



**Opening Address by
the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Seminar**

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*Dr. Dong Zhiyi,
Deputy Director General Civil Aviation Administration of China*

*Mr Joseph LAI,
Permanent Secretary for Transport & Housing (Transport), Hong Kong SAR*

*Mr. Simon LI Tin-chui,
Director General Civil Aviation, Hong Kong SAR,*

*Mr. Andrew Herdman,
Director General Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA)*

*Ms. Sarah Mathews,
Chairperson of Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)*

*Ms. Patti Chau,
Regional Director of Airports Council International (ACI), Asia Pacific*

Distinguished Government Representatives, Delegates and Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is a pleasure to be with you here today in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China, and especially to help celebrate its 20th Anniversary under the successful "one country, two systems" approach.
2. I expect that this Anniversary's theme of: *"Together • Progress • Opportunity"* will be relevant to our assessment and cooperation on optimizing the latest developments in the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme, or 'ICAO TRIP' for short.
3. ICAO is indeed sincerely thankful to the Civil Aviation Department of Hong Kong for its provision of such excellent organization and facilities in support of this objective, and for its warm welcome.

4. I would also like to recognize the very generous additional support of Hong Kong International Airport.
5. Supporting ICAO TRIP is crucial as it enables progress under ICAO's **Security and Facilitation** Strategic Objective.
6. It has two primary goals: strengthening States capacities to establish citizens' identities in a secure and reliable way, and to formalize that secure identity into an ICAO compliant passport or other official travel document.
7. It requires secure processes for the issuance and control of machine-readable travel documents, or 'MRTD', effective inspection systems and tools, and fully interoperable applications.
8. The majority of our ICAO TRIP Strategy work is conducted under the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention (*Facilitation*), and through the MRTD specifications in ICAO Doc 9303.
9. Through standards TRIP harmonizes the global line of defence in our shared battle to confront international terrorist movements, cross-border crime, and many other threats to civil society and international aviation.
10. Indeed, the TRIP strategy has been recognized for its contributions toward the implementation of United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) Resolutions 2178 and 2309, which were adopted in 2014 and 2016 respectively.
11. Last week I attended a Special meeting of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) on "Terrorist Threats to Civil Aviation". It was proposed there that the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), in cooperation with ICAO, would continue to explore new means of addressing the terrorist threat through various ICAO TRIP elements.
12. As a preliminary outcome, we have identified relevant gaps and vulnerabilities and addressed our existing policies, instruments and tools which support effective border-control management systems.

13. Along with enhanced screening and security checks, airlines' role in tracking the movement of higher risk passengers, by providing advance passenger information (API) to national authorities, was highlighted.
14. This is supported by the global transition to machine-readable passports, or MRPs, which is nearly complete. I would take this moment to remind you that under Standard 3.11.1 of Annex 9, 24 November 2015 was the deadline by which any remaining non-MRPs were to have been removed from global circulation. As of today, 143 of ICAO's 191 Member States are fully compliant.
15. At a regional level, all APAC States are now issuing MRPs and almost all APAC States are in compliance with the Standard. The small number that have not are actively working to ensure compliance and have notified ICAO accordingly.
16. We will continue to work closely with these, as continued attempts to travel with non-compliant documents could lead to significant passenger and border control impediments. It is critical for governments to encourage their citizens to renew any remaining non-MRPs in circulation, and without delay.
17. Conversely, States must achieve progress on ensuring that documents that have been stolen, lost, or revoked cannot be used. Considerable work remains to be done here. Standard 3.10. requires accurate information about these documents to be promptly reported to INTERPOL for inclusion in the Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database.
18. This entails the establishment of a relevant policy, the designation of an appropriate office, and the development of guidelines to ensure that such information is promptly reported in compliance with the Standard.
19. Similarly, much more progress remains to be achieved on the crucial implementation of API. As is the case in other Regions, many APAC States have not yet introduced API systems, despite these becoming a Standard next year.
20. Moreover, many APAC States have yet to establish a comprehensive National Facilitation Programme, a National Air transport Facilitation Committee, or Airport level Facilitation Committees. Progress on this aspect would greatly support enhanced compliance with the requirements I just mentioned.

