



International Civil Aviation Organization

Sixth Symposium and Exhibition  
on ICAO MRTDs, Biometrics  
and Security Standards

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# eVisas: The Time is NOW

Conceptual Framework and a Way Forward

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# World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

A specialized Agency of the United Nations (cf ICAO)  
“with a central and decisive role in promoting the  
development of responsible, sustainable and  
universally accessible tourism”



# World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)



"The leading international organization in the field of tourism, a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how and statistics"

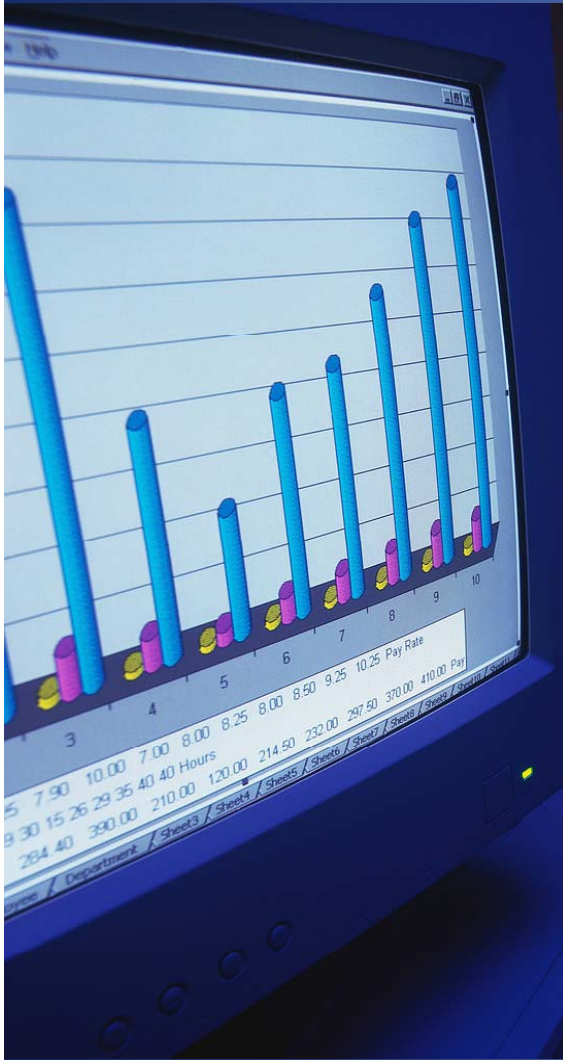


# UNWTO

- ☀ 154 Members (countries)
- ☀ 7 Associate Members (territories)
- ☀ Over 400 Affiliate Members (private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations, local tourism authorities)
- ☀ Headquarters in Madrid



# Tourism's global economic contribution



- Directly: nearly 4% of GDP, 3% of employment
- Directly & indirectly: over 10% of GDP, 8% of employment
- International (2009):
  - 880 million arrivals
  - \$852 billion receipts
  - 6% of exports
  - 30% of commercial service trade

