

ICAO Sixth Symposium: Summary and Conclusions
Barry J. Kefauver—November 4, 2010

Introduction

I am delighted to be here again with you today and pleased to be able to express my views regarding the present as well as the future. Those of you who have attended any or all of the preceding five Symposia will have seen by now that the nature and content of this year's Symposium has been different from any of those. The fundamental goal of this year's format was to look out over the next decade or so and develop a sense of purpose and direction and especially the needs of Governments in the travel document and border control and security arenas. I think the speakers have not disappointed us in meeting these goals.

At this point, nearing the conclusion of our time together, I would like to draw some of these pieces into a something of a coherent whole, with that emphasis coming full circle to looking out over the coming decade to assess the roles and functions and purposes of travel documents, the next generation.

Summary of the Symposium

There is no doubt that Santayana's time-worn saying "those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it" has great relevance on where we stand today with respect to looking out over the time horizon toward the next generation of travel documents. There have been so many significant issues and food for thought raised over the past several days. I will single out seven specific themes, but there are far too many to do justice to what we have learned at this Symposium. However, I will cite very briefly what I feel are those seven recurring themes.

First, what I will characterize as **Travel Authorizations**, within the generic frame of visas whether of an electronic context or not. Yesterday afternoon's very spirited discussion of these issues brought the substance of these areas home graphically. While not a new area of work focus for the ICAO work groups, yesterday's discussion underscores anew the interest in the travel document community for attention to these concerns. Controversial and somewhat alien to the usual posture of shying away from the ways in which sovereign entities manage their borders, I heard a call yesterday asking to seek something of a middle ground that will assess the use of electronic and other means to accomplish travel authorizations that might lend more efficiency and effectiveness to what we now generically call the visa function.

Second, **Inspection, Examination and the Use of Tools Such as PKI and PKD**, was cited by several speakers as important concerns that demand more and broader focus and attention by all of us. The time, effort, resources and emotion that we have all expended in the current generation of passports has resulted in over 250 million ePassports in circulation and each day that number grows. The message from this Symposium is that

now is the time for all to begin using the “e” in the ePassport and reap the benefits of enhanced security and facilitation.

Third, the subject of **Evidence of Identity** was a thread that ran through a number of presentations, graphically conveying the need to address the foundations on which our travel documents are issued. I suggest that this important area of focus falls into both the passport as well as the visa spheres. The vulnerabilities that abound in the ways in which we determine eligibility and entitlement are many and varied and the pressures on these foundations are growing. Ranging from the civil registry systems that record births on through those that document death, and all of life that lies in between, all of these sources of identity data need shoring up with process improvements, best practices and where we can, the use of standards.

Fourth, **Capacity Building** resonates in this Symposium hall as an area in which strides have been made and yet so much more yet to be done. The fact that almost all of the world’s passport volume is now being issued as machine readable is a quantifiable and huge success. The concerted efforts of ICAO and its many partnerships in reaching this goal deserve commendation. However, those were yesterday and this is today, with a world filled with the needs of capacity enhancement. The success thus far merely whets the appetite for more. The scarcity of resources is a fact of life that must be acknowledged, but once having done so, all the more need to redouble the efforts and define carefully chosen priorities to insure that those scarce resources are targeted to the greatest areas of genuine need.

Fifth, the concept of **Integrity** was woven throughout the fabric of this Symposium by a number of speakers in a number of settings. While integrity is an umbrella factor that includes other considerations such as evidence of identity, I chose to single this as a conceptual and conscious theme unto itself. Ranging from the ways in which we handle the raw materials that eventually comprise a passport book through to the ways in which we deal with human resources, storage and processing facilities, legal frameworks for breaches such as passport and identity fraud, the issue of integrity is fundamental and absolute. The shifting face of threats such as document fraud now segueing into identity fraud raises new and perhaps unknown methods of making mischief. Just as we have rallied ourselves to develop the world’s most secure passport, so must we now gird to make certain that the systems on which those documents rely for their credibility are equally sound and solid.

Sixth, the **Partnerships** that have been the building blocks of our past accomplishments must be reinforced, strengthened and expanded. We heard this from the UN CTITF, INTERPOL, OAS, CARICOM, ICMPD, OSCE, ISO and others who have not been able to attend this Symposium. The mortar that bonds these relationships must be continually renewed as we are facing up to dwindling resources and never ending travel document community needs. We heard about some success stories of meaningful and significant accomplishment, particularly in the arena of capacity building in its largest sense. I sense that we will be called upon even more over the coming months and only through that bond of singularity of purpose can we hope to meet the demands. Also, in the same sense

that the foregoing are institutional partnerships, the Sixth Symposium, especially the speakers on the first day, called upon all of us, the multilateral dimensions of these partnerships to work harder and better to share critical data and information to make our borders stronger and the traveling public safer and sounder in their journeys. These are partnerships that we ourselves can forge and nurture.

Finally, *seventh*, and perhaps most loudly and most clearly was the cry of **Challenge that Must be Met With Commitment**. Several speakers used these exact words, while others by implication raised the same specter: That we face many challenges; together we must commit ourselves in order to meet them. To me, the first day was especially significant for this Symposium. On that day we heard from very senior people that what ICAO has done is important to the world and that which has yet to be done is even more important. Now, usually we hear those kinds of pronouncements at gatherings such as the Symposium. However, this year among others I heard ICAO Secretary General Benjamin pledge his personal and institutional commitment to getting this job done. The speakers who followed over the next few days all have said that we will not let him down in carrying out that commitment.

Concluding Comments: The Future

As shaped by this Sixth Symposium, in my view we are poised on a very delicate and important point in the history of travel document standards, issuance and inspection. At last year's Symposium, it was observed that ICAO took a risk in entering the uncharted seas of biometrics, but that risk has paid off. I think we are going to encounter yet more areas of risk in the coming years. We need to prepare ourselves to be able to confront these risks and maximize our abilities to deal with them. The stakes have never been higher.

Throughout the Symposium I have tried to be attentive to threads and themes of continuity that might help shape a bit of what the future holds and give us something of an edge in dealing with the unknowns. I have covered those in very skeletal fashion, but I think that is the role of a summary. However, there is one important and crucial thread that holds all of the rest together: ICAO is the fulcrum around which the implementation of travel document and border management programs revolve. The Annex 9 and other related provisions acceded to by all 192 member states clearly look to ICAO as the center of the travel document universe.

Always important, but now more than ever before the work of ICAO and its partnerships will revolve around policy directions, the determinations of what the world's governments need from travel document functionality and from that the kinds of technologies that will best make those goals into realities. To assist in this, this coming year will see the work begin for the issuance of the next ICAO RFI, a Request for Information, which is the medium through which the travel document community as a whole can communicate with industry and spell out what needs to be done and to seek the kinds of technologies to carry it out. The first RFI in 1995 specifically sought biometrics and data carrying media and resulted directly in facial recognition and contactless chips.

This was a direct result of the Governments collaborating and deciding that the global priorities were to be focused on biometrics and the kinds of ways in which that data could be carried in travel documents. It is now time to develop that vision of the future to be able to clearly articulate those emerging and new long term needs and the kinds of Government policy objectives that need to be served by industry.

We have great travel document challenges ahead. As well, within the ICAO community we have a greater and more cohesive critical mass than we have ever had before to meet those challenges. I thank all of you for your time and attention throughout the Symposium and I look forward to the next steps of our next travel document generation.

(Above as delivered, though augmented occasionally by spontaneous amplifications not captured in this text.)