

- Good morning. I would like to extend my sincere thanks ICAO for convening this important event and also for inviting the OAS to speak during its inaugural ceremony.
- I'd also like to express my appreciation to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, and in particular, the Ministry of Public Utilities, Civil Aviation and Transportation, for hosting this event. We are truly blessed to be in such a beautiful and warm country—both in terms of the quality of its people as well as its lovely temperature.
- Over the next few days we will have a wonderful opportunity to discuss ways in which together we can enhance border management and security controls, strengthen technical tools to manage border and document security, make more effective use of international good practices, and exchange information on sharing mechanisms.
- I think all here would agree that secure borders are essential for the free flow of trade, for the quick and safe passage of travelers, and for greater protection against crime, violence and illegal activities. In the Caribbean, the tourism industry is a major source of employment and economic stability. As the World Travel and Tourism Council figures have shown, international tourism arrivals to the Caribbean alone went up to almost 25 million last year, and the region is expected to amass up to 30 million tourists by 2030.
- Many destinations benefited from the appreciation of the US dollar, driving tourism demand from the United States, with the Caribbean and Central America (both +7%) leading growth. So never before have secure and efficient border controls and protocols in the Americas been more important.
- Visitors travel to the region to relax on beaches, visit natural wonders, experience the local culture and participate in recreational activities. This large influx of travelers makes these facilities potential soft targets for criminal and terrorist activity. OAS/CICTE is working in partnership with governments and the private sector to improve private-public coordination, develop risk management strategies, adopt

emergency response plans, and equip local officials with proper crime and terrorism prevention training. Securing tourist destinations and critical infrastructure are among the most effective security investments.

- The Americas as a region has a long history of cross-border migration and, in many instances, areas of weakness in border control and identity management. For the past decade, population mobility has become an issue of even greater concern for OAS Member States, due largely to the rise of irregular migration and trans-border crime. In addition, the linkages between national (and regional) security and border controls have prompted governments to take into account transnational organized crime and terrorism threats when strengthening their migration and identity management mechanisms. The need for enhanced comprehensive border and identity management capacity-building strategies has emerged as a priority for both individual governments and regional bodies.
- Terrorists today have considerable resources and use sophisticated communications technologies. They are increasingly mobile and adaptable and also, unfortunately, increasingly brutal. Additional challenges are posed by **foreign terrorist fighters** who willingly travel abroad to participate in terrorist acts and who then oftentimes return home to commit attacks on their own soil. Recent events in Libya, Denmark, Tunisia, Yemen, France, Belgium and elsewhere reveal the way in which this global terrorist threat has evolved. Latin America and the Caribbean is no exception and we have seen increasing evidence of foreign terrorism fighters operating in the region.
- These new challenges require new responses – and our response must include stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and their facilitators, and identifying and helping those who are dissatisfied before they succumb to violent extremist ideologies.
- As most of you here are aware, the international system has responded in a number of different ways: namely UN Security Council resolution **2178** (2014) which “reaffirms that all States shall prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups through effective border controls and controls on issuance of identity papers and

travel documents, and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents”, and more recently, UN Security Council Resolution **2309** (2016), which calls on member states to work with ICAO to ensure that its international security standards are reviewed, adapted and implemented to effectively address this threat.

- For its part the OAS, through the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) has been helping its Member States strengthen national capacity in this field since 2006.
- Specifically, CICTE’s Document Security and Fraud Prevention Program aims to enhance security in the issuance and control of travel and identity documents by encouraging the development of integrated and secure national identity management systems, as well as more effective control over the use of these documents. The program aims to strengthen the national capacity of OAS Member States to comply with ICAO security standards (**Annex 9 and Document 9303**) concerning the emission and control of Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) and to detect fraudulent use of travel and identity documents. The program also focuses on increasing the capacity of migration, customs, and other personnel responsible for controlling the movement of people across national borders to detect fraudulent documents and prevent their counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use.
- With very generous support from the Governments of Canada and the United States, CICTE’s program has trained over 1600 officials from throughout in the region in 5 key “high-impact” areas:
  1. Providing technical expertise: by giving officials the skills they need to address operations-level border security problems (such as teaching an immigration official how to identify a counterfeit passport; instructing port officials how to implement a container control system; behavior analysis; interviewing techniques, etc.);
  2. Assessing vulnerabilities: by identifying weaknesses in existing capacities and systems;

3. Managing crises: which helps better prepare stakeholders in dealing with crisis situations, primarily by hosting table-top crisis management exercises
  4. Building networks and improving communication: to promote the sharing of experiences and know-how and to establish lines of communication among key stakeholders within countries and across borders (such as through the establishment of National Points of Contacts for Major Events);
  5. Promoting sustainability: by helping Member States move towards institutionalizing all of these efforts through train-the-trainer programs.
- Three years ago, in 2013, we carried out capacity gap assessments in 8 countries throughout the Hemisphere (Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) on travel document security and identity management, which gave us greater insight into the challenges our Member States face regarding the security of issuance processes and control of travel documents.
  - As a result, CICTE is focusing effort in providing assistance to Member States in such critical areas as information sharing and border security, drafting and implementation of CT-related legislation, and countering violent extremism to prevent recruitment and radicalization to violence. We believe CICTE efforts are well aligned with the CARICOM Regional Counter Terrorism Strategy that will be launched in the coming months.
  - In addition, we are working towards strengthening Member States abilities to secure the document issuance process and improve the verification of identity, as well as on developing greater capacity to detect fraudulent travel documents, and perhaps even more importantly, sharing information on travel document fraud.
  - In conclusion, we know that without the sustained commitment of all actors at all levels to improve border security, our Hemisphere will be less secure for trade,

investment and tourism. Threats are constantly evolving and becoming more complex. We need to be well prepared to address these threats in order to safeguard regional and international trade and economic interests, including important and growing commercial relationships.

- Of course none of this will be possible without continued cooperation and coordination. We all must work together with our strategic partners and take advantage of important events such as this, to raise awareness and create synergies so that as a region we work together to create strong and secure borders and ensure the efficient and safe movement of our citizens. On behalf of the CICTE Secretariat let me reiterate our sincere interest in strengthening the important relationships we have with our regional and international partners so that we can work more effectively together to maximize coordination and minimize duplication.
- Again, special thanks and gratitude to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for its continued support, and to ICAO for bringing us here today.