# Tourism's contribution to poorest economies

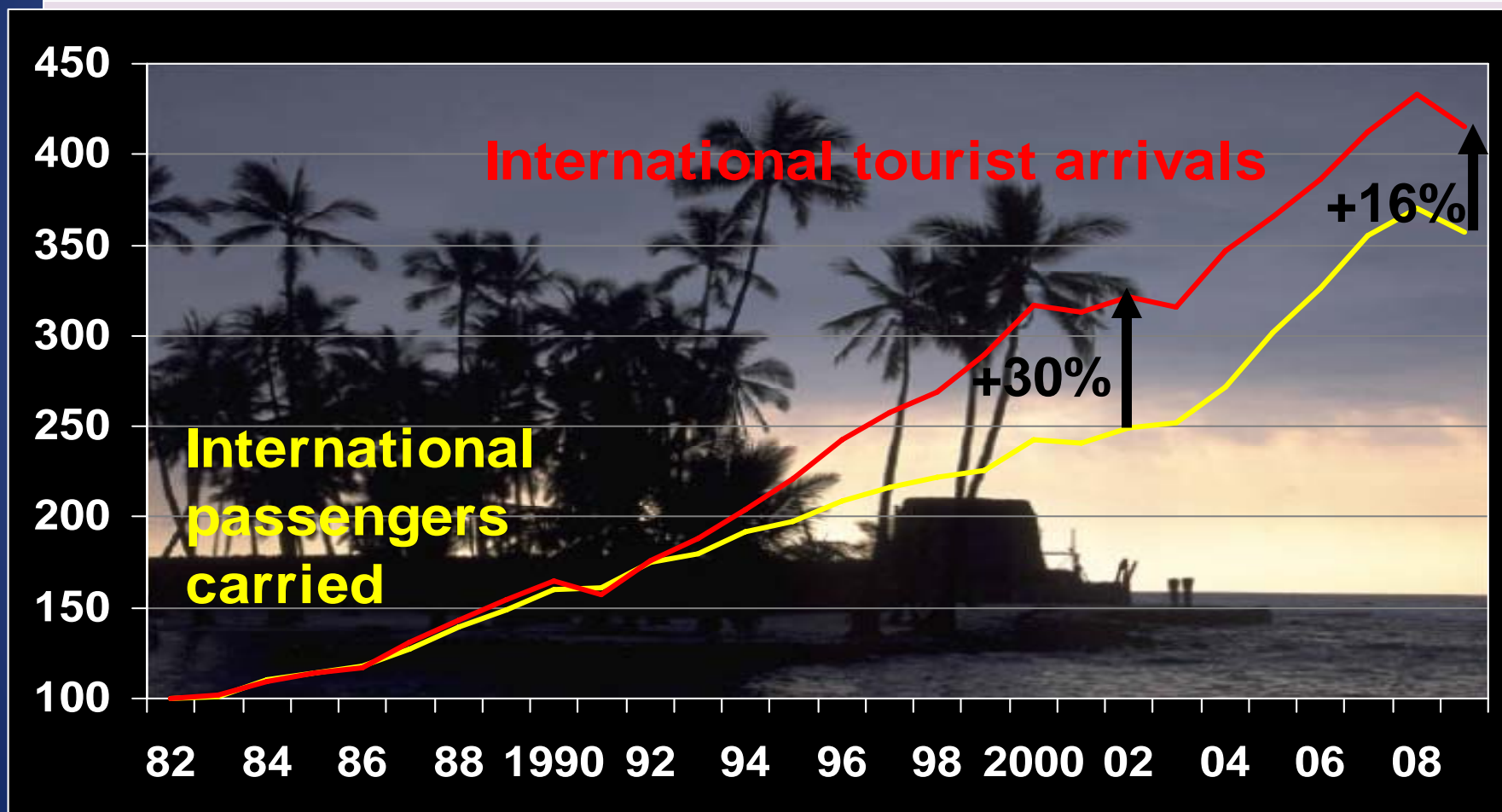
- Tourism is the second-biggest source of foreign exchange for 46 of 49 LDCs
- Tourism is often the principal service sector activity
- Tourism is an effective catalyst for gender equality, employment of young people, rural regeneration, cultural preservation and nature conservation



