



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

**TWENTY SECOND MEETING**

**Montréal, 21 to 23 May 2014**

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

**Convention Travel Documents (CTDs)**

(Presented by the Implementation Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG))

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper follows Working Paper TAG/MRTD/21-WP/9 of 24 November 2012. It accounts for the finalization and joint publication of the *Guide for Issuing Machine Readable Convention Travel Documents (MRCTDs) for Refugees and Stateless Persons* and the continued work of the ICBWG, through the CTD subgroup, with a particular focus on monitoring and implementation of MRCTDs.

**2 THE MRCTD GUIDE**

2.1 At its last meeting, the TAG/MRTD endorsed the *ICAO/UNHCR Guide for Issuing Machine Readable Convention Travel Documents for Refugees and Stateless Persons* (“the MRCTD Guide”) subject to clarification and editorial changes to be made in conjunction with the Secretariat (para. 4.2.3 of TAG/MRTD/21). In the course of 2013, ICAO, UNHCR and the CTD subgroup worked out and agreed upon a final version of the MRCTD Guide, which was published in October 2013 on the websites of both organizations.

2.2 Subsequently, UNHCR has arranged translations of the MRCTD Guide in French and Spanish; further translations into Portuguese and Russian are under way.

2.3 All relevant actors, including ICAO, UNHCR and other interested organizations are called upon to disseminate the MRCTD Guide widely; Governments and vendors are encouraged to make use of the Guide and implement its recommendations.

### **3 AMENDING ICAO DOCUMENTS TO INCLUDE CTDs**

3.1 In the last Working Paper, the ICBWG highlighted that the work on the MRCTD Guide manifested a number of open questions in ICAO documents with regard to CTDs (see WP/9, para. 3.1) and proposed identifying those questions and suggesting clarifying interpretation, and if/where required, necessary and appropriate amendments.

3.2 With regard to Doc 9303, a supplement has been accepted ("Supplement to Doc 9303, Release 13 or higher, Issue No. R12-p1\_v1\_sIV\_0011") which clarifies the data element table of the VIZ on two points (see Doc 9303-part 1-sixth edition: Volume 1, Section IV, par. 8.6):

- Field / zone no. 02/I - Add note n: "In MRCTDs the words "Travel document" shall be indicated instead of "Passport". However the first character of the document code should be "P."
- Field / zone no. 08/II - Add note o: "In MRCTDs States may include or omit the nationality data element. If nationality is included, it is recommended that States enter "stateless person" or "refugee". This ensures consistency between the VIZ and the MRZ (where the three letter code for stateless persons - XXA, and for refugees - XXB, appears)."

3.3 With regard to Annex 9, a necessary clarification of the applicability of Annex 9 to CTDs could be achieved as part of the current project of the NTWG on "Proposed amendments to travel document related Annex 9 – facilitation standards and recommended practices (SARPs)." Reference is made to WP/11 under agenda item 2: Activities of the NTWG.

3.4 More generally, ICAO is encouraged to take into account specific aspects related to CTDs and the status of their holders, i.e. refugees and stateless persons, in other documents and publications as appropriate in close collaboration with UNHCR and the CTD subgroup of the ICBWG (mainstreaming CTDs in ICAO documents). One example is the ongoing update of the Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and Issuance of Travel Documents (see WP/20), which usefully could refer to specific aspects regarding eligibility and evidence of identity of refugees and stateless persons.

### **4 MRCTD IMPLEMENTATION**

4.1 Already in Working Paper TAG/MRTD/20-WP/21 of 22 August 2011, the ICBWG set out a number of steps to reduce non-MRCTDs (see para. 2.3). In Working Paper TAG/MRTD/21-WP/9, the continued monitoring, advice to governments on MRCTDs and advocacy among all stakeholders were mentioned as next steps for the ICBWG.

4.2 Considering the low number of countries issuing MRCTDs to refugees and stateless persons (45 countries issue MRCTDs to refugees; 16 countries issue MRCTDs to stateless persons), a stronger focus on monitoring and implementation of MRCTDs is warranted. Under the lead of the CTD subgroup the following strategy is proposed:

4.2.1 Identification of a number (15-20) of key countries, essentially in terms of refugee population or number of stateless persons.

4.2.2 Analysis of the reasons for non-issuance of (MR)CTDs and development of key steps (road map) towards issuing MRCTDs in each selected country.

4.3.3 Mobilise expertise and funding, as necessary and appropriate, in cooperation with international organisations and donor governments, in order to assist and accelerate the transition to MRCTDs.

**ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD**

The TAG/MRTD is invited to:

- a) Note the final version of the MRCTD Guide of October 2013 as published by ICAO and UNHCR.
- b) Endorse, in general, amending ICAO documents to include, where appropriate, CTDs.
- c) Endorse the continued activities and cooperation with UNHCR in focusing on monitoring and implementation of MRCTDs.