



**Opening Remarks by Mr. Mohamed Khalifa Rahma, ICAO Regional Director
Middle East Regional Office
to the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (ICAO TRIP/MRTD) Seminar
(Kish Island, 9 – 11 May 2016)**

Mr. Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, Minister of Interior, Islamic Republic of Iran,
Mr. Ali Abedzadeh, President of Civil Aviation Organization, Iran
Distinguished ICAO Representatives,
Distinguished Government representatives here present
Distinguished Delegates and Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the President of the ICAO Council, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, the Secretary General of ICAO, Dr. Fang Liu, I am delighted to welcome you today at the opening of this important Seminar on the latest developments in the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (ICAO TRIP) Strategy which includes Machine Readable Travel documents (MRTDs), border facilitation and identity management.
2. The TRIP strategy is designed to assist States in meeting international obligations with respect to a number of priorities, including; enhancing the fight against terrorism, reducing cross-border crime, and combating various threats to international civil aviation. It also specifically supports efforts relating to implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 of September 2014.
3. MRTDs are a corner stone of ICAO's Traveller Identification Programme, or 'TRIP' strategy. The Programme primary objectives are to strengthen the interconnected State capacities relating to the establishment, protection and management of citizen identity, and secondly to determine secure systems of travel document production and border control facilitation, which benefit from effectively managed identity frameworks.

4. With the global transition to machine-readable passports now nearly complete, ICAO would like to remind its Member States that 24 November of 2015 was the deadline by which all non-machine readable passports should have been removed from circulation globally. It is therefore critical that States encourage their citizens to renew any remaining non-machine-readable passports in circulation in their national systems without delay.
5. In the area of ePassport implementation, 120 of ICAO's 191 Member States have reported issuance of ePassports – with nearly 500 million in circulation worldwide. However, challenges persist in the ePassport domain, mainly due to a number of these new travel documents not being fully compliant with ICAO specifications as contained in Doc 9303, *MRTDs*.
6. Another issue that pertains to ePassport implementation is the reality that a significant number of States are still not using the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) to verify and authenticate their ePassports. I would like to emphasize the fact that the PKD permits States to capitalize on the full security and facilitation benefits that ePassports are meant to deliver, and that intensified advocacy efforts are needed by all players to underscore goal of the PKD as an essential element of effective border integrity.
7. ICAO, for its part, has determined a new operating contract for the PKD, effective 22 March 2016. Under this new agreement, registration fees for new PKD participants have decreased substantially, and similarly the annual fee for existing participants have been also reduced.
8. ICAO is determined to establish a more systematic approach to assist States in the implementation of ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), including those relating to Doc 9303 specifications and other policies supporting the ICAO TRIP. These efforts are consistent with ICAO's ongoing "No Country Left Behind" campaign, and a number of recent activities have directly supported the achievement of these goals.
9. It is worthwhile to mention that in line with numerous activities aimed at enhancing local and regional aviation security and facilitation, assistance to States under the ICAO TRIP Strategy has commenced in Africa's Sahel Region, with the direct support of the Government of Canada. The Sahel project '*Strengthening Travel Document Security and Identification Management in the Sahel Region*' activities include workshops, specialized training and technical assessment missions to address capacity gaps.

10. This project is being implemented in partnership with the United Nations' Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and in collaboration with other international organizations. This project is commendable and, it represents an impressive example of joint efforts linking State needs, ICAO expertise, and financial support coordinated with the donor community.
11. I am glad to inform you that the finalization and validation of the first ever ICAO Standard Training Package (STP) on the "Control of the Authenticity and Validity of Travel Documents at Airport Borders – Level 1" has been achieved in April 2016. This STP aims to increase the ability of front-line immigration and border controls officers (the "target audience") to identify fraudulent travel documents and limit the movements of terrorists and criminals. Therefore, further to enhancing border controls, it supports States to respect their international obligations, notably ICAO's Standards and specifications contained in the Doc 9303 - Machine Readable Travel Documents and the UN Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) on Foreign Terrorist Fighters.
12. In the same spirit, ICAO is also continuing to foster improved TRIP Strategy awareness worldwide, with this Seminar taking place now in Kish Island, Iran, from 9 to 11 May, being one of them.
13. Ladies and gentlemen, there is significant work ahead for States and ICAO in the implementation of coordinated activities aimed at rectifying aviation security and facilitation deficiencies in a sustainable manner. However, with mutual agreement on pursue common goals, I am confident we will build an impressive record of progress in strengthening the global travel document system, and thereby enhance the security and facilitation of international civil aviation.
14. I wish to also make you aware that ICAO will be hosting another landmark event at our headquarters, our Twelfth **ICAO TRIP/MRTD symposium, scheduled for 15 to 17 November 2016.**
15. Importantly, this event is a world-class forum for the exchange of information on all aspects of traveller identification management, and the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy providing decision makers and technical experts with valuable insight on key current and emerging issues.
16. I wish you all a very informative and productive 2016 TRIP/MRTD Seminar.