Seventh Symposium and Exhibition on ICAO MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards

The MRTD Programme at a Crossroads

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

The ICAO MRTD Programme finds its organizational home in the Aviation Security Branch of ICAO and so as Chief of the Branch I am very pleased to welcome you to the Symposium and to ICAO. Although unable to attend the Sixth Symposium and Exhibition because of other commitments, I have nevertheless made every effort since joining ICAO last year to broaden and deepen my understanding of the MRTD Programme. To the ICAO

MRTD team and many of you, thanks for assisting my transition into ICAO.

In a complex and truly global field of activity that is absolutely essential to international security and transportation facilitation, the MRTD Programme has an impressive record of achievements. I am struck:

- by the state-of-the-art global specifications that are further developed as State travel document programme needs and technology advance;
- by the needs of States for assistance, the actions of States and international organizations to support capacity-building, and the gap between the level of assistance available and the level needed;
- by whether the level of investment by States, international organizations and regional organizations in international cooperation that has been the foundation for MRTD Programme success can be sustained, and how the ICAO Secretariat's role should be defined; and

- by the unique and truly successful model of public sector-private sector partnership demonstrated through events such as this annual Symposium and the New Technologies Working Group's Request for Information initiative, and whether we can build on these.

I am also struck

- by the policy, technical and implementation challenges with us today and that lay ahead in identity management, and border security; and
- by the need for global leadership to harness and guide collective action.

ICAO is, of course, first and foremost an organization focused on international civil aviation. The significance of travel documents to aviation security was emphasized in the Declaration on Aviation Security unanimously adopted by the 37th ICAO Assembly last October. The Declaration sets out a number of far-reaching commitments to

enhance aviation security through international cooperation, including promoting enhanced travel document security and the validation thereof using the ICAO Public Key Directory in conjunction with biometric information, and reporting on a regular basis lost and stolen passports to the INTERPOL Lost and Stolen Documents Database.

In the coming months ICAO will convene a series of regional conferences on aviation security, the objective of which is to promote full implementation of the Assembly Declaration. These regional conferences will lead to an ICAO High-level Aviation Security Conference planned for September 2012 in this room. This High-level Conference will produce recommendations to guide ICAO policy and programme development and implementation, and to prepare for the 38th ICAO Assembly in 2013. The Assembly can be expected to make policy and budget decisions for the coming 2014 to 2017 triennium, including

policy and budget decisions affecting the MRTD Programme.

So, as we look to the years ahead, the MRTD Programme – your Programme – is at a crossroads. It can proceed as it is, continuing the excellent work that is underway, planned and distantly envisaged to contribute to robust travel documents, international security and facilitated transportation. Or, the MRTD Programme can seek out opportunities to be reinvigorated and be positioned to more fully support the needs of ICAO States. How can this be done?

First, the mandate of ICAO's travel document programme can be confirmed unequivocally. The ICAO MRTD Programme in its current form traces its mandate to the provisions of the Convention on International Civil Aviation aimed at preventing "... unnecessary delays to aircraft, crews, passengers and cargo, especially in the

administration of the laws relating to immigration, quarantine, customs and clearance.".

Neither the Convention, nor the technical provisions of Annex 9 – Facilitation nor ICAO's key policy statement on security – the Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to the safeguarding of international civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference – fully establish the strategic policy parameters of the MRTD Programme. As a matter of good governance and management, I would suggest that the mandate must be much more clearly spelled out in order to advance the Programme under a complete and solid framework. Clarity of the mandate will assist in the identification of appropriate funding levels.

Second, ICAO's experience with aviation security – namely with the origins, development and implementation of Annex 17 – Security – provides some useful lessons

learned that may be very helpful for the continuing development of the MRTD Programme.

Annex 17 was conceived in the early days of escalating security threats and risks to international civil aviation security. Those who framed its original provisions recognized that a successful global aviation security programme would require Standards and Recommended Practices of a technical nature to drive the screening of passengers and their belongings, the establishment and control of restricted areas at airports and actions to be taken when acts of unlawful interference are perpetrated.

They also recognized that the international regulatory framework should drive States:

- to clearly define and allocate responsibility for aviation security at the State level;

- to establish suitable and effective organizational arrangements;
- to ensure the proper training of aviation security personnel;
- to require cooperation between States and between the multiple government and industry stakeholders;
- to document national, air operator and airport security programmes in order to promote transparency and comprehensive implementation; and
- to prepare for contingencies that are inevitably part of the operational reality of civil aviation security.

Today Annex 17 establishes a well-rounded suite of technical and strategic Standards and Recommended Practices. The Aviation Security Panel regularly reviews Annex 17 in order to keep the international regulatory framework current and relevant.

