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REMARKS

by

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INTERPOL Secretary General

**International Forum On Technologies for a Safer World
Technologies Against Crime (TAC)**

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Lyon, France

Monsieur Le Ministre de L'Intérieur de la République Française, Manuel VALLS,

Hon. Cecilia MALMSTRÖM, European Union Commissioner for Home Affairs,

Honourable Ministers,

Monsieur Le Sénateur-Maire de Lyon et President du Grand Lyon, Gérard COLLOMB,

Madame La Présidente d'INTERPOL, Mireille BALESTRAZZI,

INTERPOL Executive Committee members,

Distinguished chiefs of police,

Representatives from INTERPOL member countries and National Central Bureaus,

Mr KHOO Boon Hui, President of the Forum Coordination Association and Senior Deputy Secretary of Home Affairs for Singapore,

Representatives from INTERPOL's partner international organizations,

Dear sponsors and representatives from the security technology industry,

Representatives from the scientific and academic communities,

Dear colleagues from INTERPOL General Secretariat,

Ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed

Bonjour, good morning, buenos dias, As-Salaam Alekoum.

It is an absolute pleasure for me to address all of you here today as it is for INTERPOL to co-host, with the Ministry of Interior of France, this first International Forum on Technologies for a Safer World.

Over the next two days, we will be called – together – to provide collective answers to some of the most fundamental questions we could ask ourselves: *“How to protect our future?”*; *“how to best shield our countries, our cities and our co-citizens from criminal harm?”*

As it often happens, some of the answers to these questions come from examining our history.

While it is natural to think of technology as the symbol of what has yet to come, we should remind ourselves the desire to innovate has been constantly embedded in our existence as human beings – by need or by intellectual curiosity.

Some have traced the true origin of technology to the very birth of humankind. In the eighth century BC, Greek poet Hesiod provided in his *Theogony* a fascinating account of the first innovation ever embraced by humans.

It's a story of trickery, deceit and theft; but also of triumph of human progress. It is the story of Prometheus, the Titan who dared to defy Zeus, by first stealing and then donating the gift of fire to humankind.

For that single act, Prometheus would be condemned by Zeus to eternal suffering, because he had disobeyed the rules and shared innovation. He had shown humans how to bend the boundaries nature had apparently imposed on us, so that our quality of life could improve and so we could evolve.

In other words, in Greek mythology, Prometheus taught humankind how to innovate and about the breadth of technology, therefore changing their lives – our lives – forever.

Indeed, since then technology has accompanied us throughout our greatest achievements: curing lethal diseases; unveiling the mechanics of matter; observing our own world from beyond the clouds, and building bridges and paths where nature had failed to do so.

The realm of crime-fighting does not escape this principle.

Through the years, police have shown incredible skills in applying innovation to their daily work.

France's Alphonse Bertillon is credited with suggesting the use of anthropology in studying suspects' profiles; with proposing the use of full-face photo shots to identify criminals; and with a truly scientific approach to crime scene photography.

We have seen advances in technology from the private sector quickly adopted by the police... think about the telegraph, radio, the installation of police callboxes, cameras and police radars.

Finally, we all know too well how blood type, fingerprint and DNA comparisons have become key in solving challenging investigations and in bringing dangerous criminals to justice.

Indeed, justice is being increasingly served by technology on a daily basis.

Just think of the events unfolding in Boston, United States last April after a terrorist attack broadcast live across the globe had targeted the city's marathon.

In the immediate aftermath, it was Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) technology that allowed police eyes to comb through the 500,000 faces in the crowd and identify two suspects in record time. In many instances, CCTV technology installed by the private sector to protect customers and business interests became an important resource for police to solve an important crime.

Then, when facing the most terrifying scenario – that of an armed terrorist on the loose in the streets – it was cutting edge communication technology that allowed thousands of dedicated officers to act as one and to coordinate an unprecedented manhunt.

Finally, with the suspect trapped, it was robotics and thermal imaging that allowed police on the ground to monitor his movements in real time, and to proceed to put an end to the fear of an entire city.

But at the same time, the Boston Marathon case offers a glimpse of the dark side of innovation.

That of ruthless criminals able to exploit technology with impressive speed and skills; of improvised explosive devices created from pressure cookers and blueprints shared online; and of mass and social media threatening to endanger innocent individuals falsely identified as suspects, or even officers in the field, whose images and movements were being shared publicly in real-time.

Similarly, in the Mumbai terrorist attacks, we saw how terrorists used television to monitor the activity of police trying to apprehend them.

This reminds us of the proverbial two sides of the coin. We must always think of technology not only as an opportunity in the service of those who uphold the law, but also as a potential weapon in the hands of criminals.

