



Speech

by

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INTERPOL Secretary General

Inauguration of the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation

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Singapore

Mrs Mireille BALESTRAZZI, INTERPOL President,

Your Excellency TEO Chee Hean, Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs,

Your Excellencies, Ministers and members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Members of the INTERPOL Executive Committee,

Chiefs of Police and Heads of INTERPOL National Central Bureaus,

Representatives from international organizations and associations,

Partners from the private sector,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

Good morning.

Every great journey starts with one single step. A century ago, such a step was taken by a handful of countries, which met in Monaco seeking ways to cooperate on solving crimes. The birth of INTERPOL was the result.

Fifty years later, a city-state set out to become one of the safest and most prosperous countries in the world under the leadership of the late LEE Kuan Yew. The monument of Mr Lee's success can easily be seen as you make your way through this thriving city.

Today, we mark the intersection of these two journeys – the inauguration of the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation.

By opening its arms to INTERPOL and providing us with this magnificent home, Singapore has once again proven its dedication to international police cooperation and the promotion of the rule of law.

And by establishing this Global Complex for Innovation, INTERPOL will ensure that it is best placed to help police around the world address emerging threats through innovation and training.

The Global Complex was born out of the Organization's commitment to adapt to the changes in the threat landscape. It was conceived and endorsed in 2010, the final year of my mandate as Executive Committee Vice-President for Europe, making it all the more symbolic that its opening is at my return.

Since taking office, I have actively encouraged our member countries to share their needs with us so that INTERPOL can continue to evolve to meet these challenges.

Cybercrime is one such challenge, which has been prioritized across the world as people, their homes and national critical infrastructures become 'smarter, or in other words 'networked'.

To address this underappreciated threat, police must become 'smarter' too. As technology development speeds ahead so do criminals, quite frankly leaving the world's governments and their police forces far behind.

We must embrace developments, such as the 'Internet of things' and its implications in Industry 4.0, and the advantages they bring, while simultaneously driving dialogue about their security and their safe use.

We must discuss the place of anonymity on the Internet and the need of police to identify and trace cybercriminals, while nonetheless safeguarding the privacy of other users.

In the coming years, there will be difficult conversations to be had, but if we do not break down the walls of silence, if the world does not work together, we could soon see cybercriminals using our homes against us, and even our bodies.

A step to tackle this challenge was taken during the high-level session on cybercrime earlier this morning when we gathered to discuss global law enforcement efforts to tackle cybercrime.

And how the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation has, is and will continue to provide a neutral, international platform to address this threat.

I am already proud of what INTERPOL has been able to achieve in this field even before officially opening the Complex.

In August, INTERPOL trained and assisted member of the Malian Gendarmerie with the examination of mobile phones seized during a counter-terrorism operation. This essential capacity building effort led to the extraction of some 2,000 contacts, of which 400 were foreign and shared with National Central Bureaus in 14 countries.

Information sharing remains a vital element of daily police work. However, information is increasingly locked within devices or encrypted by technologies, making such capacity building efforts essential.

Research-led innovation is essential to prepare officers for future threats. Our researchers, in cooperation with a strategic partner, identified a vulnerability in the very DNA of virtual currencies, which could be exploited by criminals to hide malware and other illicit content.

Having identified this threat, experts from around the world can work together to find a solution and provide officers with a means to neutralize this particular threat.

Such research has only proven once again the importance of experts from all sectors combining their expertise to prepare for emerging threats.

The work of the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation will provide operational and forensic support, build capacity, and identify threats from both cyberspace and the physical world.

Today, I can announce that vital intelligence from a prominent IT actor has led to an IGCI-coordinated operation that has led to the dismantling of the Simda botnet.

This botnet has been active for years and required a unified and international effort from both law enforcement and the private sector to take it down.

These achievements highlight the value of the IGCI and its role as an innovation hub – a think-and-do tank if you will – bringing together different experts from law enforcement, academia, and the public and private sectors to help police adopt new technology and practices, becoming ‘smarter’, catching up to and ultimately overtaking criminals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have invited you here today to bear witness to the next step in INTERPOL’s journey, with the Global Complex for Innovation acting as an incubator to make policing fit for the future, a neutral hub where police leaders gather to discuss the future of policing and a trusted environment where police leaders meet leaders of other fields.

I thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here today.

We are proud of the support that our member countries and partners from the public and private sectors have lent us and continue to lend to turn this vision into reality.

My thanks go in particular to the Government of Singapore, represented here today by our guest of honour, His Excellency TEO Chee Hean, for their generous offer to provide us with this purpose built Complex.

The role played by Mr KHOO Boon Hui, former INTERPOL President who is also here today, should not be overlooked. It was thanks to his and my predecessor Ronald K. Noble’s visionary leadership that the idea of the IGCI was conceived and became a reality.

I thank Mme President and the members of the Executive Committee for their dedication to ensuring that INTERPOL is ready to continue its journey.

Members of the IGCI Working Group, who have worked to ensure that the Complex will best meet the needs of our 190 member countries.

INTERPOL will continue to innovate to meet these needs and provide better services with the help of our partners from the private and public sectors, many of whom are here today.

And finally, I would also like to thank my excellent staff for all of their hard work to make today such a success.

While we have come a long way together, the journey at IGCI is only the beginning. Yet I have no doubt, it will be a successful one, and one which will bring us even closer to a safer world.

Thank you.