

**FACILITATION (FAL) DIVISION — TWELFTH SESSION****Cairo, Egypt, 22 March to 2 April 2004**

- Agenda Item 5: Modernizing airport facilities and service delivery systems**
5.2: National, regional and airport FAL programmes

COLLABORATION IN REGIONAL FAL PROJECTS

(Presented by the Secretariat)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In ICAO the strategy of the Facilitation Programme is to advocate and support action by Contracting States in three principal areas: the standardization of travel documents, the rationalization of border clearance systems and procedures, and international cooperation to tackle security problems related to passengers and cargo. While a primary motivation of Annex 9 is to carry out the mandate in Article 22 of the Chicago Convention, "... to prevent unnecessary delays to aircraft, passengers and cargo ...", numerous provisions, developed with the intent to increase efficiency in control processes, support also the objective to raise the level of general security through enhanced border control systems.

1.2 The past decade has seen numerous important border control developments. The most visible example is that of the issuance and acceptance of machine readable travel documents (MRTDs), which have become a top priority for many States.

1.3 MRTD-related technologies allow States to make their border controls more effective and efficient. The events of 11 September 2001 and afterward have demonstrated that national programmes of travel document issuance and security, and the efficacy of inspection systems in controlling smuggling and illegal migration, can have a significant effect on the security of civil aviation.

1.4 However, the practical challenges of adopting MRTDs and implementing modern border control techniques could transcend resources of individual States. Solutions to realize futuristic developments are more readily feasible when they are approached jointly by two or more neighbouring States to achieve economies of scale.

1.5 Such regional cooperation could make it possible to find solutions to problems common to States sharing similar economic, social, political, security and technological conditions. Such cooperation would permit States in a region to harmonize policies and practices amongst themselves and it would provide regional authorities with a framework within which to discuss and plan all the required measures of coordination and cooperation.

1.6 Regional cooperation on implementation of projects aimed at speeding up and improving border procedures will ultimately benefit commercial and tourism interchange, regional security, as well as regional economic integration processes. With this in mind, ICAO is willing to cooperate with States,

organizations and private entities seeking to promote international mutual assistance in modern border control techniques, and in other FAL projects, in particular within regions. This “partnership” will aim at pulling together all private and public entities interested in achieving significant border control improvements in States within the region. Areas of cooperation could include sharing of agendas of common interest, pooling resources and expertise where appropriate and sharing expertise and experience as required.

2. ICAO MANDATE FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

2.1 Through Resolution A33-19, the ICAO Assembly recognizes the need for continuing action by Contracting States to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of clearance control formalities, the need for cooperation on facilitation matters amongst States and with the various public and private sector parties involved, and urges States to:

- a) establish and utilize national facilitation committees and adopt policies of cooperation on regional basis among neighbouring States;
- b) participate in regional and subregional facilitation programmes of other international organizations;
- c) study the facilitation problems faced by their facilitation committees and coordinate the findings with those other States with which they have air links;
- d) consult with their neighbouring States about common facilitation problems and work on developing uniform solutions;
- e) encourage aircraft operators to cooperate with their governments in developing cooperative arrangements for the prevention of illicit narcotic trafficking, illegal immigration and other threats to national interests, as well as in participating in electronic data interchange systems for achieving maximum efficiency in the processing of passengers and cargo traffic; and
- f) intensify efforts to safeguard the security and integrity of their passports, protect them against passport fraud, and to assist other States in this matter.

3. OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 The efficiency and effectiveness of border-control procedures is a basic facilitation objective. The following five-element strategy, which would be considered as the “Strategic Action Plan” for regional FAL programmes, provides authorities with an initial list of projects on which to collaborate with neighbouring States.

3.2 The first element is the *issuance and global use of standard travel and trade documents*. This is the keystone of the whole strategy. In a growing number of countries, machine readable travel documents for travellers are issued and used, and cargo manifests as well as other documents required for the importation and exportation of goods are electronically processed.

3.3 The second element consists of the *application of new technologies* for improving and facilitating the entry and departure controls of passengers and goods through the use of machine-assisted identity confirmation (biometry), Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), risk management techniques and electronic devices to facilitate data processing.

3.4 The third element of the strategy consists of the *periodic reviewing of border control procedures* to make them more efficient, effective and non-intrusive; for example, documentary requirements, information profiles on risk patterns of individuals and particular goods which are required to ascertain risk levels and decide on the appropriate type of inspection necessary, routing of traffic flows and coordination of inspection among authorities.

3.5 The fourth element is the *provision of adequate border inspection staff and facilities to meet traffic needs*, taking into account traffic characteristics such as seasonal fluctuations, composition and vulnerability.

3.6 The fifth element lies in *national and regional cooperation* among authorities in sharing technical resources and in reducing the cost of new technologies.

4. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

4.1 Cooperation between ICAO and interested organizations (both intergovernmental and non-governmental) would make it possible to create an inter-agency front for the achievement of common goals which benefit groups of States. In this regard, such cooperation would be focussed on:

- a) encouraging the general adoption of the regional “Strategic Action Plan” as a means for improving border control procedures and joint FAL/AVSEC programmes by States within the region;
- b) increasing the participation of interested organizations in the educational events on improvement of border control processes convened by any of them, including ICAO. In this way, the limited resources of the interested parties would be leveraged, multiplying their exposure opportunities and amplifying the impact of their respective messages; and
- c) promoting the establishment of regional/sub-regional coordination bodies to discuss common problems for improving border procedures and outlining joint solutions.

4.2 For the partnership initiative to be successful, there must be willingness on the part of governments and institutions. Policy makers should be receptive to innovative approaches. Commensurate with willingness and general receptiveness, the efficiency of this initiative depends also on the attitude of policy makers. States’ and organizations’ commitment to the process is also fundamental and should therefore be secured. But for the commitment to be sustainable, it must come from within governments and organizations and be made at the highest level. States, organizations and private entities wishing to be involved in the partnership would need to take into serious consideration the guidelines outlined above.

5. The above information may be included as guidance material for discussion in regional FAL and AVSEC meetings.