ICAO EIGHTH SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBITION ON MRTDs, BIOMETRICS AND SECURITY STANDARDS

(Montreal, 10 to 12 October 2012)

MRTD Assistance to States: Building on the Success of Aviation Security Technical Cooperation

It is a great pleasure to address you at the 8th ICAO Symposium on MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards.

ICAO plays an important role in the provision of aviation security capacity-building assistance to Member States. The process through which assistance is delivered, has recently gained considerable momentum through the production of concrete results while addressing the needs of States and helping them resolve their aviation security deficiencies to strengthen their overall aviation security system.

It is important to note that aviation security deficiencies and the need for technical assistance is not limited to the aviation security sector. A number of States stress the need for assistance towards implementing SARPS (Standards and Recommended Practices) and guidance materials related to MRTDs, identification management and border control. A State that has not yet implemented up to date MRTD standards presents a weakness to global security and a single failure can compromise the world-wide travel document and border security regime.

This situation raises a fundamental question: how can we ensure that ICAO MRTD SARPs and specifications are implemented and integrated worldwide? What assistance and capacity building support is needed and how can ICAO ensure a central role in providing such assistance?

I would like to give you a quick overview regarding the latest ICAO policy developments and discuss the main challenges focused on MRTDs, identification management and border controls. I would also like to brief you about the current ICAO assistance framework for aviation security, and share with you some thoughts about the emerging direction of ICAO assistance efforts.

The ICAO High-level Conference on Aviation Security took place last month and focused on priority areas in the current aviation security policy debate, many of which were related to the assistance and capacity building activities. In particular, the Conference stressed the need for ICAO: to ensure the best usage of ICAO audit results for defining and targeting assistance; to strengthen efforts to air cargo and mail security; and maximize the benefits of partnership agreements for the delivery of capacity-building activities. The Conference also encouraged Member States to enhance aviation security by standardizing formats for travel documents and the electronic transmission of passenger data to State authorities while ensuring the protection of passengers' privacy and civil liberties. With specific regard to MRTD efforts, the Conference directed ICAO to enhance travel document security by participating in the electronic passport validation service known as the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD).

While assistance to States and aviation security capacity building remain at the top of ICAO's agenda, I would like to take a closer look at why non-compliance with ICAO MRTD standards still exists and discuss the main challenges.

Current ICAO MRTD SARPs and specifications reflect conditions and facilities found in the most developed States. Developing States often struggle to implement complex specifications because they lack technical expertise and/or

funds. However, it is worth stressing that funding is not the only problem and MRTD implementation challenges are not limited to developing States. According to the ICAO MRTD Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group, only half of the States issuing ePassports fully comply with ICAO specifications and can benefit from the ICAO Public Key Directory. Resolving capacity deficiencies requires a dialogue among States, intensified liaison with donor agencies and increased access to capacity-building programmes.

During recent MRTD workshops and seminars world-wide, the message we received was loud and clear: capacity-building needs are vast, and Member States look forward to a more effective mechanism for mobilizing technical assistance in travel document and border security.

In practical terms, there are several challenges and capacity deficiencies related to travel documents, identification management and border controls . Firstly, a number of States were unable to meet the 1 April 2010 deadline for the introduction of machine-readable passports (MRPs) and some still do not. A considerable number of non-compliant passports are still in circulation but must expire , or be withdrawn, by 24 November 2015. Secondly, there are weaknesses in: overall identity management, Evidence of Identity framework, breeder documents, and in the integrity of the passport issuance process. In some States, including those having ICAO-compliant MRTDs, passport controls are processed manually, without the use of an automated database with MRTD-aligned passport and Epassport readers. There is often no watch list functionality which makes it impossible to detect known cases of document fraud and persons of interest. Thirdly, in a number of States, immigration and passport officials appear to have insufficient knowledge of migrant processing and passport examination, and generally have not undergone any specialized vocational training relevant to their daily duties. Lastly, other challenges

include how to enhance border security and secure ICAO-compliant travel documents with the use of electronic data, including API/PNR.

Under the Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP), ICAO assesses the implementation of Annex 17 and Annex 9 SARPs. Recognizing that not all States have the necessary resources to achieve compliance with relevant SARPs, ICAO works with States towards the provision of assistance. This systems-based approach to overall aviation security enhancement is built on three pillars: SARPs to define performance expectations; the audit program to assess performance; and the Implementation Support and Development Programme to assist States directly to improve their aviation security performance.

ICAO Assembly Resolution A37-17 acknowledges that some countries, particularly developing countries, lack aviation security oversight capacity and face difficulties in fully implementing preventive measures due to insufficient financial, technical and/or material resources. The Declaration on Aviation Security adopted by the 37th Session of the ICAO Assembly urges States to further enhance international cooperation to counter threats to civil aviation.

The Secretariat is actively assisting States to remedy deficiencies identified through ICAO audits. These efforts are guided by the ICAO Aviation Security Assistance and Capacity Building Strategy, which sets out the management parameters and methodology for assisting States. Under the Strategy, State Improvement Plans (SIPs) are the principle tool used by ICAO to document and agree with States being assisted on the respective roles and responsibilities, commitments, deliverables and outcomes. These detailed plans enable ICAO

and States to have a single point of reference for coordinated action by all concerned stakeholders to remedy aviation security deficiencies.

Support for the regionalization of assistance led to the development of ICAO's Cooperative Aviation Security Programme (CASP) model, in which the first programme was created for the Asia Pacific region. Comprised of regional partner States with shared aviation security objectives that have contributed financial resources, CASP provides targeted assistance and training to its members. Following on the Joint Statement adopted by the Regional Conference in Bahrain, the Secretariat is currently working with 11 participating States on a CASP proposal for the Middle East. The Secretariat welcomes opportunities to develop proposals with other regional groupings of States.

Aviation security training is an integral and long-standing component in the provision of assistance to States. Training provided by ICAO includes standardized courses and workshops on subjects ranging from basic technical subjects to entry-level management, while workshops focus on the development of aviation security programmes. A mechanism for continuous evaluation of ICAO's 23 Aviation Security Training Centres (ASTC) has been instituted in order to ensure the provision of high quality training. ICAO also encourages States to directly utilize its Aviation Security Training Packages as part of their national training programmes.

What does all this mean for the future ICAO's role in providing assistance and capacity building in the areas of MRTDs, identification management and border controls? ICAO will continue to explore the possibility of expanding its activities to include the provision of assistance in the area of MRTDs, identification management and border control. Such assistance would be built

upon the success of aviation security capacity building and alignment with the current aviation security assistance framework including the use of CASPs and Aviation Security Regional Officers. Other areas of ICAO assistance could be the use of ICAO vocational training methodology and ASTC network.

Existing MRTD challenges are a powerful reminder that border security does not exist in a vacuum. In this interconnected world, a breach of security on the other side of the planet may just as well be next door. Increased and effective capacity-building assistance is a prerequisite for increased security. Weaknesses in travel document security constitutes a global security challenge and States must adjust their international efforts to address it in a proactive manner. They must address it with political will and a strong commitment to action.

As the Secretary General stressed on a number of occasions, ICAO is adopting a more proactive stance in providing assistance to Member States. As the recognized global forum for international civil aviation, ICAO brings together States in need, donors and implementation agencies towards exploring new and better ways for States to build their MRTD and border security capacity.

Thank you very much for your attention.