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REMARKS

by

Khoo Boon Hui

INTERPOL President

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His Excellency Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;

His Excellency, Lieutenant-General Tran Dai Quang, Minister of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;

Distinguished Ministers;

Mr Ronald K. Noble, INTERPOL Secretary General;

Members of the INTERPOL Executive Committee;

Esteemed Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning.

I am pleased to welcome you to the 80th INTERPOL General Assembly. This year's General Assembly is equally significant to our host, as this is the first time that Vietnam is hosting such a major INTERPOL event. Considered a rising Asian economic powerhouse, Vietnam's influence is steadily growing not only in this region but beyond.

On behalf of the entire INTERPOL community, I would like to offer our sincere gratitude to our Vietnamese colleagues for hosting this 80th INTERPOL General Assembly in the beautiful and historic city of Hanoi. Indeed, they have put in extraordinary efforts to ensure the smooth proceeding of the Executive Committee meeting and this General Assembly as well as ensure that we are all well taken care of. Hence, besides strengthening global police cooperation, this GA is also an opportunity for us to discover and experience the hidden charms of Vietnam, a country with a past as rich as the soil in the lush countryside.

Last year, the Vietnamese people celebrated the 1,000th founding anniversary of Hanoi, highlighting the city's illustrious history and culture. Please join me in warmly congratulating and wishing all Vietnamese people more success and prosperity in the next 1,000 years.

And in five days, on 4 November, it will be the 20th anniversary of Vietnam's membership in INTERPOL. Please also join me in wishing NCB Hanoi a happy 20th anniversary.

As an integral part of any country's, and indeed organization's, development, contending with rapid change and greater complexity has become a "new normal."

For us in INTERPOL, we have responded by evolving and raising the standards of police cooperation worldwide through the commitment, strong support and belief in INTERPOL of all of us here.

Last year in Doha, Qatar, we focused on our theme: “Connecting Police for a Safer World,” and came up with many successful outcomes. Our Secretary General challenged us by asking where we wanted INTERPOL to be in 2015 and I quote: “Do we want to have stayed content with all that we had achieved? Or, do we want to have dared to reach higher?” and we answered by extending his mandate for another five years. We also unanimously endorsed the setting up of the INTERPOL Global Complex (IGC) in Singapore, with the caveat that members’ subscriptions should not increase as a result of this new initiative. The Secretary General and I have therefore been seeking inputs from many of you as well as connecting with potential partners whenever we participated in various conferences and during visits to member countries.

You have reaffirmed our belief that in order for INTERPOL to fulfil our mission in connecting police for a safer world, we need to focus on stronger partnerships, innovation and capacity building, thus the theme for this year’s General Assembly.

We live in a very dynamic and connected environment. Each day, police everywhere face new challenges emerging from a rapidly changing operating environment influenced by this complex web of forces worldwide. With the unprecedented speed that the security landscape is evolving, we need to constantly scan the horizon, anticipate and develop sustainable strategies that address both the present and emerging security threats. Only then can we ensure that INTERPOL remains relevant, proactive and resilient, ready to face the known and unknown challenges of 21st century policing.

Besides being vigilant to security threats like terrorism, illegal drugs, people smuggling, corruption and other so-called “traditional forms” of crime, we should also be mindful that criminals are getting more sophisticated. They are quick to take advantage of the rapid technological developments and the prevalence of the Internet. I am sure you will agree that cybercrime is a therefore a clear and present danger.

A recent study by IT security company Norton, estimates that the annual global cost of cybercrime is close to USD 400 billion, surpassing the total global sale of marijuana and cocaine on the black market. The same study also indicates that 14 adults become victims of cybercrime every second, resulting in over a million cybercrime victims daily.

We should anticipate cybercrime to grow in scale, sophistication and impact. To successfully confront this global crime threat requires a holistic approach that involves stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. In particular, we can enhance our capability against cybercrime by drawing on the strengths of our member countries and establishing strategic partnerships with the private sector and academia in the area of research and development. The INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI), when operational in 2014, will provide us with an excellent platform to realize the full potential of public-private partnerships.

I am also happy to learn that INTERPOL is embarking on a joint study with Risk Assessment and Horizon Scanning experts in Singapore to assess the current and emerging cybercrime threats, particularly those perpetrated by organized crime syndicates. This joint study is a step towards better strategic anticipation and will also help shape the work of the Cyber Fusion Centre at the IGCI.

The IGCI will also enhance our capability to support our member countries in other crime areas through research and development, and innovation-based capacity building and training. I am confident the IGCI will help our Organization prepare for the future, to be able to innovate and adapt to the ever-changing security landscape.

Ladies and gentlemen, our Organization is evolving into one that manages risks through strategic anticipation and innovating together with its member countries and its partners.

Risk and innovation are intricately linked. History has shown that many of our most durable and valuable innovations have come from a desire to both hedge against and exploit risks. We need to innovate in order to hedge against the strategic risks we face, but without sacrificing governance.

We also have to look for ways that make our work sustainable and affordable without burdening our member countries financially. Nevertheless, we also know that criminals will continue to evolve and take advantage of new technologies to pursue their illegal activities. We, the INTERPOL family, therefore have to be more entrepreneurial in spirit, willing to engage new partners for new solutions to stay relevant. In charting new ground, we must accept that we may fail at times. However, to mitigate the uncertainties of the future and protect ourselves, we also need to develop a sound risk management system.

John Preston, a confederate General during the American Civil War, once said: “The nicest thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise and is not preceded by a period of worry and depression.” As appealing as it sounds, this is not an approach any of us should adopt when dealing with this uncertain world. Your strong participation and commitment to the Organization’s initiatives so far, demonstrate that the international policing community prefers not to bury our heads in the sand to enjoy transient periods of blissful ignorance, before being surprised by change. Our Vietnamese hosts have certainly shown us how good planning can mitigate risks, as evident from the excellent organization of this INTERPOL General Assembly.

In conclusion, I have outlined the exciting strategic journey we are embarking upon. These initiatives are planned to better serve your policing needs. The Executive Committee and the General Secretariat look forward to hearing your views and suggestions in order to better develop these initiatives to their full potential. Let us make full use of this General Assembly to strengthen our Organization. I look forward to an engaging and spirited discussion over the next four days. Let us strive to better fulfil our organizational mission to make our world a safer place.

Thank You.

