

ICAO Regional Seminar on MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards  
Maputo, Mozambique 24-26 November 2010

**Closing Remarks**

**Mr. Geoffrey Moshabesha, ICAO Regional Director, Nairobi**

Distinguished Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to provide closing remarks on the completion of a very successful ICAO Regional Seminar on MRTDs and Biometrics for Africa and the Middle East.

ICAO MRTD Regional Seminars as this one in Maputo have two main purposes. First, they provide an opportunity to brief participants from the Contracting States about current MRTD specifications, new developments and clarify any specific questions and finer technical points. Secondly, they provide a forum for professional discussions about the current and emerging needs of States and other stakeholders. They present an opportunity to discuss practical ways how we could join our forces to strengthen MRTD implementation and border security capacity, so that the States and their societies could benefit from enhanced security and facilitation that the MRTD programme offers.

I trust we can say with confidence that the Regional Seminar in Maputo addressed those needs very well. In particular, the numbers and diversity of the participants highlighted the importance that government agencies and private sector place on travel documents, border security and combating terrorism and trans-border crime.

The dominant theme of the Seminar was MRTD and border control Capacity Building. This is an area where much has been achieved -- and yet so much more remains to be done. Everyone agrees that the MRTD specifications are comprehensive and state-of-the-art. However, their security and facilitation benefits become real only if such specifications are implemented universally. Hence the emphasis on strengthening a closer dialogue with States that need assistance, intensifying liaison with donor agencies, and expanding capacity-building measures. ICAO is currently exploring ways to better help States build their MRTD implementation capacity, and needs your ongoing input in order to identify remaining gaps and better ways to address them in practice.

Some capacity gaps have already been identified during the frank and constructive discussions during the Seminar. The ICAO Secretariat and TAG/MRTD Implementation and Capacity-Building Working Group will be following them up and exploring ways how to address them through practical capacity-building projects. But I also encourage States to maintain dialogue with ICAO about their ongoing and newly-emerging MRTD and border challenges. The more we know what your needs are, the better placed ICAO will be to develop an effective technical assistance strategy. Please remain in touch with the MRTD Programme and the ICBWG about your needs and challenges. Also, make use of the ICAO Regional offices in Cairo, Nairobi and Dakar to communicate your needs and challenges. Our close cooperation and ongoing technical dialogue are key to success.

This successful Regional Seminar was the result of excellent cooperation between many parties. I should like to take this opportunity to thank our hosts, the Government of Mozambique – and especially the Civil Aviation Authority of Mozambique – which provided enormous assistance and support in organizing this important event. Their hospitality was outstanding and gave us an opportunity to discover the beauty and charm of Mozambique and its people.

Special thanks are due to Mr Antonio Pinto, Representative of Mozambique to ICAO, who was our main focal point and partner. His enormous contribution to organising the Seminar, tireless efforts and readiness to go an extra mile whenever needed were absolutely essential to its success.

The participants of the Seminar, diverse as they are, have one thing in common: they are very busy people. I thank you all for taking your valuable time to attend the Seminar, to contribute to its discussions and a constructive debate about MRTD needs and future. Thanks are due to the Sponsors who made the Seminar possible through their contributions and briefed us about the technologies and products they offer.

Last but not least, I thank the interpreter team who worked very hard all those days to facilitate our communication, handling successfully difficult technical matters and our discussions.

Again, I sincerely thank you for having taken the time to join us here, and look forward to seeing you at future ICAO MRTD events.

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