# International tourism and air passenger transport: Locked at the hip

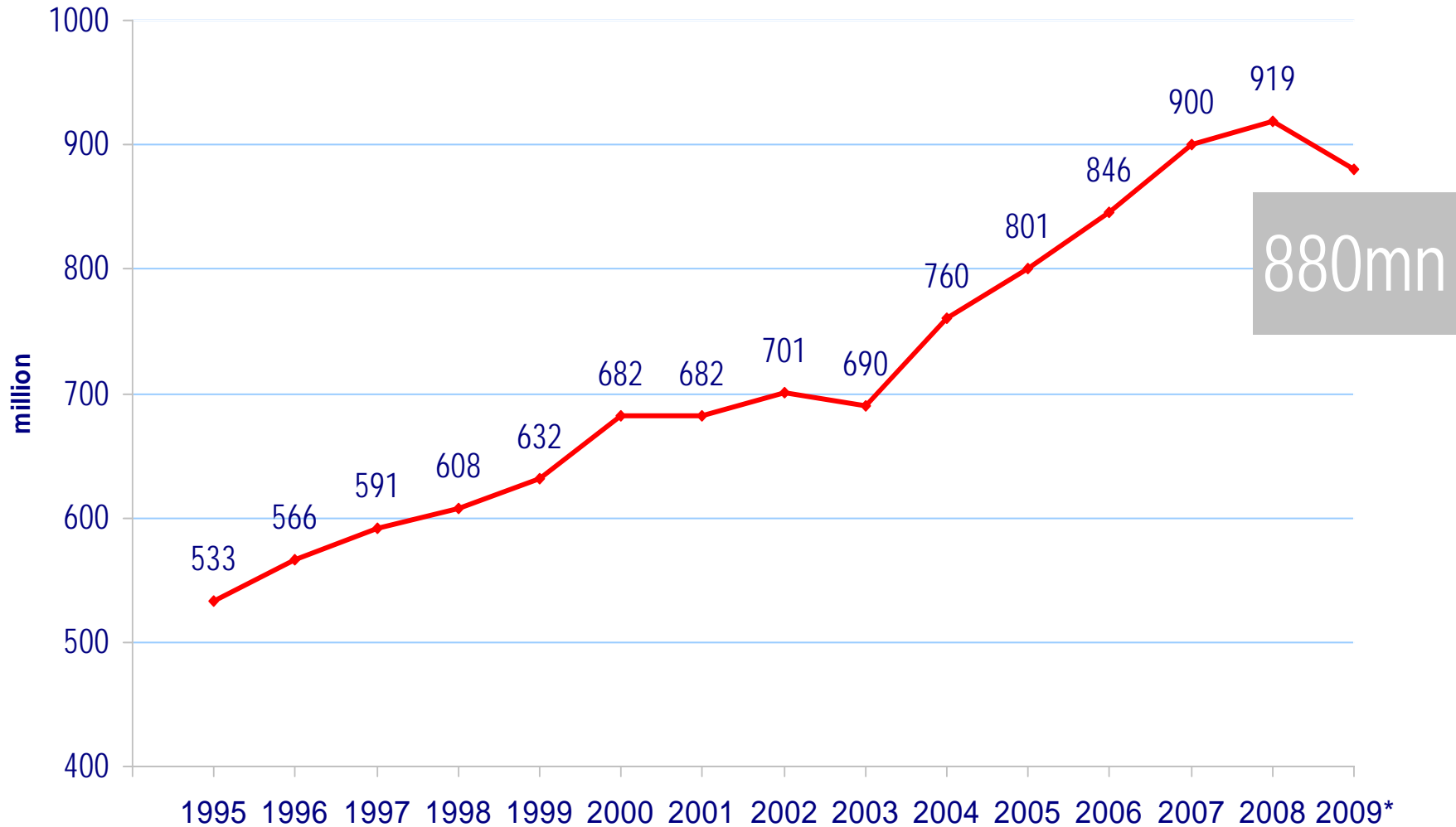
- International air passengers are predominantly tourists (business and leisure travellers)
- Over half of international tourist arrivals are by air (increasing yearly, with much higher proportions for long-haul destinations)
- International tourism and air passenger transport traffic and revenues tend to move in lockstep, with tourism being more resilient in times of uncertainty when tourists stay closer to home

