



Twenty-third session  
Item 8

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, ITS PRESENT  
INCREASING VOLUME AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Addendum to the note by the Secretary-General

Since issuance of document E/2933, the Secretary-General has received from the Government of Israel a memorandum comprising information in respect to measures taken with a view to the implementation of the Recommendations of the Meeting of Experts on Passports and Frontier Formalities, held at Geneva in 1947. The text of the memorandum is as follows:

Israel

I. DOCUMENTS<sup>1/</sup>

A. Passports

- (i) Although a general abolition of the requirement to carry a passport for travel to and from Israel is not feasible at present, some bilateral agreements have been concluded to this effect relative to certain types of naval personnel and seamen, in possession of special professional or other identity papers.
- (ii) The design of the Israel passport in use since 1952 is to a large extent based on the recommendations of the Passport Conference held in 1920 and 1926 and contains all the essential characteristics enumerated in the Report of the Meeting of Experts.

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<sup>1/</sup> The headings and numbers correspond to the text of the recommendations of the 1947 Meeting of Experts on Passports and Frontier Formalities reproduced in the Appendix to Annex 1 of document E/2933.

- (iii) The introduction of an "International Passenger Card" as a general measure does not appear to be practicable at the moment. A similar procedure has, however, been adopted in respect of persons who, as a result of their particular status, are not generally in possession of valid passports as e.g. military personnel on leave desirous of visiting the country. In such cases travel orders together with identity cards may constitute a valid travel document in lieu of passport.
- (iv) The principles governing the issue of collective passports, as set forth in the recommendations, are practically identical with current Israel practice.
- (v) In accordance with the Israel Passport Law, passports are, as a general rule, issued for a period of two years. Renewals may be given for identical periods as at initial issue, provided the total validity of the passport does not exceed ten years.
- (vi) Except in special or exceptional cases, Israel passports are valid for all foreign countries and even for such countries persistently refusing to extend the validity of their passports to the State of Israel.
- (vii) Fees for the issue of Israel passports at present in force correspond roughly to the actual cost of their preparation and delivery.
- (viii) Formalities for obtaining Israel passports have been largely simplified and several regional offices have been set up in the country with a view to decentralizing the issue of passports. It is no longer necessary to apply either in person or in writing to the central office in Jerusalem.

## B. Visas

- (i) The Government of Israel has, so far not found it possible to abolish exit visas, but, at the same time, has taken steps with a view to reducing other preliminary exit formalities to such minimum as is compatible with prevailing circumstances.

- (ii) The Government of Israel has, so far, not found it possible to abolish visas on a basis of reciprocity.
- (iii) No transit visas are demanded of passengers whose landing in Lydda Airport or arrival at Haifa port are merely incidental to an unbroken and continuous journey.
- (iv) In order to reduce the burden imposed on passengers by the necessity of frequent applications for new visas, tourist visas valid for several journeys within the period of twelve months have lately been introduced. These visas do not confer the right of residence for the entire period for which they are granted, and are valid for a period of three months only following each entry, within the period of their validity (one year). A visitor wishing to extend his sojourn beyond the period of three months may, of course, submit an application for such extension to the Ministry of Interior. Since the validity of such tourist visas cannot exceed the validity of the passport, it has been decided that they should expire at least one month prior to the expiry of the passport or any other travel document in which they are entered.
- (v) Subject to considerations of health and security in Israel, visas are valid for entry via any official recognized frontier crossing, by any means of transport, without discrimination in regard to the itinerary followed, or the national ownership of the ship or aircraft on which the passenger travels.
- (vi) As a general rule Israel visa fees are based on the principle of reciprocity.
- and (vii) No discrimination exists on the basis of nationality, itinerary, purpose of visit, means of transport or flag of vessel. A number of bilateral agreements with other States on the abolition or reduction of visa fees have recently been concluded (See Annex I).
- (viii) Far-reaching measures have been taken in recent years with a view to simplifying formalities involved in obtaining visas and procedures have been made as expeditious as possible. Special facilities are given to applicants who wish to travel for commercial and business purposes.

- (ix) Israel Consular officials abroad have been vested with extensive powers to issue transit and entry visas on the spot without reference to their home authorities. Regulations issued to this effect appear, in certain cases, to be comparatively more liberal than corresponding regulations in force in other countries where Israel citizens usually travel.
- (x) Instructions have been issued to Israel Consular Representatives in order to avoid delay and inconvenience to persons wishing to travel to Israel who apply for their visas outside their regular domicile.
- (xi) The formality of fingerprinting is not demanded of applicants for Entrance Visas, Exit Visas or any other visas.
- (xii) The principle that personal attendance should not normally be required of applicants wishing to obtain a visa was taken into account in the course of the compilation of consular instructions. In many instances recognized travel agents have been authorized to represent applicants before Israel consular authorities and to obtain visas for them.
- (xiii) Formalities for visa application have been simplified and the number of supporting documents has been considerably reduced.
- (xiv) Israel Transit Visas are granted for a period of five days and are renewable for a further period of five days. In addition, a landing permit has been introduced at Lydda Airport to enable travellers in transit to stay twenty-four hours in the country. No fees are levied upon persons wishing to obtain such permits. This arrangement applies also to nationals of countries which have not concluded an agreement with the Government of Israel on a reciprocal abolition of visa fees.
- (xv) Israel Consular Regulations provide for the granting of collective visas to groups comprising up to fifty persons wishing to tour the country for a short period of time. These Regulations were put into effect a few years ago and many groups of tourists have already benefitted from this arrangement.

