



**Remarks by
the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the Extraordinary Session of the
National Air Transport Facilitation Committee of Cuba**

(Havana, Cuba, 21 July 2017)

Mr. Eduardo Dávila Rodríguez, Vice-Minister of Transport,

Mr. Armando Daniel López, President of Cuban Aviation Institute,

Mr. Roberto Peña Samper, President of Cuban Aviation Corporation,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is a pleasure to be with you here today in Havana, and especially to participate in this extraordinary session of your National Air Transport Facilitation Committee.
2. Let me first begin by expressing my sincere thanks for the warm welcome that I received yesterday from Cuba's Ministers for Transport, Tourism, and Foreign Relations, from President Lopez and your senior air transport officials, and from the many participants at yesterday's very helpful seminar on the importance of comprehensive aviation data collection, analysis and reporting.
3. I also appreciate this opportunity to provide you with an update on the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme, which you may know as the 'ICAO TRIP' strategy, and to brief you on the latest developments regarding Annex 9 – *Facilitation* and its interaction with aviation security.
4. The ICAO TRIP strategy has two primary goals: strengthening State capacities to establish citizen identity in a secure and reliable manner; and to formalize those secure identities via ICAO compliant passports or other official travel documents.
5. The ICAO TRIP strategy benefits from an important foundation which ICAO has helped to establish worldwide, one supporting the secure issuance and control of machine-readable travel documents, or 'MRTDs'; effective inspection systems and tools; and fully interoperable applications.
6. The majority of our ICAO TRIP strategy work is conducted under the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention, on *Facilitation*, and through the international specifications for MRTDs found in ICAO Doc 9303.

7. Through these standards, the TRIP strategy harmonizes the global line of defence in our shared battle to confront international terrorist movements, cross-border crime, and many other threats to civil society and international aviation. It also greatly assists governments worldwide as they seek to take advantage of the latest technologies and procedures permitting more secure, rapid and cost-effective border processing.
8. With respect to its security benefits, the TRIP strategy has been highly recognized, as reflected in recently-adopted United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions 2178 and 2309.
9. It should be emphasized that Resolution 2309, which was adopted just last year, calls upon all States to strengthen security screening procedures and maximize the promotion, utilization and sharing of new technologies and innovative techniques that maximize the capability to detect explosives and other threats. It also calls upon governments to strengthen their cooperation and information sharing with respect to evolving security checkpoint technologies.
10. Earlier this month, I attended a Special meeting of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) on "Terrorist Threats to Civil Aviation". It is clear that the international community is expecting ICAO to continue to explore new means of addressing the terrorist threat through various ICAO TRIP elements.
11. Referencing the roadmap which ICAO has developed to guide TRIP efforts at the national level, two important first steps for governments to consider are the establishment of a National Air Transport Facilitation Committee and a National Air Transport Facilitation Programme.
12. Many Caribbean States have yet to establish these, and we see similar slow progress with airport level facilitation committees. Progress in these areas is essential, however, if our goal is to achieve enhanced compliance with the requirements I just mentioned.
13. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud and commend the exemplary leadership of Cuba in being so responsive and proactive on these goals here in the Caribbean. The establishment of this committee, and your nomination of a National Focal Point for Facilitation matters, are key to the intensive coordination needed between all ICAO TRIP stakeholders at the national level.
14. The TRIP strategy relies significantly on the global transition to machine-readable passports, or 'MRPs', which is nearly completed. The deadline for removal of non-MRPs from global circulation was 24 November 2015, and while some States are still pursuing this goal, I would once again commend Cuba and the 142 other ICAO Member States which are now fully MRP-compliant.
15. This includes virtually all of the States here in the Caribbean, with the few remaining countries working very hard to accelerate their full MRP compliance. We should recall that continued attempts to travel with non-compliant documents can lead to significant passenger and border control impediments, a point which underscores the importance of these efforts and timelines.

