



FACILITATION (FAL) DIVISION — TWELFTH SESSION

Cairo, Egypt, 22 March to 2 April 2004

Agenda Item 1: Developments since the Eleventh Session of the Division

WORK OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

(Presented by the Secretariat)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper is a brief account of the work accomplished by ICAO's Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents (TAG/MRTD) since the Eleventh Session of the Facilitation Division, in 1995 (FAL/11).

1.2 The TAG/MRTD is currently made up of experts from 13 ICAO member States: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Japan, New Zealand, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States. Observers represent either States or non-governmental bodies such as the Airports Council International (ACI), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

2. HARMONIZATION OF DOC 9303

2.1 In 1997, the TAG/MRTD commenced a comprehensive review of the then-existing four parts of Doc 9303— Part 1: *Machine Readable Passports* (MRVs), Part 2: *Machine Readable Visas* (MRVs), Part 3: *Size 1 and Size 2 Official Machine Readable Travel Documents* (TD-1 and TD-2) and Part 4: *Machine Readable Crew Member Certificates* (CMCs). The structure and organization of parts 1, 2 and 3 were harmonized to facilitate implementation by issuing States and organizations, with Part 4 being incorporated into Part 3.

2.2 Each part of Doc 9303 contains a section which outlines the specifications that are common to all types of machine readable travel documents followed by one or more sections detailing the specifications unique to the type of travel document addressed in the particular part. The text common to all parts includes guidelines for the presentation of names, placement of data elements in the visual zone of the data page, instructions for truncation of names and transliteration of national characters in the machine readable zone, as well as an explanation of the purpose and construction of the machine readable zone.

3. REVISION OF SPECIFICATIONS

3.1 On the basis of technical advice from the TAG/MRTD, all parts of Doc 9303 have been revised to assimilate new technologies into the specifications.

3.2 The Fourth and Fifth Editions of Part 1 were published in 1999 and 2003, respectively, the latter incorporating security-related technologies into the specifications and guidance on minimum security measures to be taken in the construction of MRTDs.

3.3 The Third Edition of Part 2 is expected to be published by the end of 2004. Two security-related changes are the requirement in a visa of a space for the portrait of the visa holder and the requirement to include only one person on an MRV. These changes are intended to deter the misuse of a visa by someone other than the rightful holder.

3.4 The specifications of the Second Edition of Part 3 (February 2002) are the state of art in travel document design and advanced machine reading and document security technology currently available for use on travel documents in card format. Part 3 also contains revised specifications for machine readable CMCs, formerly published as Doc 9303, Part 4.

4. BIOMETRIC BLUEPRINT

4.1 In 1995, FAL/11 recommended that ICAO should expedite work on the development of biometric specifications for MRTDs, a topic that was first raised at the Seventh TAG/MRTD meeting in 1993. FAL/11 recognized that biometrics could enhance the security benefits of using MRTDs by developing ways of preventing the use of genuine passports by imposters, help States meet the challenge of coping with increasing air traffic congestion and, importantly, strengthen immigration and security checks.

4.2 The TAG/MRTD developed specifications, for Doc 9303, to ensure standardization and global interoperability of the identity confirmation process. It then initiated a study to determine the compatibility of the then-available biometric technologies with the issuance and inspection processes relevant to MRTDs. It found that facial recognition, fingerprint and iris-scan were most compatible with the comprehensive set of requirements defined for machine-assisted identity confirmation with MRTDs. On the basis of these results and the recommendations of the TAG/MRTD, in May 2003 the ATC adopted the "biometric blueprint" which is described in greater detail in FAL/12-WP/4.

5. MRTD WEB SITE

5.1 A Web site dedicated to ICAO's MRTD Programme (<http://www.icao.int/mrtd>) has been established to serve the broad spectrum of persons in government agencies, industry and the public who are interested ICAO's work in MRTD specifications and related technology. The site provides information about the TAG/MRTD, the latest versions of publications developed by them, news items, and down-loadable technical reports. An additional feature, "on-line help", will be available in the near future to enable users to view various sections of the MRTD-related publications in answer to "frequently asked questions".

6. TAG/MRTD STRATEGY

6.1 The TAG/MRTD has adopted a long-term strategy aimed at maintaining an orderly worldwide evolution of the MRTD programme.

6.2 The goals include improving facilitation of formalities and expediting low-risk travellers through inspection controls while achieving a high level of compliance, improving the security of MRTDs and developing processes for positive identification and inspection of individuals and achieving global interoperability of travel documents and inspection technology. The approaches include increasing automation of the inspection process, introducing systems for automated self-clearance, developing international standards for the afore-mentioned purposes and sharing information globally.

7. ACTION BY THE DIVISION

7.1 The Division is invited to note the report above.

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