



## **FACILITATION (FAL) DIVISION — TWELFTH SESSION**

**Cairo, Egypt, 22 March to 2 April 2004**

**Agenda Item 2: Facilitation and security of travel documents and border control formalities**

**Agenda Item 2.1: Machine readable travel documents (MRTDs)**

### **A STANDARD TO REQUIRE THE ISSUANCE OF MACHINE READABLE PASSPORTS**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper proposes that ICAO adopt a Standard requiring all Contracting States to begin issuing Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) by 2006, if they have not already done so by then.

1.2 ICAO development of specifications for Machine Readable Passports stems from the Chicago Convention mandates that Contracting States prevent unnecessary delays by facilitating border clearance formalities and that they adopt internationally standard customs and immigration procedures (Articles 22 and 23 refer<sup>1</sup>).

1.3 The defining characteristic of an MRP is the “machine readable zone” at the bottom of the data page, containing two lines of data presented in OCR-B characters and recapitulating essential data contained in the “visual zone” of the page. The entire data page is laid out in a standardized format according to the specifications in Doc 9303, Part 1, *Machine Readable Passports*.

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<sup>1</sup> **Article 22** (*Facilitation of formalities*)

Each contracting State agrees to adopt all practicable measures, through the issuance of special regulations or otherwise, to facilitate and expedite navigation by aircraft between the territories of contracting States, and to prevent unnecessary delays to aircraft, crews, passengers and cargo, especially in the administration of the laws relating to immigration, quarantine, customs and clearance.

**Article 23** (*Customs and immigration procedures*)

Each contracting State undertakes, so far as it may find practicable, to establish customs and immigration procedures affecting international air navigation in accordance with the practices which may be established or recommended from time to time, pursuant to this Convention. Nothing in this Convention shall be construed as preventing the establishment of customs-free airports.

## 2. ATTRIBUTES OF MRPs

2.1 The MRP is the basic element in modern systems and data bases implemented by States for travel document issuance, border clearance operations, and detection of lost and stolen travel documents. Adoption of the ICAO specifications in issuing machine readable passports offers the following benefits:

- a) *Standardization.* The undeniable preference to have passports which are formatted in an internationally standard way has been a compelling reason in itself to adopt MRPs. The ICAO specifications have been endorsed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) as a global standard.
- b) *Document security.* The Fifth Edition of Doc 9303, Part 1 (2003) contains new specifications to improve the security of issued documents, including provisions for machine-assisted confirmation of the identity of the document holder and machine-assisted authentication of the document itself. These safeguards against forgeries, counterfeiting and improper use by imposters help States to prevent many of the high costs of document fraud and related criminal activities.
- c) *Global interoperability.* MRPs and other travel documents issued in any State in accordance with ICAO specifications can be read and verified electronically in information systems in any other State. Moreover, uniformity of the specified visual format enables inspection authorities worldwide to recognize a particular type of travel document for what it is and thus instills confidence in the document's integrity.
- d) *Benefits to the document holder.* Heightened aviation security, added protection against identity theft and participation in enhanced systems facilitating airport controls will flow from the use of biometric-enhanced MRPs, which are coming closer to reality as a result of the 2003 ICAO biometric "blueprint" for the integration of biometric identification information into MRPs and other Machine Readable Travel Documents

2.2 The first States began issuing MRPs in the early 1980s. In 1988 the Tenth Session of the Facilitation Division, agreeing that the clearance of passengers through passport controls was greatly facilitated by machine readable passports, decided to recommend adoption of a new Recommended Practice in Chapter 3, urging Contracting States to issue machine readable passports in the layout set forth in ICAO Doc 9303. At the time of the Eleventh Session of the FAL Division (FAL/11, April 1995), fewer than 15 States had notified ICAO that they were issuing MRPs. Today, that number has risen to 86, the names of which are listed in the Appendix to this paper.

2.3 Until now, for the reasons outlined above, the specifications for MRPs have sold themselves to States, and the upward trend of voluntary implementation is expected to continue, as it is clear that most States regard MRPs as a necessary tool in facilitating passenger clearance and improving security. However, in the interests of achieving universal implementation within a few years time – an objective deemed an important part of the ICAO Aviation Security Plan of Action – ICAO is prepared to provide assistance in the form of project planning, education, arrangements for financing and/or project management upon requests from member States. The worldwide implementation of a Standard, should one be adopted, is considered to be not only desirable but also feasible.

3. **ACTION BY THE DIVISION**

3.1 The Division is invited to recommend the adoption of the following new Standard:

3.10 Contracting States shall begin issuing Machine Readable Passports in accordance with the specifications of Doc 9303, Part 1 (*Machine Readable Passports*), no later than 1 April 2006.