# Symbiosis between tourism and air transport



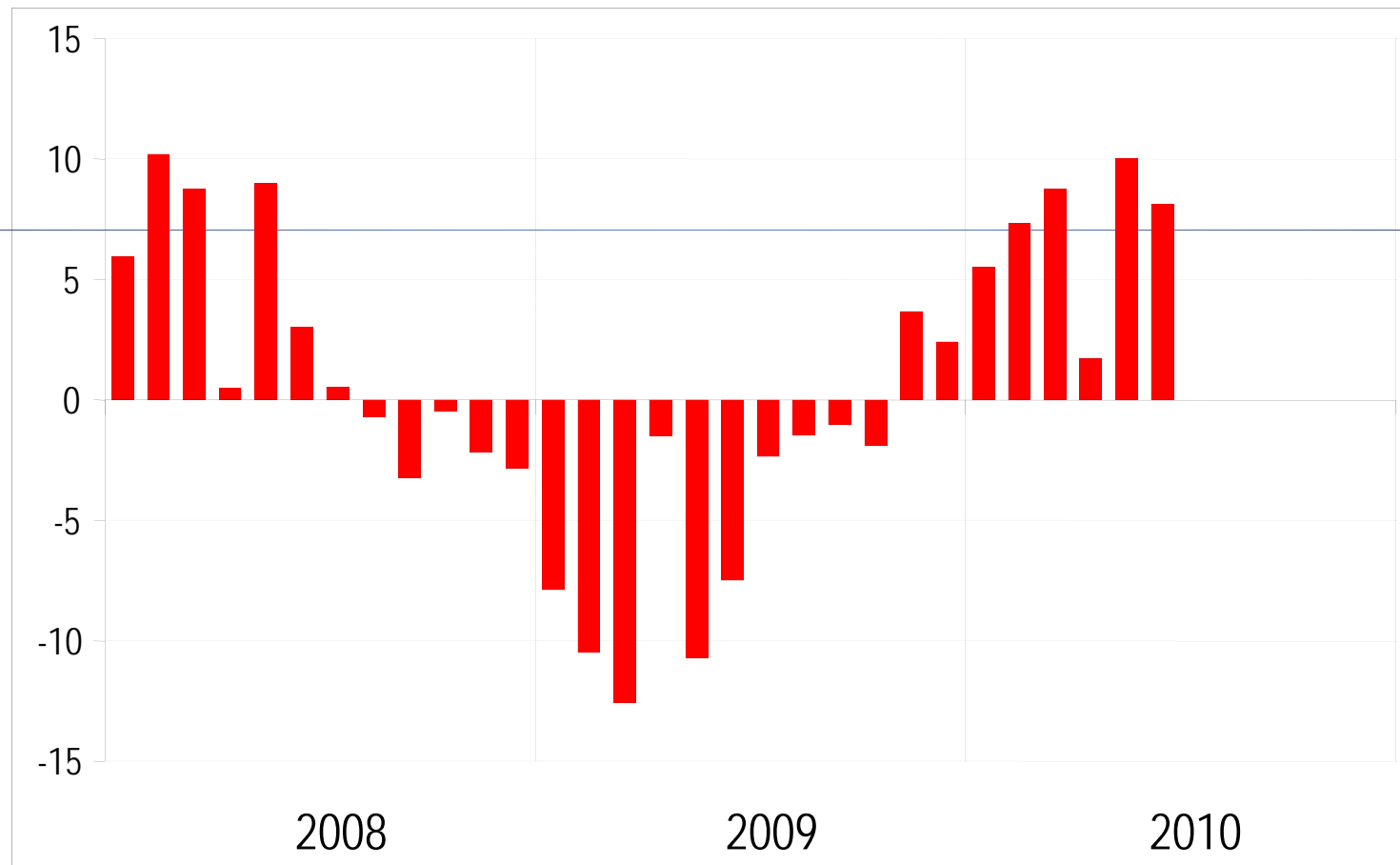
# 2009: A challenging year

International tourist arrivals, 1995-2009\*



