days
- 1.2. In the case that the vessel has arrived from a port affected by the Ebola virus, a medical team will go on board for a health inspection of passengers and crew members;
- 1.3. The conclusions of this inspection are communicated to OPRAG who will authorize, as appropriate, the vessel's entry;
- 1.4. In all cases, the port pilots must be suitably equipped and have appropriate individual and collective protection equipment before any contact with the vessel.

2. When the vessel is berthed

- All vessels upon arrival in Gabonese ports must undergo a sanitary control and systematic screening by the surveillance and response unit before any commercial operations or any control by the competent administrations;
- Any persons other than the crew must fitted with individual protection equipment, in particular with a mask and gloves, before going on board;
- A security perimeter is set up at port level in order to proceed with a systematic health control of all vessels, in particular small vessels, fishing vessels, yachts, support vessels, supply vessels to offshore platforms undergoing international travel in countries affected by the Ebola virus disease.
- No crew change will be authorized
- The vessel's crew must stay on board
- Any person having contact with the vessel must systematically disinfect their hands upon disembarkation

3. Handling of suspicious cases

When a suspicious case is declared, the vessel stays at anchorage and the country provides assistance according to the International Sanitary Regulations.

II. CONCERNING THE OFFSHORE PLATFORMS

1. Any vessel providing assistance and bunker to offshore platforms must systematically announce to the Port Authorities, the contact points for the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) and to the surveillance and response unit, where she has come from before accessing the maritime zone under the Gabonese jurisdiction
2. Any employment of a crewmember or similar workers, any movement of offshore personnel and any crew change are subject to prior authorization from the General Manager of the Merchant Marine after seeking the seafarers' health official's opinion.
3. Offshore platforms must systematically notify the surveillance and response unit of any suspicious cases to ensure they are taken care of.

III. CONCERNING THE MARITIME DELEGATION ALONG THE COAST

A surveillance and response unit has been put in place in each maritime delegation comprised of the services of the Maritime Affairs and those of the Ministry of Health.

The above preventive measures concern the following craft,
The artisanal fishing canoes, the small boats, the traditional boats and the yachts undertaking international travel and any other device capable of undertaking international navigation.

Upon arrival of the craft:

A security perimeter is put in place so as to conduct a systematic sanitary control of all the crew and the travelers by the local surveillance and response unit.

IV. PARTICULAR CASE OF STOWAWAYS

No stowaway will be disembarked in Gabon until further notice

V. RAISING AWARENESS AMONG PEOPLE IN THE MARITIME, PORT AND LAGOON SECTORS

Committees have been put in place whose mission consists of raising awareness of all persons in the maritime, port and lagoon sectors.

The Transport and Health Ministers recommend a significant involvement of the competent authorities and the port communities.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTS

Pr Fidèle MENGUE ME ENGOUANG

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Raphael NGAZOUZE

IVORY COAST

For any vessel coming from Ebola affected countries / ports the sanitary / health service will first go on board the vessel at the outer roads for medical checking / screening of the crew. The pilot will only be allowed to board on condition that no case of Ebola is detected on the vessel.

MADAGASCAR

According to information issued by APMF (Ministry of Transport) the Ministry of Transport has stated that all vessels arriving at the ports of Madagascar must submit to the APMF 48 hours before arrival their crew list, health declaration and list of the last 10 ports of call.

Vessels coming from an Ebola affected country will be subjected to a sanitary / health inspection before anyone, including the pilot, is allowed to board. Permission to berth will be dependent upon the results of the aforementioned inspection. Any vessel with any suspicion of Ebola fever on board will not be allowed to berth.

5th September, 2014

Simon Webster

**Eltvedt & O'Sullivan
As Agents to the Managers of TCI AFRICA**