ICAO NINTH SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBITION ON MRTDs,
BIOMETRICS AND BORDER SECURITY

(Montreal, 22 to 24 November 2013)

**Opening Remarks**

**Mr. Boubacar Djibo, Director, Air Transport Bureau, ICAO**

Excellencies
Dear colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to ICAO's Ninth Symposium and Exhibition on MRTDs, Biometrics and Border Security.

This is a defining year for the global traveller identification community. MRTDs are a key means by which international air transport is facilitated. The ICAO Traveller Identification Programme Strategy – known in short as ICAO TRIP Strategy – was endorsed by the ICAO Assembly here, in this hall, less than one month ago. The Strategy responds to the needs and expectations of Member States, and provides a framework for achieving the maximum benefits of travel documents and traveller identification in the future. It brings together all elements of identification management and builds on ICAO leadership in matters related to Machine Readable Travel Documents. The Assembly endorsed global civil aviation security and facilitation enhancement as a Strategic Objective of the Organization. For the first time, security and facilitation, two complementary fields, occupy the same profile in ICAO's Strategic Objectives.

The ICAO TRIP Strategy addresses a recognized need for a holistic and integrated approach to traveller identification management. An approach that links the five elements of traveller identification and border controls into a coherent framework: (i) evidence of identification, (ii) document issuance and control, (iii) MRTDs, (iv) inspection systems and tools, and (v) interoperable applications.

ICAO recognizes the benefits of traveller identification management to aviation security and facilitation. ICAO's mission is to contribute to the capacity of Member States to uniquely

identify individuals by providing tools and knowledge to establish and confirm the identity of travellers.

The ICAO MRTD Programme began with the aim of producing global specifications for interoperable travel documents. This aim has been achieved. Now we are moving to greater challenges. We explore how the TRIP Strategy – building on all the trust and credibility the MRTD Programme has generated - can contribute to further the global efforts of enhancing security and aviation growth through effective identification management. More than 50 per cent of today's international tourists are travelling by air. The travel and tourism sector which falls under theWorld Tourism Organization (UNWTO), are appreciative of ICAO's efforts toward facilitating traveller identification and border control, which ultimately benefit the end user.

Let's have a closer look at the Symposium. As every year, this global event addresses state-of-the-art developments in MRTD standards and specifications, identification management and border control issues. It highlights ICAO's global leadership in aviation security, facilitation and related areas.

This year's Symposium focuses on the benefits of Automated Border Control (ABC) systems. It explores a broad range of considerations that shape ABC developments: newly-emerging technologies; trust; reliability; non-intrusiveness; biometrics; the ICAO Public Key Directory; effective inspections tools; trusted traveller programmes; and challenges to border integrity and ways to address them.

Automated Border Controls provide a good example of how facilitation and border control issues are essential to the sustainable development of the global aviation industry. They also remind us that border control technologies are a means to an end and not ends themselves. They are means to creating the environment of freedom, security, justice, prosperity and economic growth. The environment that ensures privacy and human rights. The environment that helps societies and inviduals to realize their dignity and human potential, in line with United Nations values and objectives. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in September 2006, states, in particular, that we "continue to work with the United Nations system to support the reform and modernization of border management systems, facilities and institutions at the national, regional and international levels". ICAO through the endorsement

of the ICAO TRIP Strategy continues to strive toward more efficient and secure control of States' borders.

The Symposium also looks into challenges and good practices of providing implementation and capacity-building assistance to States in the ABC and other traveller identification areas. Implementation assistance to States has gained considerable momentum and is a major area of ICAO's ongoing work. There remains considerable technical assistance needs related to MRTDs and border controls. Our speakers will explore current capacity and ICAO compliance challenges, look into the present and future of ICAO's technical assistance related to MRTDs and border controls, and reflect on the prospects and priorities of enhancing capacity-building assistance to Member States.

I am pleased to acknowledge that the Symposium speakers and facilitators - drawn from ICAO working groups and partner international organizations - are top experts in their field. Special thanks are due to government and industry experts that make up the Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents (TAG/MRTD). I invite you all to make the most of your MRTD Symposium and the expertise available here. Ask questions, share your challenges and experiences, question established views, and contribute with your knowledge to our ongoing professional dialogue. I also encourage you to visit the many booths outside this meeting room to explore the range of products and services showcased in the Exhibition.

This Symposium presents a challenging and exciting programme that will capture your full attention for the coming days. I sincerely thank you for having taken the time to join us here, and wish you a very successful and productive MRTD Symposium.

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