TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE READABLE
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (TAG-MRTD)

NINETEENTH MEETING

Montréal, 7 to 9 December 2009

Agenda Item 2:   **Activities of the NTWG**
Agenda Item 2.11:   **Standards for Emergency/Temporary Passports**

STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY/TEMPORARY PASSPORTS

(Presented by the New Technologies Working Group (NTWG))

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   Travel document security features have become more complex and more difficult to counterfeit, or forge, lost and stolen passports are being routinely reported to Interpol with real time access to this data now possible, the lack of standards in relation to emergency passports has been identified as a potential weakness. Such documents in general are not produced to the same standard as standard passports and vary significantly in terms of their security and quality. Consequently, they may be a target for fraudulent use.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1   At TAG-MRTD/15 (May 2004), the Document Content and Format Working Group (DCFWG) submitted a paper to develop guidance material and standards in relation to emergency passports. However it is unclear what happened to this work. Although drafts of the 6th Edition, Volume 1, Part 1 did contain references to emergency passports, these were deleted in the final version. At the NTWG meeting in Brussels in February 2009, a presentation on Emergency Passports considered the necessity or otherwise of the emergency passport, the varying names by which such documents are known, ICAO standards relating to emergency passports, and the concerns raised by security and other issues surrounding emergency passports. It was agreed at the NTWG meeting that a further discussion paper be drawn up to examine the various issues and concerns around the emergency travel document. This was presented at the NTWG meeting in Sydney in October 2009.

2.2   This working paper therefore aims to do the following:

   a) highlight the current lack of standards relating to issuance of emergency passports and consequent variations in documents issued;

   b) consider the level of threat that such documents pose;

   c) seek TAG's agreement that standards/best practice are required;

   d) seek approval for further work to develop standards, recommendations or best practices in order to strengthen the issuance/security of these documents against potential attack from fraudsters.

3.   PRESENT STATUS

3.1   As part of the research undertaken for this paper, a number of countries were contacted and asked to provide details of the emergency (or similar named) passports they issue. This revealed a plethora of such documents with many countries issuing more than one type of emergency document – including one page A4 size paper documents. Photos are sometimes integrated, sometimes glued in or a mixture. In many cases (where booklets are used) the security standards are in line with ICAO standards. Validity periods of the books vary significantly between 12 months and 2-3 days and for one journey or multiple journeys. The colour of the document is more commonly different from the standard national passport. The number of pages in the book varies anywhere between 6 pages and 32 pages. Names of the documents also vary considerably with a number of countries using different names to identify multiple types of emergency documents. So we have:

   • Emergency Passport
   • Emergency Travel Document for a Single Journey
   • Temporary Passport
   • Emergency Travel Certificate
   • Temporary Travel Document
   • Temporary Passport
   • Passport

3.2   The number of different names and formats that emergency passports take may be a source of confusion to border inspectors, and where there is confusion there is the potential for weakness. The very nature of emergency passports means that they are issued in less than ideal conditions, possibly in a mission which does not have the sophisticated equipment that enables printing of full validity passports. Usually, emergency passports will be used to enter the country of which the passenger is a national, meaning that border inspectors should be briefed to be familiar with the document, however this will not always be the case as some passengers will need to transit via other countries, or may be travelling to the nearest country where they can obtain a full validity passport.

3.3   Whilst there is no hard evidence that emergency documents are currently being misused, there is clearly the potential for this to take place. At the very least as a result of this work it does appear that there is a strong case for bringing a degree of standardisation to the format of emergency passports.

3.4   It is proposed that further work is carried out by NTWG to identify those areas that should be standardised and those where standards are not appropriate but best practice could be recommended. The areas that will be examined include the following:

- Minimum security standards
- Use of a standard name
- Whether a logo should be used
- Colour and validity of documents

4.   **ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD**

4.1   The TAG/MRTD is invited to:

a) agree that there is a need for standards/best practice to be developed for emergency travel documents in order to protect them from potential abuse;

b) approve further work to be carried out by NTWG to develop a set of standards or best practice with the aim of their inclusion within a forthcoming Supplement and in the next edition (7th) of Doc 9303, Volume 1.

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