

**ICAO EIGHT SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBITION ON MRTDs,  
BIOMETRICS AND SECURITY STANDARDS**

**(Montreal, 10 to 12 October 2012)**

**Closing Remarks**

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I am honored to be with you here today and very pleased that I have been asked to summarize this Symposium and to express my views with respect to the past as well as the future. To prepare today's summary, I looked back over the content and conclusions of the past several years. The summary of the Sixth Symposium two years ago observed that the focus and content were different from the then-preceding five symposia. Similarly, the Seventh Symposium last year had a much different shape, form and meaning. Last year's format essentially, in the overall sum total of the four days of presentations and discussions, went toward conceptual anticipation and introspection, seeking a clearer sense of vision in a global frame. Those important foundation-building deliberations were well leavened with presentations of technical, operational and how-to-do-it nature. Last year, the tenth anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 provided a very tangible and sobering point of departure that the Symposium met with both reflection and expectation. This year, the Symposium forged a new direction that provided insight into an admittedly smaller but highly vulnerable segment of the world's traveling public, one representing compelling needs and urgent requirements: The human dimension of international development and humanitarian assistance.

With that as an introductory perspective, I will comment on and pull together some of these component pieces of this Symposium and draw them into a cohesive whole. That whole in its entirety looks out over the coming years in shaping and defining the global role, nature and purposes of machine readable travel documents with a conscious and tangible focus on humans in need.

### **Summary of Eighth ICAO Symposium**

These past three days have been filled with many issues, concerns, successes, failures, needs and realities. That having been observed, this Symposium in my view has posed a challenge to “summarize”. Usually the presentations and discussions will coalesce themselves into several rather clearly identifiable themes. This Symposium has covered a wide swath of the past as well as some hints of the future. While the information shared has many complexions, I will cite what I consider to have been the Symposium’s six recurring threads of emphasis. Please note that these threads are in random order that in no way signifies importance. (NOTE: the comments of Mr. Dupuis were offered while I was on the dais; his comments regarding the pragmatics of threading through the ICAO decision makers are must reading from this Symposium.)

*First*, I will single out the **ICAO policy directions and the fit of the MRTD strategy**, which I feel is of pivotal, fundamental and critical importance for much of the other thematic aspirations to become realities. We heard the results of the HLCAS and from that derived a sense of purpose

and direction. However, at last year's Symposium, we concluded that the ICAO MRTD program was at a crossroads; it still is. This observation from last year's Symposium has continued and perhaps has even stronger relevance at this year's Symposium. Maybe resulting from having over the past decade accomplished so much with so little, the demands and consequent expectations on the MRTD resources in ICAO have never been greater. Nor have the opportunities to make significant change ever been greater. We have accomplished much in the past ten years incorporating chips and biometrics into travel documents worldwide. However, it is urgent for us to now look to the future and seek solutions that will carry us into the coming decade. Within ICAO's overarching institutional aviation security and safety reasons for being, the fit, role, relevance and mandate of the MRTD program needs sharpened clarity to insure full understanding and appreciation of the potential of this very visible constituency-building program. The preparations for the 2013 ICAO 38th Assembly should serve as the forum to chart the course of the travel document program as envisioned by ICAO.

*Second*, as it was at last year's Symposium, this year the very clear and increasingly urgent need to **use properly the electronic verification and integrity tools** that we have expended so much energy and time and money incorporating into the ePassports. Unless and until they are, the full return on the ePassport investments will not be realized, and, of perhaps greater concern, the use of the inadequately inspected document will yield a dangerous and false sense of credibility and security. This year we heard a refreshingly simple yet comprehensive definition of border control: Border control is all about facilitating the genuine and deterring the fraudulent. We

also heard a clear and fundamental explanation that the PKD is one of the tools, an important tool, but only one aspect of a properly managed border control system that will provide the means to accomplish that simple, yet far-reaching definition. With more than 420 million of these documents in circulation and growing each day, the Symposium in terms of several speakers, in precisely this term, strongly emphasized that the “e” of ePassport become an upper case letter in our border management vocabulary.

