

**Results of the High-level Conference on Aviation Security:  
Strategic Directions for the Future of the MRTD Programme**

**Eighth Symposium and Exhibition on ICAO MRTDs, Biometrics and  
Security Standards 10-12 October 2012**

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Your Excellencies, Symposium Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of Raymond Benjamin, Secretary General of ICAO, welcome to the Eighth Symposium and Exhibition on ICAO MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards. The Secretariat, working in collaboration with expert speakers, exhibitors and sponsors, has organized this event to address current issues of importance to the MRTD community, to showcase products and services, and to promote continuous improvement toward MRTDs achieving their full security and travel facilitation potential. We are grateful to you for contributing to the success of this important annual event.

ICAO continues its commitment to enhance aviation security as a strategic objective of the Organization. When I say enhance aviation security, let there be no doubt that this includes facilitation and

matters related to MRTDs, which are institutionally, organizationally and practically very closely connected to aviation security.

Next year at this time, the 38th Session of the ICAO Assembly – ICAO's highest level governing body – will convene in this room. The Secretary General has already presented his intentions to underline the importance of facilitation to air transport and its connection to security by explicitly recognizing **aviation security and facilitation** as an ICAO strategic objective in the next triennium. You will appreciate that this will help promote the importance of facilitation – including the MRTD Programme – in the priorities, activities and outcomes of the Organization.

But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves. Last month, from 12 to 14 September, ICAO convened the High-level Conference on Aviation Security to provide an opportunity for States and aviation stakeholders to engage in discussions on present and future challenges; reach global consensus on key aviation security priorities; and ensure that commitments expressed by States during the series of regional conferences, held in 2011 and 2012, culminated in harmonized implementation of the ICAO Declaration on Aviation Security, through enhanced international cooperation.

The High-level Conference attracted over 700 participants from 132 States, including over 30 Ministers, and 23 international organizations and industry associations. The agenda of the High-level Conference covered a broad range of critically important issues, including: the adoption of a first-ever ICAO global Risk Context Statement; enhancing air cargo security; combatting the insider threat; the evolution of the aviation security audit process; capacity building and technical assistance; ensuring the sustainability of security measures; the role of MRTDs, Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record data; and driving technology and innovation. With respect to MRTDs, the Conference concluded that:

- With the development of progressively secure travel documents that are increasingly difficult to forge, security vulnerabilities in identity management pose a threat to the integrity of travel documents;
- The related expansion of the focus of the ICAO Technical Advisory Group on MRTDs from document fraud to identity fraud is welcome;
- It has become increasingly necessary to expand the mandate of the existing ICAO MRTD Programme, and to define its future on the basis of outcomes to be achieved; and

- It would be premature to make ePassport issuance mandatory under the provisions of Annex 9.

The Conference recommended that:

- ICAO provide States with assistance and training on the introduction of ePassports;
- States consider issuing ePassports;
- States consider participating in the ICAO Public Key Directory, and ICAO disseminate the requirements of the programme and assist States in understanding these requirements;
- States consider implementing automated travel document validation using ePassport readers;
- The proposed new strategy for the MRTD Programme be submitted to the Council for approval on the basis that it describe outcomes to be achieved; and
- The technical issues raised during the Conference be addressed during the Seventh meeting of the Facilitation Panel (which will be meeting here at ICAO from 22 to 26 October).

These recommendations will, with further inputs from the Facilitation Panel, the Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents, and others, including this Symposium, help shape the preparation of ICAO's MRTD work programme and budget proposals for

the 2014 to 2016 triennium, which will be decided by the 38th Assembly next year.

The ICAO MRTD Programme is in excellent shape. It is moving forward on the strong foundation of:

- ICAO Standards, Recommended Practices and specifications;
- Partnerships and collaboration among and between States and international organizations in the public sector, and private sector stakeholders, a number of whom are represented in the Exhibition; and
- The commitment of the MRTD community, as demonstrated by your engagement in this Symposium, the ICAO Regional Seminar held earlier this year in Rio de Janeiro and another to be held 27-29 November in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

The outcomes of the recent High-level Conference on Aviation Security have added new momentum to ICAO's efforts to set the MRTD Programme on a course for continued success in the years ahead. We look forward working with you directly and through ICAO's governing bodies to secure the future of the MRTD Programme.