

ICAO REGIONAL SEMINAR ON MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (MRTDs), BIOMETRICS AND BORDER SECURITY: VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE, 27 – 29 NOVEMBER 2012

OPENING SPEECH BY Honourable Nicholas T. Goche: Minister of Transport, Communication and Infrastructural Development

- **Governor and Resident Minister of Matabeleland North Province Hon. T. Mathuthu**
- **His Worship, The Mayor of Victoria Falls- Councilor Jiyane**
- **ICAO Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Mr. Meshesha Belayneh**
- **Registrar General Mr. Tobaiwa Mudede**
- **Principal Director of Immigration Mr. C. Masango**
- **The Civil Aviation Authority Zimbabwe Board Chairman- Advocate J.F. Mudenda and CAAZ Board members (here present)**
- **The General Manager of the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe Mr. David Chawota**
- **Seminar delegates,**
- **All protocols observed**

On behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe and the people of Zimbabwe, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the resort town of Victoria Falls for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Regional Seminar on Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs), Biometrics and Border Security. I am convinced that this unique three day MRTDs seminar and vendor exhibition will remain a pre-eminent global gathering in this region for a long time to come.

I am informed that this MRTDs and Biometrics Seminar will deliberate on identity management best practices and related border security issues. This will enhance facilitating the clearance of persons at border control points. The enhancement of the integrity of travel documents serves, in turn, to strengthen aviation security, since MRTDs can be used as an information tool to curtail illegal activities such as unlawful interference, illegal migration and human trafficking.

The introduction of new security features, production methods and personalization techniques in MRTDs has made the latest generation of identification documents very difficult to forge. However, in spite of the current high level of travel document security, there yet remains a vulnerability regarding identity management that can undermine this effort and I am sure it affects most of the issuing authorities. I am talking about breeder

documents (such as birth certificates) that determine the identity of a person. These documents, along with the underlying civil and administrative systems and processes used to issue them, pose security vulnerabilities that can compromise MRTDs. As the later has become more difficult to forge, breeder identity documents fraud can become more prevalent. This can result, for example, in ‘genuine’ travel documents being issued to persons with false identities, thereby undermining the benefits which have been achieved by the MRTDs to date. I therefore urge this seminar to look at ways of enhancing breeder document security.

Threats to civil aviation are diverse and multi-faceted, and call for coordinated strategic responses. Regretfully, terrorism remains a global problem that calls for global solutions. To be effective, counter-terrorism measures must be harmonised and consistently implemented world-wide, aiming at concerted efforts among states, and cooperation with industry partners. ICAO has been a focal agency of global cooperation on counter-terrorism and we welcome its ongoing efforts aimed at exploring further options for a more comprehensive security framework.

Terrorism, while being a particularly serious and visible threat, is hardly the only security concern. Organised trans-border crime, in its numerous forms, presents threat to civil aviation as well as to the security of states and their societies. In addition to providing illicit funding to terrorist activities, trans-border crime has a strong destabilising potential and continues presenting threats to civil aviation, states and their citizens.

Where does ICAO become a key player in the development of such documentation?! Yes ICAO is a key player in this domain as one of the fastest and mass mover of people across the globe. Besides gluing global air travel security efforts together, ICAO's active role is a demonstration of the seamlessness of security systems, cross sectorial, encompassing aviation security, immigration, passport offices, police and state security in general. This is all in a bid to safeguard humanity. The resultant technology development is not a preserve of the aviation sector, but will be employed across all forms of border and passage control.

Zimbabwe acknowledges and comments the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for a job well done in spearheading travel document security. I urge delegates to support ICAO efforts to make global travel safe and secure. This Seminar presents an opportunity for delegates to further enhance global air transport security through resolutions which will strengthen the current regime of MRTDs.

I sincerely thank you for having taken your time to come here and wish you a successful MRTD Seminar in the next three days. I also invite you to spare asome of your time to visit our majestic Victoria

Falls, the wild life within the surrounding areas and the Zimbabwean hospitality.

I declare this Seminar officially open.

I thank you.