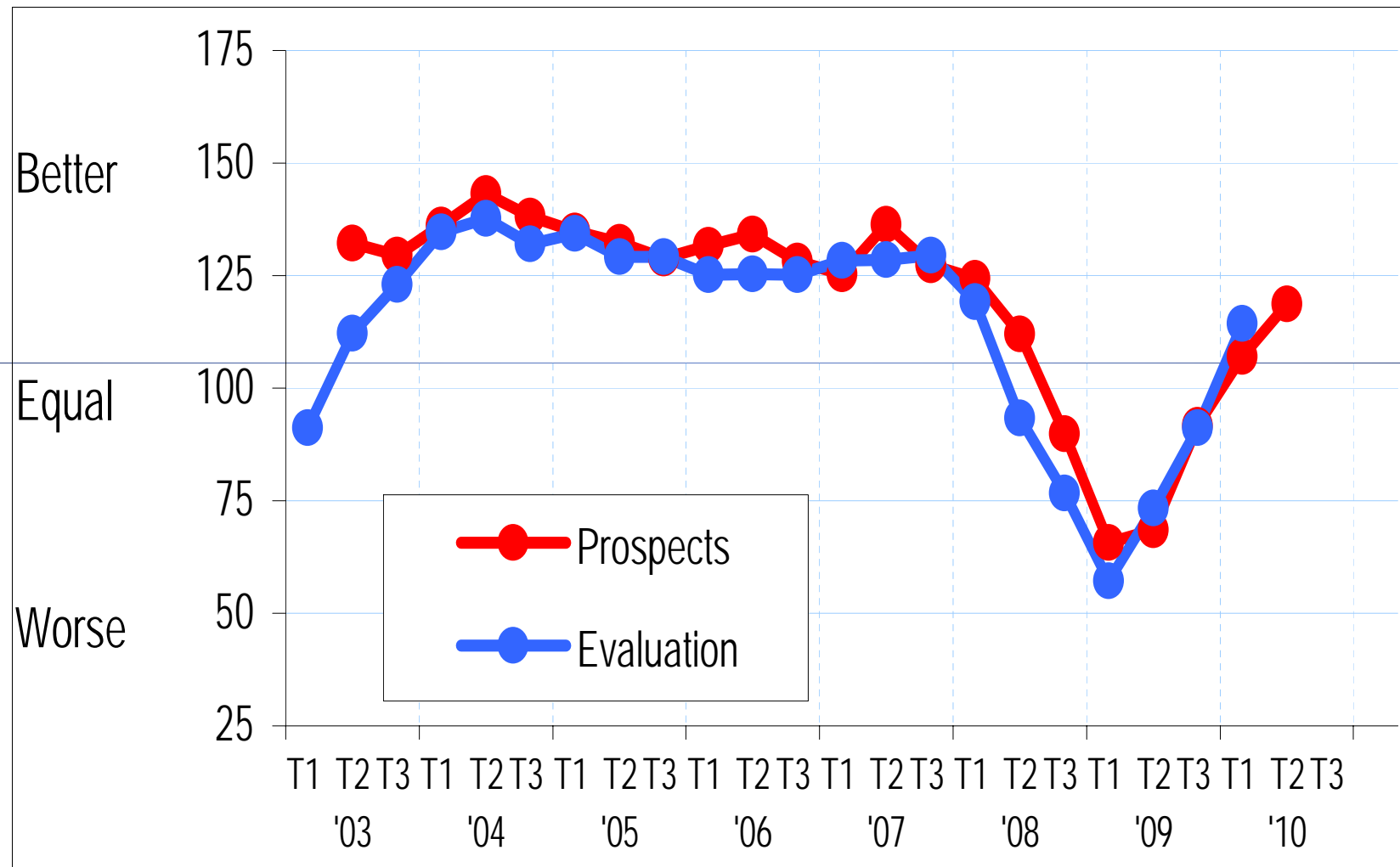
# Return to growth at end of 2009

International Tourist Arrivals, monthly evolution (% change)



