**Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Raymond Benjamin,
to the High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the
ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP)**

*(Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, 22 May 2015)*

Honourable Minister of State, Minister of Transport of the Republic of the Congo, Son excellence Rodolphe Adada,
Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs,
Deputy Secretary General of ECCAS, Madame Clotilde NIZIGAMA,
Distinguished Representatives on the Council of ICAO,
Distinguished guests and delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1.  It is a pleasure and an honour for me to present opening remarks for this High-Level Meeting on the implementation of the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP), jointly organized with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Republic of the Congo.

2.  Let me also express my special thanks to the Honourable Minister of Transport of the Republic of the Congo for his exceptional assistance in the organization of this high-level meeting, here in one of the most pleasant cities in Central Africa.

3.  The goal of ICAO's Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) is to strengthen the capacities of ECCAS Member States in the management and identification of security of travel documents and border controls. These developments assist States in meeting their international obligations on matters including the fight against terrorism, trans-border crime, and other threats against civil aviation.

4.  I am pleased to note that many of you have gathered here in Brazzaville to discuss both the implementation of the ICAO TRIP Strategy, as well as the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions applicable to ECCAS States. Let me share with you now some highlights and challenges linked to ICAO TRIP :

    a)  First, the global transition to machine readable passports is now nearly complete. A major challenge which remains is the 24 November compliance deadline later this year, by which time all non-machine readable passports should expire. States are urged to encourage their citizens to renew any non-machine readable passports before this date.

    b)  Secondly, over 120 States now indicate they are issuing ePassports - with nearly half a billion of these documents in global circulation. Significant work remains to be done by States, as not all ePassports are fully compliant with ICAO specifications yet – and not all use the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) as a means for verifying and authenticating ePassports. This prevents issuing States from capitalizing on the full security and facilitation benefits that ePassports are meant to deliver.

c) Although ICAO PKD membership continues to grow, it still comprises less than half of all States claiming to issue ePassports. I would bring to your attention that, starting in January 2016, registration fees for new PKD participants will decrease from 56,000 US$ to 15,900 US$. This means that the Operator portion of the annual fee will also decrease, from 34 000 US$ to 29 900US$. Intensified advocacy efforts are needed to underscore that the ICAO PKD is an essential requirement as far as border integrity is concerned.

5. In line with numerous activities aimed at enhancing aviation Security and Facilitation in Africa, assistance to States under the ICAO TRIP Strategy has already commenced in the Sahel Region. The Government of Canada has generously funded a related technical assistance project, which includes workshops, specialized training and technical assessment missions to address capacity gaps.

6. ICAO is partnering on this project with the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), among others. It is an excellent example of joint efforts linking States' needs, ICAO expertise, and essential resources provided by the donor community.

7. I would also bring to your attention an important TRIP Strategy Regional Seminar which will be convened in Kenya later this year, from 12-15 November.

8. There is a significant work ahead for States and ICAO in the field of traveller identification and the enhancement of aviation Security and Facilitation. Success can only be achieved if we all join forces, and I am therefore especially pleased that the new ICAO Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Security and Facilitation in Africa, known as the AFI SECFAL Plan, was launched last week in Maputo, Mozambique.

9. This Plan will contribute to the enhancement of aviation security and facilitation in Africa through an ambitious and clearly defined eight-year programme. It will be managed under the supervision of the ICAO Regional Director in Nairobi, in coordination with the ICAO Regional Directors in Dakar, Cairo and Paris.

10. The AFI SECFAL Plan calls for collaboration between States, authorities, and industry, and will be achieved by establishing a strong management mechanism through the coordinated efforts of ICAO, Donor States, International Organizations, various stakeholders and partners, and available experts from African States.

11. Its near-term goals include th eexpectation that all African States will establish a National Civil Aviation Security Committee (NCASC) and a National Civil Air Transport Facilitation Committee (NATFC), by 1 December 2017.

12. In the medium-term, the focus will be to raise 50 per cent of States in the region to a minimum 65 per cent level of effective implementation of the critical elements of a States' aviation security oversight system, as per related ICAO audit results.

13. Finally, by 1 December 2023, all Africa and Indian Ocean States are expected to have a national air transport facilitation programme in place.

14. Ladies and gentlemen, I would encourage you all to take advantage of the unique opportunity here in Brazzaville today to share your experiences and best practices in managing secure passport issuance and border control systems. And let me please re-emphasize the importance in this regard of issuing ICAO-compliant Machine Readable Passports, and of participating in the ICAO PKD.

15. At the conclusion of today's meeting, we intend to sign a common declaration addressing issues facing States, the industry and the stakeholders. I wish to highlight the important role of this document in providing a roadmap for the facilitation of travel in the ECCAS States.

16. ICAO is fully committed to addressing these challenges, and your support for the ICAO TRIP Strategy and AFI SECFAL Plan will be intstrumental to that goal. I wish you a very productive and engaging meeting leading to a concrete roadmap for ECCAS States.

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