



**A view of the official rostrum during the opening ceremony.**

This has created a need not only for national and international police co-operation but also for initiatives to establish co-operation with the Regions.

There has been another Regional initiative in Europe outside Interpol, by the European Union. The European Union, which consists of fifteen of Europe's forty-five countries, has chosen to establish co-operation between law enforcement authorities outside the Interpol entity by the Europol, Schengen and K4 Committee initiatives.

Of course, there might sometimes be a need for an organization like the European Union to co-operate even more closely than is possible through an already existing organization such as Interpol. The European Union has accordingly taken the initiatives I just referred to, aiming at such close co-operation. Consequently, the next natural step for Europol and Interpol is then to avoid duplication of effort and ensure that these initiatives will be complementary to our work in order to improve the fight against crime.

This complicated situation can, in my opinion, only be solved in a constructive way if we focus on the users' need for efficient law enforcement in the European region.

Professional users of Interpol and the new entities mentioned are, of course, the best ones to decide on how they should co-ordinate and divide tasks and projects in the European region.

Ladies and gentlemen, the ICPO-Interpol is indeed a productive organization which during this last year has accomplished a lot. But, please remember that these achievements are the results of a long time of planning. This year's results derive from decisions taken by the General Assembly many

years ago, such as the Regional Modernization Plan that was adopted by the General Assembly in Punta del Este in 1991.

These wise and constructive decisions have been taken by you and your predecessors, who have been and are working with police issues on a professional basis and therefore are the best decision-makers. Time will not allow me to mention all that has been achieved this last year, but I would like to mention some things.

- Regional initiatives: To enhance closer co-operation between member countries, regional initiatives have been taken in Africa, South America, and Eastern and Central Europe. Here in Asia, the liaison office in Bangkok is one example of progress, and another is the Asian Contact Officers programme that has developed rapidly. This emphasizes the regionalization of our worldwide Organization. Rapidly developing regional co-operation was foreseen by the Organization and the Regional Co-ordination Bureau was created to guide and support these initiatives. With the support from this Bureau and from the Secretary General, preparations have been

**The conference hall during the opening ceremony. Insert, the facade of the Beijing International Convention Center.**