*Third*, we finally, this year, have formally placed the concepts of **civil registry** in the travel document evidence of identification lexicon and moreover have acknowledged that the effective capturing of civil data is inextricably linked to the larger social and development agenda. The work currently underway on the evidence of identification, the foundation that establishes trust in our documents, will strongly urge that those who must make eligibility and entitlement decisions go beyond documents and consult genesis sources of validation, especially civil registries and related. In this regard, the work of the Organization of American States is especially noteworthy and provides persuasive examples that this perennially vexing quandary of enhancement of the evidence of idea can, in fact, be addressed.

*Fourth*, **special needs that must be met with special purpose documents**, could be considered the central focus of this Eighth Symposium. Deriving specific examples from UNHCR, ICRC and the UN eLP, we have been provided with these very important examples of the ways in which the ICAO MRTD program can reach out to disparate and multifaceted elements of the world's traveling public and help solve very real human problems and make

the world a better place. Just as the Convention travel document protocols will provide help for the UNHCR in fulfilling its goals, so shall the work underway on standardizing emergency and temporary passports assist the ICRC in times of emergency and crisis. In a different context, the work that has been carried out by the United Nations in launching its eLP serves two distinctly different, valuable purposes. First, because the UN carried out to the fullest extent possible the deployment of its eDocument program to insure that the systems that issue the documents are as bullet-proof as the documents themselves, this work of the UN can be looked upon as a model for countries to emulate in every way that insures the highest likelihood of a successful application. Also, insofar as the intended travel purpose, the document, because of the strength and care in its development and issuance integrity will garner a widened acceptance embrace and respect, which will allow UN staff to deploy and travel easier and faster, especially in crisis situations, than ever before.

*Fifth*, another very important theme of this Symposium is **capacity building**. While not singled out as a specific theme at last year's Symposium, the important contributions and opportunities that are especially evident in addressing the need for capacity building have now been broadly acknowledged and, significantly, have been anointed with an organizational locus within the ICAO managerial structure. Recognized by the HLCAS as a legitimate contributing partner to the institutional objectives of comprehensive aviation security, the capacity building aspects of the MRTD program knows intimately that the countries of greatest concern are among the most vulnerable and at the same time least equipped to deal with what needs to be done. We also need to always keep in mind that it is these same

countries that are not able to avail themselves of the roundtables of expertise such as NTWG, ICBWG or this Symposium. The global interdependencies that have always been with us are now at new heights of importance. Just as the travel document community has reached out to help solve document needs with the UNHCR and ICRC, so must we also provide those in need with the capacity to meet the challenges of today's travel facilitation and security.

*Sixth*, another theme that surfaced in this Symposium is the degree to which the world has begun to **leverage existing eMRTD specifications/infrastructures into other identification applications**. We all know or have heard anecdotally that the ICAO specifications are being used for other applications. However, in this Symposium we learned that there are many examples of applying the Doc 9303 eMRTD specifications for other identification programs. Cards of national identity, driving licenses, voter registration and many others exemplify the convergence of e-government programs with eMRTD, and the alignment activity within the international standardization community. This leverage of existing eMRTD specifications/infrastructures into other identification applications yields several benefits including interoperability between and among solutions within the community and the reuse of national infrastructures for regional identification programs.

### **Conclusions:**

Throughout the Symposium, but especially in the afternoon of the first day when senior ICAO officials spoke, the work of the MRTD program has been applauded and acknowledged as important and much needed, indeed even

perhaps the most important work within the ICAO framework from a worldwide human impact. Certainly this Symposium emphasized these human and humanitarian accomplishments of the ICAO MRTD program. Just as last year, we heard the observation that we have done much, but so much more remains yet to be done. True, but that crossroad still beckons and demands that we demonstrate that we deserve the resources that have been so urgently sought in many of the presentations we have heard over the past few days. Hopefully we will have a presentation at the Ninth Symposium that summarizes the work of the 38th Assembly as having laid the groundwork for an even more successful coming decade. I thank all of you for your time and attention throughout the Symposium and I look forward to our next steps.