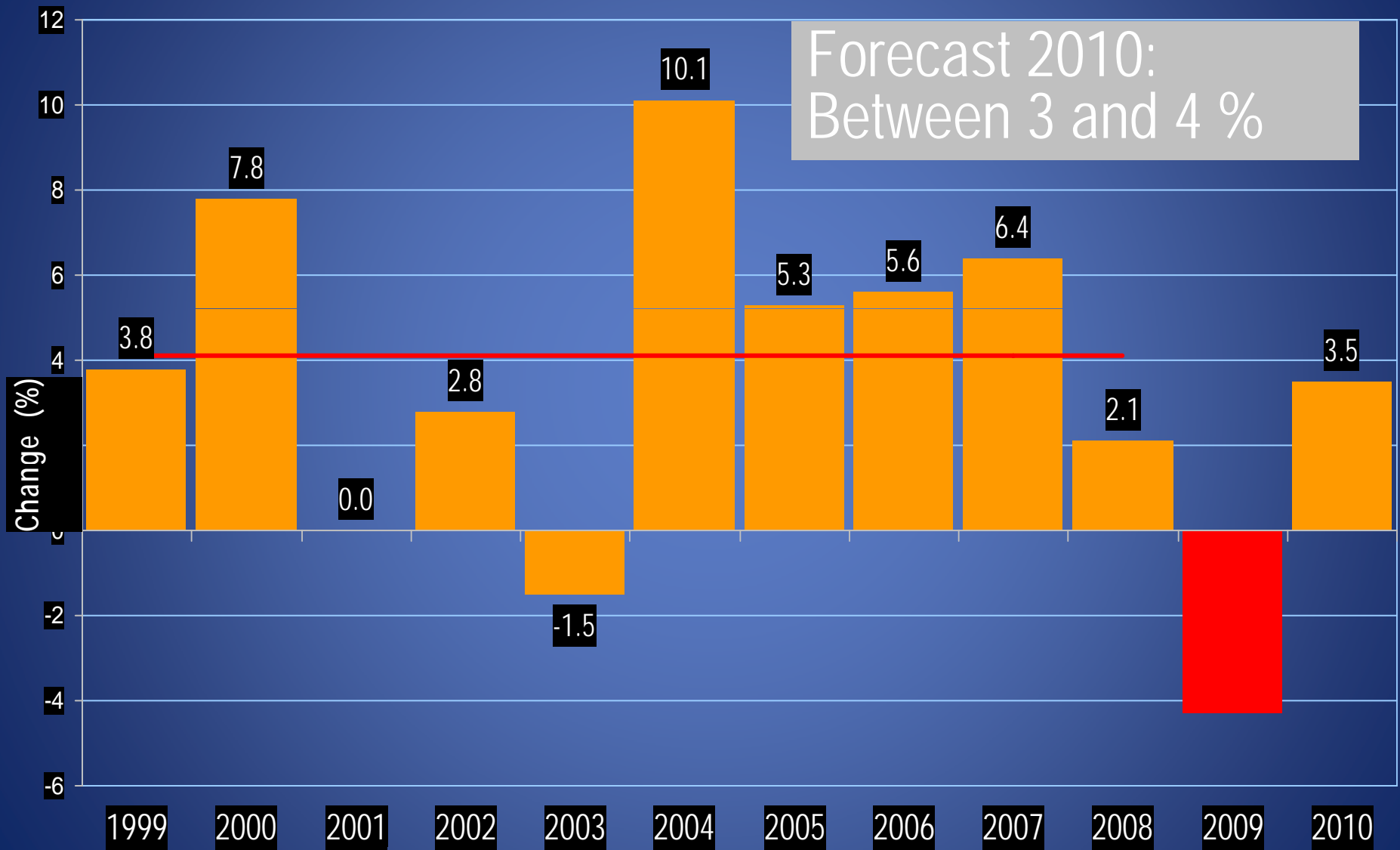
Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©

## UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©

# 2010: Forecast maintained



\*Preliminary results

A person with dark hair, wearing a red top and blue shorts, stands on a globe. Above them is a blue speech bubble with a white grid pattern. Inside the bubble, the year "2020" is written in yellow. The background is a clear blue sky.

2020

- **1.6 billion international tourists, spending \$5 billion per day**

"Level of penetration of the 'real' potential population in tourism in 2020 can be seen to be 7 per cent – truly an industry still in its infancy."

