

Statement on X-Press Pearl incident by Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, IMO

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IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim issued the following statement:

“I express my deep concern to all impacted by the incident involving the container vessel X-PRESS PEARL, which caught fire whilst at anchor near Colombo, Sri Lanka in May.

I wholeheartedly appreciate the efforts of the Sri Lankan and Indian authorities, for their successful rescue of the crew, bringing them to safety. I also thank the salvors for their efforts.

We are closely monitoring the situation as it evolves, including reports of chemical pollution, debris coming ashore in the form of plastic pellets, and the potential for oil pollution.

I commend the Sri Lankan and Indian authorities, including the Department of Fisheries, the Marine Environment Protection Authority, the Navy, and the Coast Guard, who are responding to the incident at sea and onshore.

IMO is liaising with its UN partners (UNEP and OCHA) and with the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), the regional organization for South Asia, with regards to possible assistance. IMO is also in communication with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Environment (MEPA) for any specific technical assistance that IMO may provide.

I look forward to receiving the investigation report into this incident in due course.”