- (xvi) Frontier Control Posts have been authorized to issue emergency visas to nationals of all countries who, due to exceptional reasons, arrive at an Israel point of entry, by any means of transport, without a visa.

A small fee is generally levied upon all travellers granted such visas.

- (xvii) With a view to preventing inconvenience to travellers wishing to go to or through Israel, care has been taken to refrain from modifying or amending the conditions of issuance of Israel visas without ample previous notice. This principle was fully taken into account whenever consular regulations were compiled or published.

- (xviii) Provided that no special services are required, Israel Consular representatives have been instructed not to charge, upon issuing a visa, supplementary official fees for documents additional to an application for a visa.

C. Other documents

- (i) Inoculation and Vaccination Certificates of the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation of 1933 as amended in 1947 and the International Sanitary Convention for Maritime Navigation of 1926 as amended in 1944, with such changes from time to time as are effected by the World Health Organization, have been accepted.

II. FRONTIER FORMALITIES

- (a) Frontier formalities including police and currency control, customs and health inspection have been considerably simplified and have now reached standards comparable to those prevalent in Western European countries.

A. Police control

- (i) Efforts have been made to expedite passport control at points of entry.

- (ii) Travel documents of travellers entering the country are never retained or impounded except in the interest of justice or public order.

B. Currency control and facilities for exchanging money

- (i) Visitors to Israel are requested to declare the amounts of foreign currency imported into the country. An appropriate certificate to that effect is handed to them upon entry. This certificate enables them to export the unspent portion of the imported sum of foreign currency. According to regulations at present in force, the importation and exportation of Israel bank-notes are forbidden.
- (ii) Official exchange facilities are provided at main points of entry as well as in all the main cities.

C. Customs importation of luggage

- (i) Customs formalities have been simplified to the largest possible extent and are now being conducted in such manner as to cause least inconvenience to travellers entering the country.

D. Public health inspection

No charge is imposed for medical examination of crew and passengers.

ANNEX I

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND OTHER STATES ON THE  
ABOLITION OR REDUCTION OF VISAS FEES

Agreements providing for the abolition of visas fees on condition of reciprocity for visas granted, to foreign nationals were concluded with the following countries and came into force on the dates appearing against their names.

Sweden	1 April 1955
Denmark	1 April 1955
Belgium	1 May 1955
Luxembourg	1 May 1955
Norway	1 August 1955
Netherlands	21 September 1955
Finland	1 December 1955
Iceland	1 February 1956
Union of South Africa	10 October 1956

Agreements containing specific clauses have been entered into, on a basis of reciprocity, with the Governments of the following States:

(1) The United States 15 March 1955

The Agreement with the Government of the United States provides for the abolition of visas fees on a basis of reciprocity, for non-immigrants visas issued to the nationals of the two countries. It thus covers Transit Visas, Tourist Visas, and Temporary Residence Visas. The Agreement also applies to stateless persons in possession of a laissez-passer issued to stateless persons by either country.

In addition United States nationals are exempted from the need to obtain visas prior to arrival in Israel. Visas are issued to them on entry.

(2) Greece 1 August 1955

The Agreement between Israel and Greece provides for the reduction, on a basis of reciprocity, of visa fees in respect of visas of all types including Transit Visas. The fee collected from Greek citizens is 0.40 dollars U.S.A.,

or the equivalent in another currency, which is the minimum fee compatible with existing regulations in force in Greece.

(3) United Kingdom

1 August 1955

The Agreement with the Government of the United Kingdom provides for the reduction, on a reciprocity basis, of visa fees for visas granted to citizens of both countries. The Agreement is valid for holders of British passports who are citizens of the United Kingdom, British Colonies, British Protectorates and Protected States and British Trust Territories. The fee of 1.2.6 sterling pounds is levied upon holders of British passports for visas of all types granted to them with the exception of Transit Visas the fee of which is 0.2.6 sterling pounds only.

In respect of citizens of the United Kingdom only, the Agreement lays down that tourist (Visitors') visas, valid for several journeys within the period of one year may be granted by competent consular authorities. This arrangement has so far not been made applicable to citizens of British Colonies, Protectorates, Protected States and Trust Territories, but will be made so applicable upon final approval by the Governments of Israel and the United Kingdom.

(4) Canada

1 September 1955

This agreement prescribes the reciprocal abolition of visa fees for visas granted to nationals of both countries with the proviso that it be made applicable to Canadian visas issued by Canadian authorities only.

(5) Switzerland

17 November 1955

In accordance with this Agreement, visa fees reciprocally reduced, now stand as follows:

Transit visas	\$ 0.30
Tourist Visas, Temporary or Permanent Residence Visas and Immigrant Visas	\$ 1.40

In addition to the above Agreement and with a view to the further facilitation of visits in Israel of persons in bona fide activities, (such as cultural, educational, scientific and economic activities), a visa valid for one year and good for several journeys has also been introduced.