21. Moving on to the implementation ePassports, we note that challenges persist, but mainly because some ePassports are not fully ICAO compliant. More than 120 ICAO Member States currently report that they are issuing ePassports – with more than 636 million now in circulation worldwide.
22. Another key implementation issue here pertains to the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD). Many States processing domestic or foreign ePassports are still not using the ICAO PKD to authenticate the chip-based data.
23. The full security and facilitation benefits that ePassports are meant to deliver require PKD membership. It is crucial that States see PKD as an essential part of the ICAO TRIP Strategy. Fortunately, more than 80% of the ePassports in global circulation are issued by PKD participant States.
24. ICAO will continue to underscore the role of the PKD as a fundamental contributor to effective border integrity, especially when used in conjunction with automated border control gates.
25. Last year we also set out a new PKD operating agreement, which led to a substantial reduction of registration fees for new PKD participants. The annual fee for existing participants has been also reduced.
26. More generally in this area, ICAO continues to establish a more systematic approach to assisting states with TRIP.
27. Our Secretariat has developed a roadmap to guide States in implementing TRIP at the national level. An important first step here is the establishment of a National Air Transport Facilitation Committee, as per Annex 9's guidance and my earlier remarks.
28. This is consistent with our ICAO *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) initiative. It is designed to provide assistance and capacity building to States so they may optimize international air connectivity and the many socio-economic benefits that result from compliance.
29. In line with these goals, and with generous funding support from the Government of Canada, and other donors, assistance projects have been successfully concluded in the African Sahel Region, as well as for the Small Island Developing States.

30. These projects resulted in new ICAO Training Packages designed for front-line immigration and border control inspection officers, and will further contribute to the implementation of both ICAO's provisions and the UN Security Council resolutions I referenced earlier.
31. Some forty-percent of SID States are located in the Asia-Pacific region. ICAO comprehends the challenges these governments face in terms of local resources, infrastructure and servicing costs, and resulting the difficulties in realizing economies of scale.
32. An ICAO dedicated working group is presently working on options and guidance for these States. One key challenge, for example, is a lack of skilled human resources. In some cases, a single individual may be responsible for the issuance of up to 200,000 travel documents!
33. Additional assistance will be available later this year when ICAO publishes the inaugural edition of our TRIP Compendium. This planning and implementation guide showcases the work of several international organizations and includes references to relevant ICAO guidance material. It is targeted at government officials, document issuance authorities, civil registries, passport offices, immigration, customs and industry experts. It should be available this October.
34. If we were to ask ourselves what aspect of ICAO's TRIP strategy work has most impacted its success, the answer would most certainly be **cooperation**.
35. ICAO works very closely with many leading organizations which play a key role in this field, including UN-CTED, INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Most recently we have also signed a new TRIP-related MOU with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
36. In the meantime, we also continue to encourage States to come together at the regional and sub-regional levels to agree on action plans to implement travel facilitation programmes, including all of the elements of the TRIP Strategy. Recent examples of this are the recent Ministerial meetings which took place in Windhoek and Riyadh.
37. Ladies and gentlemen, there is significant work ahead for States and ICAO as we work to coordinate our efforts aimed at rectifying aviation security and facilitation deficiencies in a robust, affordable and sustainable manner.

38. I am confident that by working together, and fostering greater coordination among the many agencies and stakeholders involved in this work, we can enhance even further the security and facilitation of both your borders and air transport's global network.
39. We hope to see you all at the Thirteenth ICAO TRIP Symposium and Exhibition this October at our Headquarters in Montreal. In closing now, let me please wish you all a very productive Seminar here in Hong Kong.
40. Thank you.

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