Since 2002, ICAO has carried out systematic and rigorous aviation security audits under the Universal Security Audit

Programme. These audits are a key component of ICAO's efforts to assist States by identifying and prioritizing deficiencies in need of remedial action. They also serve to focus ICAO's aviation security Implementation Support and Development Programme on the States in most need of assistance and on the deficiencies most critical to aviation security programme success.

By comparison, and with the greatest respect for all that has been accomplished under the MRTD Programme and the Facilitation Programme, the international regulatory framework for travel documents in Annex 9 places its emphasis on familiar technical matters, like issuing ICAO-compliant passports. Therefore, I am suggesting that challenges surrounding travel document reliability, integrity, security and implementation we face today and in the future may benefit from new international regulatory tools.

Third, like in any organization, the extent of ICAO's role in the travel document sphere is governed by the level and source of resources available. The current funding model for the MRTD Programme results in the minority of the Programme budget coming from the so-called Regular Programme Budget, which is funded by the assessment paid by ICAO's Member States. The majority of funding comes from extra-budgetary sources, like the revenues derived from MRTD events held under ICAO auspices.

This model is very similar to the way in which the Aviation Security Programme was funded. For many years, ICAO had a large dependence on extra-budgetary voluntary contributions from States to fund the Aviation Security Programme. States recognized, however, that a global programme of high importance requires budget certainty so that activities can be planned and executed without the significant risk of insufficient funds being offered to or generated by ICAO.

Over approximately six years, ICAO transitioned away from an Aviation Security Programme funding formula that was subject to much uncertainty year after year. Since January 1, 2011, the Programme is funded 100% by the Regular Programme Budget. Voluntary contributions are still made available by States and gratefully accepted by ICAO in order to accomplish even more.

The move to a predictable, stable and adequate funding base was driven by States that recognized a need based on their own experience that a programme essential for international security and the sustainability of air transport should not be revenue dependent.

So my question to you is this: do States want budget certainty and an adequate level of ICAO funding for the MRTD Programme? If the answer is yes, the work to achieve this must begin now.

Fourth, the relevant State authorities having an interest in the various aspects of the international travel document programme – Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, Passport Offices, civil registries, national security agencies and immigration, customs and border control agencies – must fully engage their representatives at ICAO to support informed policy and budget debate and decision-making at ICAO.

You will appreciate that the vast majority of ICAO's business deals directly with highly technical aviation matters. Consequently, State representation in policy and budget decision-making tends to be aviation focused. It is fed by inputs from Civil Aviation Authorities and State authorities responsible for aviation security and environmental matters if they are not the Civil Aviation Authority. As matters related to MRTDs are typically outside the competence of civil aviation authorities, my challenge to you is to engage your representation in policy and budget decision-making at ICAO in order to ensure

advocacy of your whole-of-government position on the full range of MRTD issues.

I cannot stress strongly enough that ICAO is your organization and responsibility for ICAO's MRTD Programme lies with Member States and the Secretariat. You must take an active role in shaping its future, enabling it to make steady and deliberate progress toward achieving all objectives. The ICAO Secretariat is here to support you.

In recent weeks, the Secretariat has launched a project to develop an MRTD Programme strategy. We intend for the strategy:

- To set out the objectives and priorities of the MRTD Programme and a work plan to tackle them;
- To describe the full range of elements required to assure the success of the MRTD Programme;

- To identify the level of resources required by the MRTD Programme and recommended funding arrangements;

- To be developed in collaboration with you; and

- To be a key document for the planned High-level Aviation Security Conference in September 2012 and the 38th ICAO Assembly in 2013.

This Symposium is a valuable working forum that brings together government and industry representatives from around the world to focus on the continuing evolution of the MRTD Programme. On the final day of the Symposium we will have a discussion panel on the strategic directions of the ICAO MRTD Programme. Our aim for the discussion panel is to open a dialogue between ICAO senior management and MRTD community stakeholders to receive your input to the MRTD Programme strategy.

You are invited to share your issues, needs, suggestions and ideas or to ask questions about matters of interest or concern related to the ICAO MRTD Programme. While the feedback and questions from the MRTD community will serve as the basis for panel discussions, the issues raised will also provide useful input for researching and developing the newly-emerging MRTD Programme Strategy. Symposium participants are invited to reflect on matters of importance and submit written suggestions or questions to the panel. A box for suggestions and questions is available at the entrance into the Assembly Hall during the Symposium (until Thursday 12:00). Symposium participants are, of course, also welcome to contribute with ideas or ask questions orally during the panel discussions.

The MRTD Programme is at a crossroads. I hope that my remarks will provoke your thinking about what should be the future of the MRTD Programme, encourage you to participate in shaping the MRTD Programme, and assure

you that ICAO is very serious about working with you on this important matter.

I sincerely thank you for having taken the time to join us here, and I wish you a very successful and productive MRTD Symposium.