



| ICAO

2026 ICAO **TRIP** SYMPOSIUM

22 - 24 SEPTEMBER | MONTRÉAL, CANADA



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Travel Document Ecosystems Designed for All:

Ensuring Refugees and Stateless Persons Inclusion

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An Unsustainable Reality and an Ambitious Vision

- Presently, there are 41.6 million refugees with **25 million experiencing prolonged displacement** with the majority **relying on aid** to meet their basic needs.
- UNHCR has set a goal of “50 by 35” - to **halve the number of protracted refugees** dependent on humanitarian aid and expand access to solutions **by 2035**.
- It seeks to **strengthen self-reliance and advance durable solutions** through:
 - Voluntary, Safe, and Dignified Returns
 - Achieving Self-Reliance and Inclusion in National Systems
 - Local Integration
 - Third-Country Solutions



Convention Travel Document: A Core Component of Durable Solutions

- Travel documents act as an **enabler** for mobility, self-reliance and inclusion
- Without CTDs, refugees and stateless persons may be **excluded** from various legal admission pathways



Centering Refugees in Travel Document Modernization

- In 2025, **only 43%** of ICAO member states provide Machine Readable Travel Documents to refugees
- A CTD without a chip is **excluded** from Digital Travel Credential-enabled travel, eGates and digital-first corridors
- For individuals carrying Doc 9303 codes XXA, XXB, or XXC, **every system involved in international travel needs to accept them**



ICAO–UNHCR Memorandum of Cooperation

- Established a **formal framework for collaboration** on travel documents, capacity development, and the implementation of international travel
- Demonstrates a **shared commitment** to the protection of refugees and stateless persons **within global travel document ecosystems**
- Soon the Kyrgyz Republic will issue its first refugee travel documents** after collaboration between the Government, UNHCR, and partners
- Other countries like **Chile started issuing MRCTDs in 2025**, while some like **Ethiopia are making substantial progress.**

MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION AND THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

concerning air transport facilitation and cross border mobility for persons in need of international protection

This Memorandum of Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the “MoC”) is entered into by and between:

The International Civil Aviation Organization, with headquarters in Montréal, Canada (hereinafter referred to as “ICAO”); and

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland) (hereinafter referred to as “UNHCR”),

(hereinafter referred to, individually, as a “Participant” and, collectively, as the “Participants”),

WHEREAS the International Civil Aviation Organization, established by the Convention on International Civil Aviation, signed in Chicago on 7 December 1944, (Chicago Convention) to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation, including the adoption of international standards for customs and immigration procedures at international airports;

WHEREAS the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations established by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 319 (IV) of 3 December 1949 which, on the basis of its Statute, adopted by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950, as well as in subsequent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, is mandated to provide international protection and solutions to refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons”; for the purposes of this MoC, IDPs are excluded from this definition) and is also responsible for supervising the application of international conventions for the protection of Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons;

WHEREAS ICAO and UNHCR share common objectives with regard to facilitation within the framework of Annex 9 – Facilitation and the ICAO’s Traveler Identification Program (TRIP)



Closing the Gap Requires Investment

- Issuing machine readable travel documents requires investment as the largest **refugee-hosting states tend to face fiscal and technological constraints**
- Options to consider are:
 - A **voluntary** opt-in contribution mechanism among invested states and actors
 - A small solidarity levy linked to **No Country Left Behind** modernization initiatives
 - **Dedicated donor financing** windows focused on refugee and stateless persons travel documentation

Thank You

