

## VALIDITY OF MANUALLY WRITTEN OR NON-MACHINE READABLE PASSPORTS

The Ministry has released a press statement to address the growing anxiety among our compatriots holding manually written or non-machine readable passports which are to be phased out following the introduction of the Biometric Passports.

The Ministry wishes to assure the general public that there is no cause for alarm as these passports can still be used for international travel in line with ICAO MANDATORY STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES.

While the phase out exercise is proceeding, the holders of manually written or non-machine readable passports can use them for international travel until 24th November, 2015 if they have not expired. For the avoidance of doubt, the relevant sections of the ICAO MANDATORY STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES are quoted below for the information of all interested parties:

### *“D. Travel Documents*

*3.10 Contracting States shall begin issuing only Machine Readable Passports in accordance with the specifications of Doc 9303, Part I, no later than 1st April, 2010.*

*Note – This provision does not intend to preclude the issuance of non-machine readable passports or temporary travel documents of limited validity in cases of emergency.*

*3.10.1 For passports issued after 24th November 2005 and which are not machine readable, Contracting States shall ensure the expiration date falls before 24th November 2015.”*

In the light of this clarification the Consulate hopes the fears of the traveling public will be allayed and wishes to appeal to all concerned to exercise patience and not rush to change their manually written or their non-machine readable passports immediately if they have not expired.