

## Freedom to Travel: Jobs and Economic Growth through Visa Facilitation and Introduction of e-Visas

### The economic and jobs importance of the aviation, travel & tourism industry

- At \$6.3 trillion in 2011, or 9.1% of total world-wide GDP, the impact of Travel & Tourism is larger than that of some of the largest manufacturing sectors—namely automotive and chemicals manufacturing.<sup>1</sup>
- The industry currently directly employs 98 million people <sup>2</sup>

### The 600 Million Job Challenge

- With global unemployment of 200 million and 40 million people projected to enter the labour force every year, 600 million jobs will need to be created over the next decade. Streamlining visa processes can provide a means to expanding job and export growth through greater Travel & Tourism.

### Opportunity

- The bureaucratic hurdles that often accompany visa procurement such as long wait times, absence of local consular offices and excessive documentation requirements discourage travel, constraining visitor spending and the jobs and growth it generates.
- Models predict improved visa facilitation in G20 countries could create between 940,000-5.1 million jobs and generate US\$149 -206 billion in international tourist receipts by 2015.
- The largest delays are caused by antiquated visa processes and can be easily reduced through utilization of commonplace modern technology. Shifting away from in-person interviews and consulate-based application system to online applications, video interviews and application processing software can reduce staffing costs and produce immediate returns en route to widespread adoption of e-Visas and a coordinated global travel facilitation system.

### Recommendations

- Acknowledge economic benefits of visa simplification and commit to revisiting outdated processes, improving efficiency, reducing wait times, and maximizing growth through Travel & Tourism.
- Recognize the ability of modern technology better achieve core visa functions such as security, immigration control and revenue generation through use of real-time information, monitoring capabilities, and the ability to redirect resources to likely security risks.
- Commit to treat visitors as customers by cutting wait times, reducing unnecessary documentation requirements, using internet to provide visa applicants with complete, easily understandable information, and making process more convenient for applicants through technology.
- Increase the collaboration with all stakeholders, including industry. Explore public/private partnerships as well as regional collaborations, such as the Schengen visa, and acceptance of third-country visas as means to share costs and reduce burden on travellers.

### A Vision for the Future

- Explore the development of a framework that would enable the introduction at national level and potentially at a regional and global level of an e-Visa system to maximize the benefits outlined above, increasing speed, efficiency and flexibility while leveraging technology to best secure and control borders.

<sup>1</sup> The automotive manufacturing sector accounts for (7.9%), mining (8.0%) and chemicals manufacturing (9.0%).

"Benchmarking Travel & Tourism- How does T&T compare with other sectors", April 2012, World Travel & Tourism Council & American Express

<sup>2</sup>Idem - 6 times more than automotive manufacturing, 5 times more than the global chemicals industry, 4 times more than the global mining industry, 2 times more than the global communications industry; A third more than the global financial services industry