



International Civil Aviation Organization

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**ICAO NEWS RELEASE**

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**“FOR TERRORISTS, TRAVEL DOCUMENTS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS WEAPONS.”**

### **Ten years after 9/11, ICAO meeting considers new options for countering terrorism and trans-border crime**

**MONTRÉAL, 12 September 2011** – The world’s leading government and industry experts on passports and identity documents will meet at ICAO Headquarters this week to discuss how to better prevent terrorism and related trans-border crime.

The Seventh Symposium and Exhibition on ICAO Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs), Biometrics and Security Standards (12-15 September) coincides with the tenth anniversary of the attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States. Some 500 participants from ICAO Member States, international organizations, law enforcement agencies, and developers of identity technology and documents are expected to participate.

“Our track record since 9/11 in strengthening the global security net is excellent. We are better at anticipating, detecting, intercepting and protecting against terrorist attacks. And we respond more appropriately when attacks occur or are attempted.” said Raymond Benjamin, Secretary General of ICAO.

“In today’s heightened security environment, however, we must consider how the ICAO MRTD Programme can do even more to strengthen aviation security and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of passenger clearance procedures at airports and border crossings.” he added.

Remaining weaknesses in identity management or travel document security flaws tend to be exploited by terrorists and criminals worldwide and present a weak link in global efforts to ensure security, stability, good governance and the rule of law. The issuance and integrity of travel documents, border security and identity management constitute an integral part of global counter-terrorism efforts.

This year’s Symposium focuses on the role of MRTDs and border controls in combating and preventing terrorism and trans-border crime, as aviation security is being redefined and broadened, and made more risk-based intelligence-led.

Of primary concern is the lack of resources by a number of States to achieve compliance with ICAO MRTD requirements and to build robust identity management systems. Other issues to be considered include:

- Identity fraud
- Identity management and data sharing
- Passenger screening technologies and the “Checkpoint of the future” concept
- Automated border controls
- Enhanced security of travel documents
- Increased cooperation among government agencies and with industry

The meeting will also emphasize the value for States of joining ICAO’s Public Key Directory (PKD), a central brokerage system for the multilateral exchange of electronic certificates and certificate revocation lists used to validate digital signatures of electronic MRTDs. The PKD enhances the security and trustworthiness of any State’s ePassport.

Currently enrolled in the PKD are: Austria, Australia, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region – China), India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Macao (Special Administrative Region – China), Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Korea, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

Detailed information on the MRTD Symposium and presentations can be found at:  
[www.icao.int/mrtdsymposium2011](http://www.icao.int/mrtdsymposium2011)

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 190 Contracting States.

**To set-up an interview or request a media pass, please contact:**

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