Regional Seminar on Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) and Traveller Identification Management *Tashkent, 8 – 10 April 2014*

(The Seminar, hosted by the Government of Uzbekistan, is organized by ICAO and supported by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Opening statement of CTED Executive Director

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations Security Council and CTED are together committed to working with Member States to identify effective ways to prevent acts of terrorism and to bring to justice those who commit terrorist acts.

As you are all aware, CTED plays a important role in assessing compliance by United Nations Member States with the counter-terrorism measures required by the Security Council in its resolution 1373 and reaffirmed in resolution 2129 (December 2013).

As a facilitator of technical assistance, CTED works closely with Member States to help enhance their capacity to implement the resolution.

Of particular interest to all of you here today, perhaps, is that resolution 1373 obligates all Member States to prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups through the effective implementation of border controls, including through measures to prevent counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents as well as controls and processes relating to the issuance of identity papers and travel documents.

Moreover, Security Council resolution 1624 (2005) calls upon all States to "cooperate, *inter alia*, to strengthen the security of their international borders, including by combating fraudulent travel documents and, to the extent available, by enhancing terrorist screening and passenger security procedures with a view to preventing those guilty of [incitement to commit a terrorist act] from entering their territory".

From experience gathered through the conduct of country assessments and visits on behalf of the Counter Terrorism Committee, CTED is aware that one of the most significant challenges faced by States in implementing resolutions 1373 and 1624 is the effective management of States' borders to prevent the movement of terrorists.

In this regard, we have noted that the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) in Central Asia is hampered by several factors, including proximity to the security-related challenges in Afghanistan; the illicit activities of trans-border cash couriers; the circulation of surplus arms; remote and under-protected borders, coupled with the lack of human and material resources to ensure effective border control. Moreover, Al-Qaida-affiliated groups operate in some parts of the Central Asian sub-region. Central Asian States are thus confronted with an acute transnational terrorist threat that requires concerted regional and coordinated responses. Furthermore, countries in the region are increasingly concerned about post-2014 scenario in Afghanistan and its implications for Central Asia, especially in light of the porous borders of these countries with Afghanistan and between each other.

Acutely conscious of these challenges, Central Asian States have made significant progress in implementing a variety of counter-terrorism measures, in compliance with resolution 1373 (2001). Of relevance to the topic of today's seminar, they are working to curtail terrorist movements by strengthening immigration controls and aviation security. Most of the States have established procedures to determine the true identity of persons prior to the issuance of travel documents, and most – like Uzbekistan hosting today's seminar – issue machine-readable travel documents in accordance with Standard 3.10 of Annex 9 - *Facilitation* and already incorporating biometric components as encouraged by Recommended Practice 3.9. Legislation to prevent the movement of terrorists across borders is largely in place. There is however still a need to improve the practical implementation of measures to prevent and suppress the movement of terrorists across borders. In some States, the lack of technical equipment, such as document readers, and the lack of full national and international law enforcement database connectivity, prevents a thorough and effective screening of travel documents.

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

CTED is mandated to work with a variety of international, regional and subregional organizations in its efforts to address the challenges faced by States in effectively implementing counter-terrorism measures.

CTED continues to work closely with ICAO, the lead agency responsible for the development of international Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) relating to travel documents as detailed in the relevant Annexes to the Chicago Convention. CTED also cooperates with OSCE, which is supporting this seminar in Tashkent, in supporting its Member States implement UN instruments related to the fight against terrorism. CTED is aware and appreciates OSCE's continuous efforts in assisting Member States to strengthen the security of travel documents and their issuance processes.

CTED fully supports the importance attached by ICAO to promoting States' issuance of machine-readable travel documents (MRTDs) in accordance with the specification established in ICAO Doc 9303, Part 1, as an essential component of efforts to prevent the movement of terrorists across borders, as well as to providing appropriate technical assistance supporting capacity building efforts to meet this objective.

With respect to States' issuance of ICAO-compliant travel documents, CTED is aware of the needs of States to further enhance the integrity of the passport issuance process and ensure robust identification management processes in order to prevent exploitation by terrorists and to maximize the effectiveness of border security and benefits of enhanced facilitation of travel across borders.

CTED supports ICAO's approach that efforts to ensure the legitimacy of secure travel documents depends on a holistic, and integrated approach to the traveller identification-management and issuance process.

The integrity of issuing a secure travel document is seriously compromised without appropriate safeguards incorporated into a traveller identity management process to ensure the confirmation of the identity of the individual to whom the passport is issued.

For these reasons, CTED fully supports ICAO's Traveller Identification Programme (ICAO TRIP) Strategy to assist States in complying with their international obligations under UN Security Council resolutions 1373 and 1624 and the Strategy's aims to develop a holistic and systematic model for traveller identification management to ensure that all States have the capacity to verify the identity of individuals prior to the issuance of secure travel documents compliant with international Standards.

CTED looks forward to continuing its close partnership with ICAO in efforts to encourage Member States to subscribe to the TRIP strategy and to collaborating with ICAO to ensure the availability of appropriate technical assistance and development of States' capacity in this regard.

CTED encourages the States present today to intensify their efforts, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and ICAO SARPs, to develop and implement a robust identification management system and thereby safeguard the integrity of the issuance process for secure machine readable travel documents.

I wish you all a fruitful seminar and look forward to hearing about your ideas and proposals.

Thank you.