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## APPENDIX

### ISSUANCE OF MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

(Updated 29 October 2003)

U = 2001 ICAO State letter and correspondence received from States

(I) = Information in "Interpol/Keesings Identity Checker" (2003 edition)

MRP = Machine Readable Passport; MRV = Machine Readable Visa;

TD-1/TD-2 = Size 1 and Size 2 Machine Readable Official Travel Documents; CMC = Crew Member Certificate

State/Territory/Other	MRPs	MRVs	TD-1/TD-2	CMCs	Machine Readers	
<i>Total</i>	86	27	16	1	7 Full page	35 MRZ only
<b>Albania</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Angola</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Argentina</b>	U	–	–	–	U	–
<b>Australia</b>	U	U	–	–	–	U
<b>Austria</b>	U	U	U	–	–	
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Bahrain</b>	U	–	–	–	–	
<b>Belarus</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Belgium</b>	U	–	–	–	–	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Brunei Darussalam</b>	U	–	–	–	U	–
<b>Bulgaria</b>	U	–	–	–	–	U
<b>Canada</b>	U	U	–	–	–	U
<b>Chile</b>	U	–	–	–	–	
<b>China</b>	(I)	U	–	–	–	
<b>-----Hong Kong SAR</b>	U	–	–	–	–	U
<b>-----Macau SAR</b>	U	U	–	–	U	
<b>Costa Rica</b>	U	–	–	–	–	
<b>Croatia</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Cuba</b>	U	–	–	–	–	U
<b>Cyprus</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Czech Republic</b>	U	U	U	–	–	U
<b>Denmark</b>	U	U	–	–	–	U
<b>Estonia</b>	U	–	U (I)	–	–	
<b>Finland</b>	U	U	U	–	–	U
<b>France</b>	(I)	–	U	–	–	
<b>Georgia</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Germany</b>	U	U	U	–	U	–
<b>Greece</b>	U	–	–	–	–	U
<b>Hungary</b>	U	–	U	–	–	U
<b>Iceland</b>	U	U	–	–	–	U
<b>India</b>	U	–	–	–	–	U
<b>Indonesia</b>	(I)	–	–	–	–	
<b>Ireland</b>	U	–	–	–	–	

State/Territory/Other	MRPs	MRVs	TD-1/TD-2	CMCs	Machine Readers	
Israel	(I)	–	–	–	–	
Italy	(I)	–	–	–	–	
Japan	U	U	–	–	–	U
Jordan	U	–	–	–	–	
Kenya	U	–	–	–	–	
Kuwait	U	–	–	–	–	
Latvia	U	U	–	–	–	U
Lesotho	U	–	–	–	–	
Liechtenstein	(I)	–	U	–	–	
Lithuania	U	–	–	–	U	–
Luxembourg	U	U	–	–	–	
Madagascar	U	–	–	–	–	
Malaysia	U	U	–	–	–	U
Maldives	U	–	–	–	–	
Malta	U	–	–	–	–	U
Mauritius	U	–	–	–	U	
Mexico	U	–	–	–	–	
Monaco	U	–	–	–	–	
Namibia	U	–	–	–	–	
Netherlands, Kingdom of the	U	U	U	–	–	U
New Zealand	U	U	–	–	–	U
Nigeria	(I)	–	–	–	–	
Norway	U	–	–	–	–	
Oman	U	–	–	–	–	U
Paraguay	U	–	U	–	–	
Philippines	–	–	–	–	–	U
Poland	(I)	–	–	–	–	
Portugal	U	–	–	–	U	–
Republic of Korea	U	–	–	–	–	U
Republic of Moldova	U	–	U	–	–	
Romania	U	–	–	–	–	U
Russian Federation	U	U	–	–	U	–
San Marino	(I)	–	–	–	–	
Saudi Arabia	U	U	–	–	–	U
Seychelles	U	–	–	–	–	
Singapore	U	–	–	–	–	U
Slovakia	(I)	–	–	–	–	
Slovenia	U	U	U	–	–	
South Africa	U	U	–	–	–	U
Spain	U	U	U	–	–	
Sri Lanka	U	–	–	–	–	
Sweden	U	U	–	–	U	–
Switzerland	(I)	U	U	U	–	U
Taiwan, Province of China	(I)	–	–	–	–	
Thailand	U	U	–	–	–	U

State/Territory/Other	MRPs	MRVs	TD-1/TD-2	CMCs	Machine Readers	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	U	–	–	–	–	U
Tonga	U	–	–	–	–	
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	U
Ukraine	(I)	–	–	–	–	
United Kingdom	U	U	–	–	–	U
United States	U	U	U	–	–	U
Uzbekistan	U	–	–	–	–	U
Viet Nam	U	U	U	–	–	U
Other						
UNMIK Travel Document	(I)					

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