

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

(Montreal, 7 to 9 October 2014)

**Opening Remarks**

**Mr. Jim Marriott, Deputy Director, Aviation Security and Facilitation, ICAO**

Excellencies  
Dear colleagues  
Ladies and gentlemen

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

The tenth anniversary is a defining milestone for the MRTD Symposium. Its programme provides an overview of progress made from the early MRTD specifications to today's coherent and holistic ICAO policy framework on holistic traveller identification management - the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme – known in short as ICAO TRIP and its Strategy endorsed by the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly last Autumn. Many of you in the audience are MRTD veterans who have attended every Symposium in the past. You are well placed to grasp the dramatic expansion of the scope, ambition and results of the ICAO TRIP Strategy.

The adoption of the ICAO TRIP Strategy – and its main objectives - is already yesterday's news. Today's focus is on the Strategy's implementation in practice. Regardless of how relevant and timely the TRIP Strategy is, it will remain just a policy document – unless its ambitions for holistic traveller identification are embraced and implemented by Member States. Changes, that, once put into practice, will enhance both facilitation and security benefits to ICAO's Member States – and their citizens.

Let me provide you a brief overview of developments meant to ensure that the ICAO TRIP Strategy delivers practical benefits. A Work Programme of the TRIP Strategy is being developed by the Secretariat in close coordination with members of the Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents. The work programme is a structured action plan that will articulate results and targets, estimated resources and activities required to

achieve the strategic outcomes, indicators for measuring success, and attribution of responsibilities for all activities.

The new Facilitation Section is currently being set up within the ICAO Secretariat, which will encompass the ICAO TRIP Programme. In addition to optimizing ICAO's resources, this restructuring will better align the Secretariat with Annex 9 – *Facilitation* provisions, and relevance to the needs and expectations of the global aviation community.

A recurrent theme in our TRIP Strategy work is assistance to States. Let me provide you with a few current highlights and challenges in TRIP implementation:

- The importance of reading ePassports properly at border control points. Specifications for issuing ICAO-compliant ePassports provide for the most secure and robust travel document ever issued. Over 120 States claim that they are currently issuing ePassports -- with nearly half a billion ePassports in circulation. And these numbers continue to increase.
- However, significant work remains to be done by States before ePassports provide their full security and facilitation benefits. Not all ePassports are fully compliant with ICAO specifications yet – and not all use the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) as a mean for distributing public key infrastructure information required to verify and authenticate ePassports. This prevents issuing States from capitalizing on full security and facilitation benefits that ePassports are meant to deliver.
- ICAO PKD membership has reached 45 States and continues to grow. However, this is still less than half of all States claiming to issue ePassports. This calls for intensified advocacy efforts to underscore that the ICAO PKD is a must-have as far as border integrity is concerned.
- ICAO is currently developing the ePassport Roadmap – a policy planning and strategy tool guiding State and global efforts towards the universal implementation of ePassports.
- A major machine readable passport compliance challenge is meeting the 24 November 2015 deadline by which all non-machine readable passports should expire. States ought to encourage their citizens to renew any non-compliant passports before the deadline.

The remaining and newly-emerging challenges stress an important point. Having a good policy is vital - but not quite enough. It is the implementation of the TRIP Strategy in practice that really matters. Some States inevitably struggle with turning ambitions into reality. This calls for intensifying capacity-building assistance efforts, intensifying technical dialogue with States in need and regional partners, and mobilizing assistance funding from the donor community.

ICAO TRIP implementation assistance has already started with Phase I in the African (Sahel) Region. Assistance projects have been developed in close cooperation with several Economic Communities of the African Union: CEN-SAD, COMESA, ECCAS, and ECOWAS. The pilot assistance project for Phase I is a Canada-funded initiative “Strengthening Travel Document Security in the Sahel. “Project activities include a workshop, training and technical assessment missions to address capacity gaps. I would like to highlight the Sahel project as a shining example of joint efforts linking the needs of States, ICAO expertise and resources provided by the donor community, and to thank the Government of Canada for its generous support.

In this spirit, we continue developing TRIP implementation project proposals for other regions in Africa, Central Asia, the Americas – while also continuing our regular assistance activities. This year, two MRTD Regional Seminars in Uzbekistan and Spain attracted an unprecedented number of participants. These Seminars provided a first-ever opportunity to explore the TRIP Strategy with our colleagues in Europe and Central Asia, as well as to conduct the first ICAO passport interoperability tests. In addition, we have been implementing MRTD gap assessments in beneficiary States, especially in South and Central America, supported, once again, by contributions Canada.

These short-term measures focus on intensifying and enhancing assistance activities that we are doing already. But our main interest is the potential of mid- and long-term prospects of ICAO’s TRIP Strategy assistance. Options explored include establishing an ICAO-UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNCTC) framework dedicated to providing technical assistance to States in implementing the TRIP Strategy. A framework that would offer a one-stop shop for States in need to access funds and expertise required for TRIP capacity building. The presence of the UN Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee Chairperson and UN

Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (UNCTED) leadership today is a symbolic reminder about close synergies between the ICAO TRIP Strategy and the global counter-terrorism agenda. Our emerging vision is ICAO, UN CTC, partner organizations and Member States joining forces in consolidating their capacity to provide assistance in implementing the ICAO TRIP Strategy to all member States in need as an integral part of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

And finally, a few words about the Symposium programme. As usual, we will address latest developments in MRTD standards and specifications, identification management and border control issues. This year's Symposium focuses on border integrity and border control management. It will explore inspection systems and tools, and interoperable applications that enhance security and facilitation benefits to Member States, with particular reference to their use in combatting terrorism and trans-border crime. Watch lists, passport readers and border information systems, the ICAO PKD, intelligence-led border controls, inter-agency and cross-border information sharing will be examined in detail. Experts' presentations will also explore the integrity of the passport issuance process during a dedicated session. Document Issuance and Control, a component of the ICAO TRIP Strategy, offers concepts and good practices in preventing the fraudulent use of MRTDs by individuals who are not entitled to them.

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 (formerly known as the TAG/MRTD). I invite you all to make the most of your 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 offers a challenging and exciting programme that will capture your full attention for the coming three days. I sincerely thank you for having taken the time to join us here, and wish you a very successful and productive Symposium.

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