



### ICAO takes steps to strengthen global border management and security

For immediate release

**Montréal, 03 March 2020** – Leveraging its privileged position as the nexus for international passports and associated standards development, UN aviation agency ICAO has taken steps to strengthen modern border security through the online [issuance](#) of a new “Master List” of e-passport authentication certificates.

“Improved access to the authentication certificates will enhance global e-passport validation effectiveness, in particular for authorities which have faced difficulties in obtaining them in the past,” stressed ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu. “And importantly, all the certificates in the Master List have been personally delivered to ICAO by its Member States, thereby enhancing the mutual trust upon which secure and efficient e-passport verification must depend.”

The new ICAO Master List contains the Country Signing Certificate Authority (CSCA) or ‘root’ certificates used in the e-passport digital signing process. Its publication complements existing sources of certificates, including those disseminated through the [ICAO Public Key Directory \(PKD\)](#) and by national authorities.

“We are also making these certificates available for non-state non-commercial use,” Dr. Liu clarified, “in recognition of the inherent public good in assuring as wide a capability to authenticate e-passports as is feasible. Assuring these capabilities is critical to assuring the evolution of new digital identity innovations, and in particular our ongoing work on a new [Digital Travel Credential \(DTC\)](#).”

More than two-thirds of States issue e-passports today, making use of their chip-based features to store traveller identity information and to leverage the win-win benefits which chip-based documents provide in terms of strengthened security features and shorter processing times for cross-border travellers.

The chips are digitally secured or ‘signed’ by the issuing authority, using enciphered data in the form of linked private and public ‘keys’ which are generated by cryptographic algorithms. The security of the verification process is further strengthened by the need for a digital authentication certificate issued by a reliable authority which binds the public key with the traveller’s identity.

The validation of e-passports and DTCs by non-state entities, including the private sector and the traveling public, is envisioned today in the context of several seamless travel initiatives. But just as with nationally-issued e-passports, all digital identity initiatives must fundamentally rely on the availability the CSCA and other certificates required to assure their secure verification.

The new development on behalf of ICAO serves to bolster the traveller identification management processes which are so important to modern aviation security and passenger facilitation approaches. These and other priorities are currently being pursued by ICAO Member States in the context of the UN agency’s [Traveller Identification Programme or ‘TRIP’ Strategy](#), which ICAO launched in 2013.



## Resources for Editors

### About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 193 Member States.

### About CSCA certificates and the PKD

CSCA certificates are foundational, so-called 'root', certificates. They are used for digitally signing documents over a relatively long period (typically 3-5 years). In comparison, the "Document Signer" (DS) certificates that can also be used for validating electronic signatures are typically used for only a few months. The 71 entities issuing electronic passports that are currently members of ICAO's Public Key Directory (PKD) use the PKD to exchange these DS certificates. From now on, a master list of CSCA certificates prepared by ICAO will also be shared.

The master list is digitally signed by an ICAO Master List Signer certificate, that is in turn itself signed by the United Nations CSCA certificate. Its authenticity can therefore be confirmed through use of the same certificates used in the production of UN passports which are already available to authorities globally, further enhancing trust.

[ICAO's Traveller Identification Programme \(ICAO TRIP\) Strategy](#)

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