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Agenda Item 39: Facilitation

MACHINE READABLE PASSPORTS IN CHINA

(Presented by China)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper introduces the outcome and experience of China in issuing Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) and the prospects of ePassports in China

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective D: Efficiency --- <i>Enhance the efficiency of aviation operations</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Not applicable.
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9, 3.10, Doc 9303

¹ English and Chinese versions provided by China

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since the formal publishing and issuing of ICAO's "Machine Readable Travel Documents" (Doc 9303) in 1980, machine readable passports have been widely applied worldwide. Annex 9, 3.10 provides that "Contracting States shall begin issuing Machine Readable Passports in accordance with the specifications of Doc 9303, Part 1, no later than 1 April 2010".

1.2 In China, there are ordinary passports, diplomatic passports and service passports. MRPs have been utilized and developed in China step by step.

1.3 Machine readable ordinary passports have been issued since 1996. By the end of 2006, China had issued over 26 million machine readable ordinary passports. Machine readable diplomatic passports and service passports were issued starting from 1 May 2002 and 1 November 2005 respectively. By the end of 2007, it is estimated that China will have totally issued about 400,000 machine readable diplomatic passports and service passports. And now all types of passports in China have been machine readable.

2. EXPERIENCE OF CHINA IN ISSUING MRPS

2.1 It is important to implement the specifications, techniques and standards recommended in Doc 9303 of ICAO, so as to enhance the security, authenticity and interoperability of the passports.

2.2 Supporting facilities can improve not only the accuracy of data acquisition, but also facilitate the process. China began to install MRPs' reading devices at border control points since 1998, and now MRPs can be read by machines at most of border control points in China.

2.3 In 2000, China began to issue ordinary passports with Chinese bar code in addition to the international standard machine readable bar code to facilitate inspection of the passports.

3. PROSPECTS OF EPASSPORTS IN CHINA

3.1 Epassport is effective in combating against illegal immigrants, transnational crime and terrorism because of its advanced technologies. ICAO has recommended all the Contracting States incorporate biometric data in their MRTDs.

3.2 Chinese government always gives high priority on developing ePassports. Article 12 of Passports Law of the People's Republic of China (effective on 1 January 2007), provides that the anti-fake performance of passports shall comply with the international technical standards. At the same time, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have set up a special workgroup to develop ePassports according to the international standards of ICAO.

3.3 China has been making preparations for the application of ePassports and shall gradually develop its ePassport system which is in conformity with international standards on the basis of other countries' and regions' experiences in issuing ePassports.