UNWTO: Vision 2020

# UNWTO

- S.A.F.E. – Security And Facilitation Enhancement:
  - Continued threat of terrorism
  - Ground as well as air
  - Costs and irritation
  - Insurance and liability



# S.A.F.E

- Systems approach to:
  - Facilitation and Security
  - Air transport and tourism
  - Rich and poor countries



# S.A.F.E.

- Three key aviation linkages:
  - “Extension” of certain aviation security standards and procedures to tourist facilities and sites
  - Facilitation of the security process at airports (ICAO Annexes 9 and 17, IATA Passenger Experience Management Group)
  - Facilitation of the provision and processing of travel documents (ICAO MRTD programme)



# ICAO MRTD Programme

# ICAO : TAG-MRTD

# Doc 9303



## Part 2 - Visa

# Part 1 - Passport

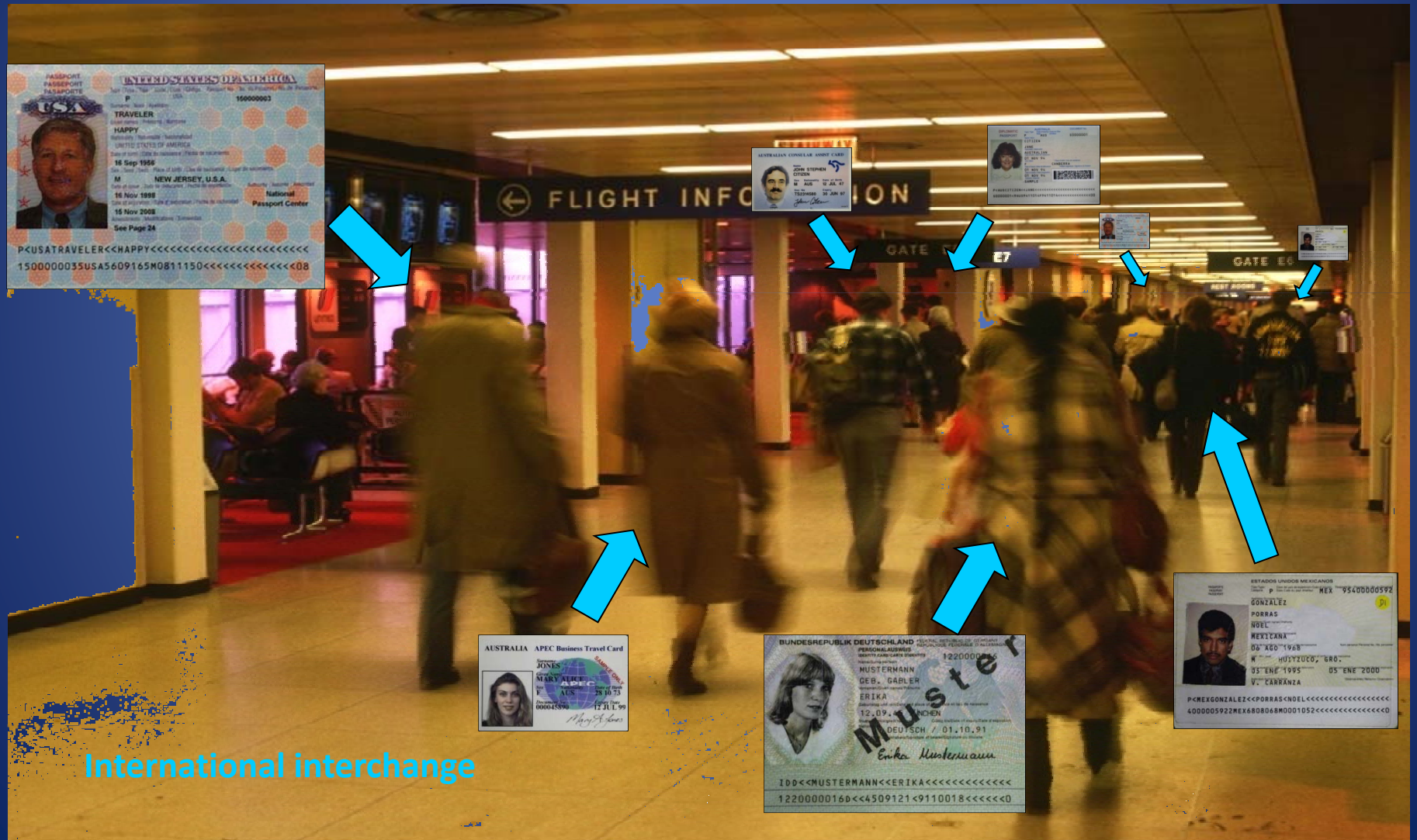
## Part 3 - Official Travel Document



# ISO : SC17 WG3

# ISO/IEC 7501

# Standards – ICAO Doc 9303



# MRTD implementation

- MR Passports 1 April 2010 final issuance deadline largely achieved
- Non-MR Passport expiry deadline 1 April 2015
- ePassport Standards established, well over 50 States implementing, others planning
- eVisa Standards awaited, but some States are already implementing



# What is an eVisa?

An electronic visa, or eVisa, is a paperless substitute for a traditional visa, one which can be obtained from a government administration by a traveller directly online through an internet portal or through a travel agent, tour operator or participating air carrier at the time of making a travel reservation.



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# What advantages does an eVisa offer?

- First and foremost, increased security
- Streamlined and lower cost issuance process for States
- Particularly beneficial for:
  - States that have limited number of visa-issuing missions abroad
  - Travellers who have no such mission in their home or base country



# What do we know regarding the implementation status of eVisas?

- In effect: Australia (1996, the pioneer), Armenia, Bahrain, Nigeria, United States (Electronic System for Travel Authorization under the Visa Waiver)
- Under development: Cambodia, Oman
- Pilot programme for visa interviews/clearance by video conference: United Kingdom, United States
- Many other countries would like to introduce but cost high for a "standalone" system, especially for developing countries
- "Community" interest in Africa (CEMAC, ECOWAS, SADC, UEMOA), Asia (ASEAN, PATA), Europe (EU), South America



# What can we infer?

- There is a need for a globally interoperable e-Visa system that can be shared by many countries, individually or jointly
