



**Opening Remarks by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 17th TRIP Symposium**

(Montréal, Canada, 13 September 2022)

Dear participants in the 17th ICAO TRIP Symposium and Exhibition,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you today.

Our Traveller Identification Programme event theme this year is: *Seamless and Contactless: Sharing data to accelerate the recovery*, and I am sure we are all very eager to learn more about how to advance that objective through the latest innovations.

Aviation's many responses to COVID-19 have left a lasting imprint on passenger facilitation procedures and policies, including those relating to border checkpoint processing.

In short, more credentials than ever are now required to travel, and this has logically, but also quite regrettably, resulted in longer passenger processing times.

Travellers' proofs of vaccination, testing, and recovery status, now need to be integrated into the different steps of a passenger's journey.

To achieve this, in the context of a seamless and contactless passenger experience which will ultimately benefit travellers, operators, and governments, we must quickly find solutions to **digitize, automate, and integrate public health credentials** into the aviation and border control ecosystem.

ICAO believes that building on the existing travel document technical specifications is our best way forward to achieving efficient global interoperability for health credentials, as well as to realizing this aim as quickly as possible.

We have refined the related specifications and framework for the past 73 years, in recognition of the fact that border security and passenger flows are reciprocal objectives, and building on this robust foundation will benefit the many stakeholders, including immigration authorities and aircraft operators, who have contributed to its development.

The refinements I speak of refer more specifically to the amendments which have been made to the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention – on *Facilitation* – since its inception in 1949.

Amendment 29 to Annex 9 recently incorporated new and amended health-focused priorities, including the establishment of a new Chapter 10 specifically relating to *Health Related Provisions*.

One new Recommended Practice I would highlight in particular, and which emerges directly from that travel document foundation I spoke of earlier, concerns the issuing of vaccination certificates using the ICAO Visible Digital Seal, or VDS.

The VDS is a digitally signed barcode that can be app or smartphone based or printed on paper. These barcodes are inexpensive to produce, and can be verified using existing infrastructure which is already deployed at borders and airports all over the world.

While we maintain the capability for paper-based verifications with the current VDS, the need to transition to 100% digital documents and processes will be fundamental to realizing the contactless and much more efficient security and border control experience which our global network and its travellers now expect.

This momentum will only continue to accelerate, and the ICAO Digital Travel Credential (DTC) specifications provide a helpful solution and pathway toward the digital verification of identity.

As we increasingly migrate towards digital credentials, I would like to recall that the underlying integrity of a State's identity management and travel document issuance processes is just as vital to the outcomes we seek.

A lack of trust in the document issuance process results in higher entry and visa requirements, as well as more restrictive eligibility criteria for trusted traveller programmes or automated border clearance solutions.

Efforts must be reinforced by governments to ensure *Evidence of Identity* and *Document Issuance and Control*, two critical elements of the TRIP Strategy.

Another important aspect of going digital is an Issuing State's existing status of compliance with ICAO Doc 9303, which as you know contains current *Machine Readable Travel Document* specifications.

This compliance is fundamental to current global interoperability. ICAO is working closely with the experts of the TRIP Technical Advisory Group (TAG/TRIP) to establish a new programme aimed at better assuring it.

In the past decade, a number of States have begun deploying electronically issued visas without any standardization, commonality, or even shared definitions of what an eVisa means.

This has created an unfortunate situation for airlines, because they're unable to verify non-standardized credentials.

ICAO has responded to this situation with the development of a Digital Travel Authorization, or DTA, which employs ICAO VDS technology to issue standardized and easily verified digital notifications. Thanks to the flexibility of the VDS, these DTAs can be deployed in both digital and physical formats for the time being, while delivering the same security and results.

Underpinning all of ICAO's efforts to support the issuance of electronic passports and digital credentials is the ICAO Public Key Directory, or PKD.

The PKD established the cryptographic backbone permitting efficient and global ePassport verification and authentication. It also permits all verifiers to capitalize on the benefits that ePassports are meant to deliver.

I wish to remind States of the importance of joining and effectively using the PKD as an essential element of their border control management.

For aircraft operators, I would highlight the commercial access and root certificate use advantages of the PKD, which can be employed to facilitate industry verifications of numerous types of documents and credentials.

As a closely related aspect of the PKD, ICAO has also recently published its first Health Master List. This is a new data resource for States and aviation stakeholders, including industry, designed to make the authentication of traveller vaccination, health, and related certificates much more secure and efficient.

As part of this work, and in support of current World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, ICAO has embarked on an innovative Public Key Infrastructure project for health certificates with the support of the Luxembourg State Agency, INCERT. The aim of this partnership is to address the urgent need for improved trust and processing of health documentation internationally.

Turning to passenger data – ICAO is a core partner of the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (UNCTTP), a flagship initiative of the UN Office on Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

ICAO is currently contributing to these efforts by helping States put Annex 9 SARPs and the related Guidelines for Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data into action, via a dedicated legal framework.

I would like to take this opportunity to recall that, with respect to PNR data, the recent Amendment 28 to Annex 9 includes a baseline commitment for all States to develop PNR programmes, and to establish a global framework for the collection, use, processing and protection of PNR data.

Thanks to these new Standards, Annex 9 now places an obligation on States to implement capabilities to process both API and PNR data.

ICAO also fully recognizes the implementation burden which these new and amended Standards can entail for States, and in line with our ongoing "No Country Left Behind" priorities we have developed in-depth ad hoc training programmes for Annex 9; the TRIP strategy and Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families; as well as Implementation or iPacks for States to develop health proofs based on the Visible Digital Seal.

This Symposium is a prime example of how ICAO is re-doubling its efforts to foster the implementation of the TRIP Strategy worldwide, and to illustrate how it provides such a versatile platform from which many of our digital aspirations for the post-pandemic passenger experience can be realized.

In that context I would draw your attention to the Joint ICAO/INTERPOL Passenger Data Exchange Forum, which will be held in Lyon, France, from 13 to 14 December of this year.

In closing today it is both my honour and my regret to recognize that in December of last year the TRIP community lost one of its leaders with the passing of Mr. David Philp.

Mr. Philp served as New Zealand's long-standing representative to both the ICAO Facilitation Panel and the TRIP Technical Advisory Group, and served admirably as Chair of the TAG-TRIP Implementation and Capacity-Building Working Group.

His contributions to ICAO's work were deeply valued by technical experts around the world, and he very genuinely personified the spirit of "No Country Left Behind".

Today ICAO is pleased to honour Mr. Philp's many qualities and achievements by posthumously awarding him the *TRIP Award of Excellence*.

I wish you all an enjoyable time this week in Montréal, and a productive and interesting Symposium.

On that note I hereby declare this Seventeenth TRIP Symposium and Exhibition open.

Thank you for your attention.

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