

ICAO Regional Seminar on MRTDs, Biometrics and Border Security

Zimbabwe 2012

Closing Remarks

Dear Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to provide you with closing remarks for this very successful ICAO MRTD Regional Seminar on Machine Readable Travel Documents, Biometric and Border Security.

The Seminar had two main objectives:

- 1) Provide an opportunity to ICAO member States to get an update on the most recent standards and specification on MRTDs, new developments and clarify technical concerns that they may have.
- 2) Offer time and space with professionals and experts to discuss subject matters as presented about the current and emerging needs. It also provided an opportunity to have practical discussions and join efforts and synergies to enhance implementation of MRTDs and increase border control capacity. This is done so that Member States and their societies benefit from the highest level of trust and capacity offered by the MRTD Programme on Security and Facilitation.

We can say with confidence that the Regional Seminar in Zimbabwe addressed those needs very well. In particular, the numbers and diversity of the participants highlighted the importance that government agencies and private sector place on travel documents, facilitation, border security and combating terrorism and trans-border crime.

I would like to highlight some important messages that emerged from our discussions at the Seminar:

The Honorable Minister of Transport, Communications and Infrastructural Development of Zimbabwe, Hon. Nicholas Goche, and the Governor of Matabelel and North Zimbabwe, Honorable T. Mathuthu kindly and warmly welcome the participants, experts and partner organizations, and provided highlights on the importance of the Seminar for the region and the world for achieving safe and secure movement of people across borders.

- Mr. Meshesha Belayneh, Director of the ICAO Regional Office in Eastern and Southern Africa, based in Nairobi, highlighted the conclusion of the recent High-level Conference on Aviation Security held in Montreal, Canada, in September 2012, which encouraged ICAO Member States to enhance aviation security by standardizing formats for travel documents and to adopt electronic transmission of passenger data while ensuring the protection of passengers' privacy and civil liberties.
- Mr. Belayeh also highlighted that, aviation security, including border security controls is a major priority area for ICAO and, as such, implementation and

assistance to States has gained considerable momentum in the recent past. During the deliberation experts and participants explored the current global capacity gaps and challenges; looked into the present and future of ICAO's technical assistance related to MRTDs and border controls; and reflected on the prospects and priorities of enhancing capacity building assistance to Member States.

- Finally, Mr. Belayeh highlighted that the collaborative approach with industry players and State authorities would provide solutions for enhancing global civil aviation security while at the same time improving the efficiency of aviation operations.
- During the Session on ICAO Standards and Specifications, it was emphasized that compliance with the standards and specifications of the ICAO MRTD is essential to maximize the benefits of security and facilitation for states and their citizens. In this aspect, you were updated with the latest work item on updating Doc 9303. This document and related Supplement and technical reports are available for free from our website.
- We also highlighted the importance of the security of passport issuance process and the elements related to Evidence of Identification as a subject matter that requires particular attention. This is an area where identity fraud efforts have been shifting globally, and could be exploited for terrorist and trans-border crime purposes. ICAO will continue with the ongoing work of codifying good

practices in secure issuance and identification management for the benefit of all States.

- We also presented the availability of technical assistance and training to States that are facing difficulties in meeting the standards and recommendations of ICAO. We encourage you to contact the ICAO Regional Office for more details on how articulate and implement such assistance.
- We offered to you a key presentation on implementation ePassports, with the distinguished title: “Are you ready for ePassports,” highlighting the important questions and roadmap a Government should consider before implementing ePassports. Although many ICAO Member States are currently claiming that are issuing ePassports, we must highlight that their issuance are not currently required or mandated by ICAO. However, if a State decides to issue them, they must do so according to specifications set by the organization in Document 9303.
- The Registrar-General of Zimbabwe and his colleague provided us an update on the production of machine readable passports and their extensive and integrated approach to managing vital civil registry data.
 - The representative of the African Union provided a remarkable presentation on the Evaluation missions currently performed throughout Africa, to strengthen the capacity of the Focal Points Structure as the Coordinating mechanism, and taking stock of the States’ capacities to

identify Technical Assistance needs. A follow up on this will be done by ICAO and the African Union to establish a joint effort to assist States in need.

- The representative of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees deliver an appealing presentation to call upon States to issue Convention Travel Documents for refugees and stateless persons following ICAO standards and specification, and the guidance material developed by ICAO experts, which are available to you.
- Session two, “Travel Documents Security and border security” was brilliantly moderated by the learned Mr. John Wycliffe Kabbs, ICAO Council Representative of Uganda, and highlighted the work done and implemented by our partner organization, INTERPOL, in establishing and maintain diverse databases that support the fight against crime and terrorism. It also emphasized the importance of joining the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) to those States that intend or that are currently issuing ePassports, as the most effective tool for gaining access to essential information to verify and authenticate ePassport. The session also highlighted that, to obtain the intended benefits related to issuing ePassports, States should read, verify and authenticate such travel documents at borders.

