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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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TO: CA - Ms. Maura Harty

FROM: CA/PPT - Frank Moss

SUBJECT: ICAO Document Content and Format Working Group

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Document Content and Format Working Group (DCFWDG) is one of three working groups formed by the ICAO Technical Advisory Group on Machine Readable Travel Documents (TAG-MRTD). (The others are New Technologies and Education and Promotion/Applications.) These Working Groups (WGs) support the ICAO Facilitation Division by vetting issues concerning machine-readable travel documents prior to annual plenary meetings of the ICAO TAG-MRTD. The United States has had leadership roles in all three Working Groups (WGs), which has ensured that U.S. positions are advocated and honored.

The WGs meet two to three times a year at various locations, depending on which member is willing to host the meeting. The content of the agenda is issue driven. In particular, DCFWDG reviews the text of the Travel Document Standards every five years as well as when major changes, such as biometrics, are introduced. DCFWDG originates proposals, such as One-Person, One Passport and Minimum Security Feature Standards, and reports on Imposter Detection and Factors Affecting OCR-B Machine Readability and the effort to upgrade the EU Visa to full-ICAO compliance. These issues, as well as many lesser topics, have been addressed at the last few meetings.

John Mercer (CA/PPT/PAS) chairs ICAO-DCFWDG. Together with the chair of the International Standards Organization's Task Force 2 on Harmonization (Charles Chatwin), they coordinate our efforts to maintain and update the ICAO Doc 9303 Specifications for Machine Readable Travel Documents.

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The next meeting of ICAO-DCFWD will be held on September 15-17 in Prague. Two major tasks are on the agenda: 1) identifying the text changes to the Doc 9303 set of standards necessitated by ICAO-TAG's endorsement of facial images as the biometric of choice for passports and the use of contactless chips as the storage medium of choice and to begin the vetting process; and 2) assisting the International Labour Organization to develop standards for their Seaman's Identification Certificate, while maintaining the U.S. position on visas. There are also a series of old business items relating to the disposition of several Working Papers introduced during the May 2003 TAG/14 plenary. The DCFWD will also assign responsibilities for writing Working Papers for TAG/15 in May 2004, and provide any needed support for ICAO FAL Division meeting scheduled for March 2004.

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