16. Another important priority concerns States' progress on ensuring that documents that have been stolen, lost, or revoked are prevented from being re-used. Considerable work remains to be done here, and Standard 3.10. in Annex 9 currently requires that information concerning appropriated documents be promptly reported to INTERPOL for inclusion in its Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database.
17. This entails the establishment of a relevant policy, the designation of an appropriate office, and the development of guidelines to ensure that such information is promptly reported.
18. Moving on to the implementation of ePassports, more than 120 ICAO Member States currently report that they are issuing these innovative travel documents – with around 700 million now in circulation worldwide.
19. Challenges persist, however, but mainly as some ePassports are not fully ICAO compliant. This can lead to unnecessary border control complications and delays.
20. Another key ePassport implementation issue pertains to the encryption of their data and its secured access through the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD). Many States processing domestic or foreign ePassports are still not using the ICAO PKD to authenticate the chip-based data, and yet the full security and facilitation benefits that ePassports are meant to deliver require PKD membership.
21. Fortunately, more than 80% of the current ePassports in global circulation have been issued by PKD participant State, and we expect this figure to steadily grow after the new PKD agreement set out substantially-reduced its registration and participation fees.
22. I encourage Cuba to consider its membership in the ICAO PKD, especially if you see biometric passports becoming part of your facilitation future. The overall PKD framework is a fundamental contributor to effective border integrity, especially when used in conjunction with automated border control gates.
23. More generally in this area, ICAO continues to establish a more systematic approach to assisting states with their TRIP-related objectives, consistent with our ongoing *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) initiative.
24. In line with these goals, and with generous funding support from the Government of Canada and other donors, assistance projects have been successfully concluded in the African Sahel Region, and are still on-going for Caribbean States.
25. Some 40 per cent of the world's Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) are located here, and ICAO greatly appreciates the challenges these governments face in terms of local resources, infrastructure and servicing costs, and realizing economies of scale.
26. One key challenge in this regard is a lack of skilled human resources. In some cases, for example, a single individual may be responsible for the issuance of up to 50,000 travel documents.
27. An ICAO dedicated working group is presently working on options and guidance for Small Island and Developing States. Additional assistance will be available later this year when ICAO publishes the inaugural edition of our TRIP Compendium. This planning and implementation guide

showcases the work of several international organizations and includes references to relevant ICAO guidance material.

28. The Compendium will be available late October, and we expect it to become an essential reference source for government officials, document issuance authorities, civil registries, passport offices, immigration, customs and industry experts.
29. Besides the significant TRIP strategy coordination which ICAO engages in at the international level, we also continue to encourage States to come together at the regional and sub-regional levels to agree on action plans to implement travel facilitation programmes, including all of the elements of the TRIP Strategy. Two recent examples of this are the Ministerial meetings which took place in 2016 in Riyadh and Windhoek.
30. Another important development we should take note of was the ICAO Council's adoption last month of Amendment 26 to Annex 9. This becomes effective in February 2018, and is aimed primarily at harmonizing policies and procedures regarding the transport of unaccompanied minors by air, as well as mandating the global establishment of Advance Passenger Information, or 'API' systems.
31. In addition, the amendment addresses the requirement of worldwide adherence to the transmission of requests for Passenger Name Record (PNR) data, in response to the growth in PNR programmes. A letter informing all States of this amendment was dispatched just last week [14 July 2017].
32. If we ask ourselves which aspect of this amendment will be most important to ICAO's TRIP strategy objectives, in my view it is the obligation for States to set up API programmes.
33. Implementing API will greatly assist States in complying with Security Council Resolutions 2309 and 2178, and it is absolutely essential that these programmes are designed from the start to be fully consistent with international API standards and supported by appropriate legislation, regulation or national decree.
34. While Cuba has already implemented API, much more progress remains to be achieved regionally if the Caribbean is to be fully API compliant by next February.
35. These new additions to Annex 9 on interactive API, PNR data, Automated Border Controls, and Electronic Travel Systems, will bring concrete facilitation benefits while serving to complement various provisions of Annex 17 and enhance ICAO's work in the aviation security domain.
36. Along with enhanced screening and security checks, the airlines' role in tracking the movement of higher risk passengers by providing API to national authorities will also help to make border control management systems more effective.
37. Ladies and gentlemen, there is significant work ahead for all of us as we work to coordinate our efforts aimed at rectifying aviation security and facilitation deficiencies in a robust, affordable and sustainable manner.

38. I am confident that by working together, and fostering greater coordination among the many agencies and stakeholders involved in this work, we can enhance even further the security and facilitation of both your borders and air transport's global network.
39. In closing now, let me please express my hope that many of you will be joining us this October at the Thirteenth ICAO TRIP Symposium and Exhibition in Montreal, as well as at the regional TRIP seminar currently planned for Montego Bay, Jamaica, at the end of November.
40. I commend you again for your commitment and actions in aid of ICAO's global priorities, and for the tremendous progress which Cuba is making locally on its aviation security and facilitation challenges.
41. Thank you.