Yet we cannot and must not stand at the mercy of a flip of that coin.

This first International Forum on Technologies for a Safer World will provide us with the opportunity to identify ways that technology can help keep our countries and citizens safe from crime.

With us we have leading representatives from government, law enforcement, academia, the scientific community and industry with a precise goal. To think, discuss and decide how we should best design our strategy and act, so that innovation becomes our best ally in the fight against criminal threats, while protecting the rights of individuals.

And can you think of a better city than Lyon for INTERPOL to co-host this event with France's Ministry of Interior? Over almost a quarter of a century, this city has been witnessing the incredible evolution in how INTERPOL and its member countries work together to prevent, investigate and prosecute crime worldwide.

It was here that we saw radio antennas disappear from our roof, as INTERPOL became the first police organization in the world to use the internet to create a secure police communication network that we call I-24/7. That same network now connects more than 20,000 users worldwide and manages more than 17.5 million messages a year by law enforcement.

It was here that we saw the lights at INTERPOL's General Secretariat never go out, as our Command and Coordination Centre went live in 2002, to assist police around the clock;

And it was here that INTERPOL devised the technical solutions that brought millions of police records at the fingertips of frontline officers worldwide, now able to perform more than 2.7 million searches a day on average in our global databases, and to screen almost 740 million travellers in 2012 alone.

Indeed, each of the more than 9,000 arrests conducted yearly via INTERPOL has seen technology or innovation play a role. Every day, INTERPOL witnesses the global, universal power of innovation through the eyes of its 190 member countries' police forces.

Constant police innovation has been at the core of INTERPOL's history – from the time police would be alerted of fugitives wanted internationally in our paper-based magazine, to this day, where the same can be achieved within seconds through the internet.

In other words, technology and innovation have been and will remain the engine of INTERPOL's evolution as we pursue our vision of a safer world.

Yet in parallel, there is also a hard lesson to be learned from almost a century of INTERPOL history: that in order to be able to protect the future, law enforcement must first catch up with the present. A present that sees new technologies emerge and re-shape at astonishing speed the world we operate in.

A present where the developing world is leaping towards connectivity, with mobile technology spreading four times faster than in developed economies; where 15 billion devices are connected to the internet and are therefore vulnerable to attacks; where unmanned vehicles are not just in battlefields, but entering our city streets; and where dangerous items aren't just smuggled in containers across oceans, but can also be printed in three dimensions in the comfort of our homes.

Against this backdrop, we are also witnessing extraordinary financial challenges for governments, police and private entities alike.

In today's world, we must work together. Forging alliances to pool our resources and reach our shared goals. This conviction comes from what INTERPOL experiences in our daily work and from the support we receive from our partners.

Partners like France, its Minister of Interior Manuel Valls and the hundreds of thousands of police and law enforcement officials in France's Ministry of Interior.

Partners like Gerard Collomb, le Sénateur-Maire for the City of Lyon and the entire Rhône-Alpes region.

Partners like the European Commission and its Commissioner Cecilia MALMSTRÖM, with their steadfast support to INTERPOL and its efforts within and beyond Europe.

Partners like Singapore, its entire government and Ministry of Home Affairs that have sponsored the building of INTERPOL's Global Complex for Innovation, where from the fall of 2014 we will focus on technology-led efforts against Cyber-crime and in support of police capacity building and training.

Partners from so many other INTERPOL member countries, whose ministers and heads of police are with us today and with whose support INTERPOL has been able to accomplish so much.

Finally, partners from an increasingly long list of private sector enterprises who are now at the side of INTERPOL

We see you as allies in developing the police tools of tomorrow, because there is simply no way to even think about technology or innovation, without working closely with the private sector. You see INTERPOL as an important link between helping keep the world safer for growth in our 190 member countries, and fostering innovation on international markets.

INTERPOL has recently proudly entered into strategic partnerships with several such entities, to support and fund some of our priorities while always maintaining our independence, neutrality and fine reputation.

For instance, we are currently examining ways to allow airlines, hotels, banks, cruise ships and travel agencies to work with INTERPOL to determine if passports presented by their potential clients have been invalidated by the issuing member country after being reported lost or stolen. This is just one example of the great opportunities awaiting us in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The conclusion to be drawn from the remarks that you have heard and will hear this morning is straightforward: the public and private sectors can achieve a lot, when working closely together in the name of innovation and security, and in compliance with our respective mandates and rules.

INTERPOL's firm belief is that technology-led innovation and private-public alliances will constitute the foundation for increased global cooperation against international crime.

In other words, we believe that technology will once again trace the path towards what all of us hope to find in our future.

A better life. A better world. A safer world.

Thank you.