- Currently there exist neither global standards nor specifications for e-Visas (ICAO NTWG has been working on outline of technical specifications and modalities for their issuance)
- States with limited technical capacity can launch a tender and select a proposal without any standard process to follow or test of robustness (and there have been problems)
- The prospect of fragmentation, inconsistency and potential weakness in specifications and processes is rising



# An implementation structure for eVisas

- Adjustment to the needs and risk profile of States:
  - Internet-based issuing system during which details of applicants are checked against a border intelligence watchlist
  - Option for extension to real-time secure system between border agencies, border checkpoints, airlines, surface transport and criminal intelligence
  - Option for ICAO to host a central eVisa data server and provide services to client States (cf PKD)
  - Option for biometric component



# An implementation constitution for eVisas

- Public Private Partnership (PPP), comprising interested government administrations, ICAO, other relevant UN and international organizations (including UNCTC, INTERPOL, OSCE.....) and private sector suppliers (SITA, Entrust.....)
- Investment to be offset by revenue generated from an eVisa operation processing fee



# Where things stand today

- ICAO Assembly (Montréal 28 September – 8 October) supported UNWTO proposal “that ICAO should explore with international partners the development of global standards and specifications for eVisas as a matter of priority”
- Chairman of NTWG has been requested to place the subject on its work programme
- Submission of a report to the Technical Advisory Group on MRTDs in April next year
- This Symposium an opportunity to expand the eVisa “body of knowledge” and to source interest and funding options



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# Some food for thought

An October 2010 report from the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) finds that “the process of applying for a visa to Europe is an unpleasant one. Over 450,000 tourists are deterred from visiting. Conservative estimates by the EATO put the financial loss to the European Union, caused by poor visa processing at over 500 million Euros per year.”



# Further information:

A37-WP/136

([http://www.icao.int/icao/en/assembly/a37/wp/wp136\\_en.pdf](http://www.icao.int/icao/en/assembly/a37/wp/wp136_en.pdf))



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