

ICAO Regional Seminar on MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards

Singapore 2011

Wrap-up: Mauricio's Talking Points

Dear Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to provide closing comments on the completion of a very successful ICAO Regional Seminar on MRTDs and Biometrics.

ICAO MRTD Regional Seminars as this one in Singapore have two main purposes. First, they provide an opportunity to brief participants from the Member States about current MRTD specifications, new developments and clarify any specific questions and finer technical points. Secondly, they provide a forum for professional discussions about the current and emerging needs of States and other stakeholders. They present an opportunity to discuss practical ways how we could join our forces to strengthen MRTD implementation and border security capacity, so that the States and their societies could benefit from enhanced security and facilitation that the MRTD programme offers.

We can say with confidence that the Regional Seminar in Singapore addressed those needs very well. In particular, the numbers and diversity of the participants highlighted the importance that government agencies and private sector place on travel documents, border security and combating terrorism and trans-border crime.

I would like to highlight some important messages that emerged from our discussions at the Seminar:

- Mr. Awan, Director of the ICAO Regional Office in Bangkok highlighted that this year marks the tenth anniversary of 9/11, and that, tragic as it is, this date urges us to reflect upon what has been achieved and what still could be done to ensure the greatest possible security world-wide. Security is a sector that allows no compromises. It is our responsibility to be proactive, innovative and explore every further option that adds to global security and cooperative international efforts in combating terrorism.
- Mr Jim Marriot, Chief of the Aviation Security Branch provided the institutional views on the importance ICAO places on the development and implementation of the MRTD Programme, and highlighted the commitment on supporting and making the Programme and sustainable one for the long run.
- Compliance with ICAO MRTD standards and specifications is key to maximising security and facilitation benefits for States and their citizens. And for this, ICAO will update and simplify the structure of Doc 9303 and

significantly enhance its content with the inclusion of currently available technical reports and information contained in the Supplement to Doc 9303. In the meantime, this information is available from our web site.

- Some states world-wide struggle with the implementation of MRTD standards. This calls for intensifying capacity building assistance efforts, intensifying technical dialogue with states in need, and mobilising assistance from the donor community.
- The session on the Public Key Directory (PKD) highlighted the importance of considering all the component elements of required to issue an ICAO compliant electronic Passport (or ePassport), which includes the implementation of the PKD. A passport that simply ignores or overlooks this element cannot be called an ePassport according to ICAO official definitions.
- Our hands-on exercise session on the ICAO Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and Issuance of Travel Documents proved to be a constructive and helpful exchange on this important work package, and generated very useful feedback. It also provided and enhanced different perspectives on the travel documents to participants from different professional backgrounds.
- Procurement of MRTDs remains an area that often presents significant challenges to government agencies. If technical advice or guidance is needed, I encourage States to contact ICAO MRTD programme at the early planning stage. Preventing mistakes is much easier and cheaper than solving them.

- The security of passport issuance process and Evidence of Identity is an area that requires particular attention. This is an area where identity fraud efforts have been shifting globally, and could be exploited for terrorist and trans-border crime purposes. ICAO will continue with the ongoing work of codifying good practices in secure issuance and identity management for the benefit of all States.
- Smart Borders (eBorders) is an exciting and innovative area where new approaches are being explored to enhance both border security and facilitation. In particular, eBorder developments integrate the use of both travel document and data to maximise security benefits. In particular, the success stories about eVisa show that Smart Borders can be a significant addition to the broader security framework. ICAO Secretariat has been following eBorder developments world-wide and exploring options of providing guidance material to States about already existing best practices.
- Some capacity gaps have been identified during the frank and constructive discussions during the Seminar. The ICAO Secretariat and TAG/MRTD Implementation and Capacity-Building Working Group will be following them up and exploring ways how to address them through practical capacity-building projects. But I also encourage States to maintain dialogue with ICAO about their ongoing and newly-emerging MRTD and border challenges. The more we know what your needs are, the better placed ICAO will be to develop an effective technical assistance strategy. Please remain in touch with the MRTD

Programme and the ICBWG about your needs and challenges. Also, make use of the ICAO Regional Office in Bangkok to communicate your needs and challenges. Our close cooperation and ongoing technical dialogue are key to success.

This successful Regional Seminar was the result of excellent cooperation between many parties. I should like to take this opportunity to thank our hosts, the Government of Singapore – and especially the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and the Singapore Aviation Academy – which provided enormous assistance and support in organizing and implementing this very important event. Their very generous hospitality was outstanding and gave us an opportunity to discover the beauty and charm of Singapore and its people.

Special thanks are due to Mr. Yap Ong Heng, Director General, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and his staff (Cheri and Ani) and Mr. Pok Cheng Chong, Director of the Singapore Aviation Academy and his staff (Laura, Fadz and Dian). His support and enormous contribution to organising the Seminar was absolutely essential to its success. I would also like to highlight our gratitude to Messrs. Chee Meng Lam, and Mr. Sherman Koh of the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore. They were our main focal points and partners in organising this Regional Seminar. Their tireless efforts and readiness to go an extra mile whenever needed made this Seminar a success.

Special thanks are due to the ICAO Technical Advisory Group Experts that contributed during this seminar. You have graciously postponed your other

duties to serve as speakers and moderators at the Seminar, generously provided knowledge and expertise, thus ensuring its success. I must also thank the Chairman of the Public Key Directory Board for their outstanding cooperation, in particular for mobilizing experts for our Seminar.

The participants of the Seminar, diverse as they are, have one thing in common: they are very busy people. I thank you all for taking your valuable time to attend the Seminar, to contribute to its discussions and a constructive debate about MRTD needs, current and future.

Thanks are due to the industry partners who made the Seminar possible through their contributions and briefed us about the technologies and products they offer.

Finally, I would like to thank the MRTD Programme team: Garleen Tomney, Erik Slavenas and Nathalie Teatin for making this event yet another success.

Again, I sincerely thank you all for having taken the time to join us here, and look forward to seeing you at future ICAO MRTD events.

— END —