



**TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE READABLE  
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (TAG/MRTD)**

**TWENTIETH MEETING**

**Montréal, 7 to 9 September 2011**

**Agenda Item 3: Activities of the ICBWG**

**Agenda Item 3.9: Convention Travel Document (CTD) Standards**

**CONVENTION TRAVEL DOCUMENT (CTD) STANDARDS**

(Presented by the ICBWG)

**1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 The 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees provides for travel documents for refugees, and the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons provides for travel documents for stateless persons (Convention Travel Document, CTD).

1.2 Article 28 of both conventions describes the obligation of Contracting States to issue travel documents to refugees or stateless persons living within their territory, in order for them to travel outside of their territory.

1.3 Schedules to the conventions describe the specific features of the respective documents and their issuance. Over time, some of the original provisions of the schedules have become outdated. CTDs described in the schedules are not machine readable, and have features that appear to contradict present ICAO Doc 9303 Part 1, Volume 1 standards.

1.4 Of 147 Contracting States to the 1951 Convention and/or the 1967 Protocol, only around 30 appear to be ICAO compliant. Of the 65 Contracting States to the 1954 Convention, only 16 appear to be ICAO compliant.

1.5 Often the CTD issuing authority is different from the one that issues passports. Access and uniformity of production methods and equipment are problematic, especially if the authorities are rivals.

1.6 The volume of CTDs is very low, and therefore it is difficult for States to produce them in economically viable quantities. Of States reporting, volumes range from less than 100 to maybe 11,000 per year.

1.7 ICAO Doc 9303, Part 1, Volume 1 and 2 describe the features of the modern MRP and eMRP. Informative appendices to Part 1, Section III describe security features and fraud prevention in issuance. FAL Annex 9, Chapter 3, Sections A to D describe attributes of travel documents and issuance procedures for ICAO MRTDs.

1.8 ICAO has established two deadlines for MRP issuance. By 1 April 2010, all passports shall be machine readable, and by 24 November 2015, all non-MRPs shall be removed from circulation. In order to comply, several ICAO Member States have begun issuing machine readable CTDs or in some cases, eCTDs. This rate does not project to attain compliance by the 24 November 2015 deadline for withdrawal of all non-MRPs.

## 2. How can ICBWG help UNHRC with CTDs?

2.1 **Information Sharing:** Expand the existing tracking tools for passport compliance issues world-wide to include CTDs, to ensure regular exchange of information and implementation updates between ICAO/ICBWG and UNHCR.

2.1.1 This would establish a baseline from which specific areas for compliance assistance could be targeted.

2.2 **Specification Assistance:** Elaborate detailed specifications for CTDs for states that combine Doc 9303 and the Schedule of the 1951 and 1954 Conventions. This combined specification would combine the technical aspects of Doc 9303 and FAL Annex 9, with the requirements of international refugee and statelessness law. The proposed combined specifications would need to be approved by both ICAO and UNHCR.

2.2.1 Many of the differences already identified between CTDs and MRPs relate to FAL Annex 9 issues, rather than issues addressed in Doc 9303, Part 1, Volume 1.

2.2.2 Of Doc 9303 issues, many can be resolved by use of optional Zone VI, as an observations page. This may raise other issues with CTD production.

2.2.3 Proposed combined specifications should heed CTD documents already in production, and should not suggest mandatory CTD elements in optional zones or fields.

2.3 **Reduction of Non-Compliant CTDs:** Propose and put into action various techniques to increase issuance of compliant MRCTDs.

2.3.1 The former UNHCR practice of providing blank CTD booklets is reduced to exceptional cases, i.e. where there is no alternative and to the extent a non-ICAO compliant travel document is accepted by transit and destination states.

2.3.2 For states that produce MRPs but non MRCTDs, attempt to develop ways to induce the passport printer to produce a short run of CTDs for personalization using the existing state hardware.

2.3.3 For States who issue MRPs and CTDs through different authorities, attempt to establish a Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministries, so that production of CTDs can be done using existing MRP hardware.

2.3.4 Enlist support from responsible passport producing companies to produce sufficient quantities of MRCTD books for their existing MRP clients.

2.3.5 Explore potential funding sources to implement CTDs from governments, groups of states or non-government organizations or development agencies.

3. **ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD**

3.1 The ICBWG invites the TAG to:

- a) approve collaboration with UNHCR in order to bring about ICAO compliance of the CTD documents; and
- b) endorse the specific steps cited above to increase CTD compliance with ICAO MRP standards.

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