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Address

By

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Mr Secretary General,

Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Italian Government, and in a personal capacity, I would like to welcome you to the 81st session of the INTERPOL General Assembly which officially opens today.

With its 190 Members, INTERPOL is the world's largest and oldest international police organization.

Italy has been a Member of INTERPOL since the Organization's creation in 1923, and this year is the third time that our country has hosted the General Assembly, the Organization's supreme body, whose role is to set its strategic priorities and main programmes of action.

I am particularly happy that delegates from every country in the world are attending this 81st General Assembly session.

To highlight the strategic importance of this event, we held a ministerial meeting yesterday, on the eve of this General Assembly session.

That meeting, attended by political and institutional leaders responsible for security, was an opportunity for us to examine the most topical security issues and the strategic aspects of police activities of common interest.

We adopted a Ministerial Declaration to highlight the operational rather than the ceremonial nature of this event, and also to restate our common commitment to adopting a different approach to the fight against criminal and terrorist violence, with the emphasis on taking specific action in a spirit of openness and cooperation.

Today, we shall continue the work begun yesterday. With you, the leading police experts from around the world, we will consider the possible responses that States and the international community can devise to stem criminal and terrorist violence in today's society.

Whatever the causes may be, organized crime and terrorism are among the most serious and complex transnational problems. They blur the traditional distinction between domestic and international politics, and force us to rethink and reorganize our approach to the role of the international system, of the State, and of international organizations.

The 21st century will only mark a decisive turning point if peoples and governments, albeit with different ideals and cultures, can work jointly towards the same aim: moving forward together on a path of sustainable development based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, and combating criminal and terrorist violence.

In this respect, there can be no denying that, in the 21st century, at a time when matters of international security have taken on a dimension never seen before, the role of international organizations such as INTERPOL is all the more challenging, but also more important.

We must therefore be equal to the challenges of our times and help to develop international cooperation by relying on global players like INTERPOL, bearing in mind that the fight against violence is a never-ending battle which concerns us all, because what is truly at stake is not just security, but the very future of our civilization.

It is therefore my great pleasure to officially declare the 81st INTERPOL General Assembly session open. I wish you every success.