- We also benefited from a vivid, practical and relevant presentation on fraudulent methods used in travel documents, identity and visa documents, done by a representative from the Immigration Portuguese authority.
- The seminar also sent a strong reminder that travel documents and identification management remain important parts of border controls and global security, but that they are only a part. The use electronic data and intelligence-driven border controls has become unstoppable and still gaining further momentum. Representatives from Zimbabwe Immigration and the Civil Aviation and the representative of SITA provided us with an appeal for the use of API/PNR to better manage flow of people and border security. For this, our colleagues called upon the use of travel documents and electronic data sharing as two sides of the same coin. Both have to be used in an integrated manner to offer optimal security and facilitation benefits to States.
- Today, we had an opportunity to show you a very useful tool created by ICAO experts, which will assist you perform a passport issuance Assessment, to identify gaps and requirements, and build a plan of action to overcome such deficiencies.
- We had an opportunity to propose and discuss about implementing electronic visa systems, as an engine for rationalizing government foreign affairs resources, facilitating access to consular services, securing borders

and promoting tourism, economic development and movement of people across borders.

- Some capacity gaps have been identified during the frank and constructive discussions during the workshop and Seminar. The ICAO Secretariat and TAG/MRTD Implementation and Capacity-Building Working Group will be following them up and exploring ways how to address them through practical capacity-building projects. But I also encourage States to maintain dialogue with ICAO about their ongoing and newly-emerging MRTD and border challenges. The more we know what your needs are, the better placed ICAO will be to develop an effective assistance strategy. Please remain in touch with ICAO Regional Office and the MRTD Programme about your needs and challenges. Our close cooperation and ongoing technical dialogue are key to success.
- This successful Regional Seminar was the result of excellent cooperation between many parties. I should like to take this opportunity to thank our hosts, the Government of Zimbabwe – especially the Minister of Transport and the Governor of Matabelel and North Zimbabwe; the Civil Aviation Authority in the person of Advocate Jacob F. Mudenda, Board Chairman of the Civil Aviation; Mr. David Chawota, CEO of the Zimbabwe Civil Aviation and his wonderful and talented staff; especially Anna Julia Hungwe and her colleagues from the CAA and Victoria Falls Airport – without whom this seminar would

not have been possible. Their very generous hospitality, the music, the sounds, the food were outstanding and gave us an opportunity to discover the beauty and charm of Zimbabwe and the wonders and beauties of Victoria Falls. But most especially, I would like to thank you the Zimbabwean people, for their hospitality, kindness and generosity.

Special thanks are due to the members of the ICAO Technical Advisory Group Experts, and experts from other organizations that contributed during this seminar. You have graciously postponed your other duties to serve as speakers and moderators at the Seminar, generously provided knowledge and expertise, thus ensuring its success. The participants of the Seminar, diverse as they are, have one thing in common: they are very busy people. I thank you all for taking your valuable time to attend the Seminar, to contribute to its discussions and a constructive debate about MRTD needs, current and future.

Thanks are due to the industry partners who also made possible to participants get acquainted with the latest in technologies and products they offer. Special thanks to our “marketing” team, **the interpreters**, who have done a great job in assisting us promote the MRTD Programme.

Finally, I would like to thank the MRTD Programme team: Erik Slavenas and Nathalie Teatín, whom remained in Headquarters, and very specially to Garleen Tomney, who is the engine and an essential contributor to the success and pertinence of the MRTD Programme. A special thanks goes to my ICAO

colleagues Mr. Belayneh, Christiane Dermakar and Keith Miller for helping us make this event yet another success.

And to the participants, over 205 representing 29 States from Africa and other regions. Thank you for your kindness, professionalism and participation. ICAO is your agency. Take ownership.

This has been a remarkable seminar in every sense. From the moment we landed, we were hugged and “welcome home;” and so we have felt throughout the week. We leave Victoria falls - the only wonder I know – well, there’s also the brother of Victoria, the Angel’s Falls in Venezuela, my native land, the brother of Victoria Falls – ... we leave Victoria with the feeling of having done a great job; in the greatest location; in the greatest company; and hosted by the greatest people. These are true great wonders of the world. We could not have asked for more!

Tenda iwe nyatso zvakanyanya kuitira nyemwerera yako yakanaka

Thank you very much for your beautiful smile, and hope to see you soon

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