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PREPARED REMARKS

by

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INTERPOL Secretary General

11th Central African Police Chief Committee (CAPCCO)
Annual General Meeting
Meeting of Ministers in charge of Security

Libreville, Gabon

15 October 2010

- Your Excellency, Paul BIYOGHE MBA, Prime Minister of Gabon;
- Hon. Jean-François NDONGOU, Minister of Interior, Public Security, Immigration and Decentralization of Gabon;
- Mr. Antoine NTSIMI, President of the Commission of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC);
- Mr. Petter DYHRE, Delegate for Europe to the INTERPOL Executive Committee and Chairman of the Finance Subcommittee;
- Mr. Emmanuel EDOU from Cameroon, outgoing CAPCCO Chairman;
- General Antoine EMBINGA NDOUNDA, Chief of Gabon National Police Forces and incoming CAPCCO Chairman;
- CAPCCO Chiefs of Police;
- Lieutenant Colonel Serge Hervé NGOMA, Head of NCB Libreville;
- Distinguished delegates;
- INTERPOL General Secretariat and Regional Bureau Yaoundé staff;
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a true pleasure for me to be here on this fine day, before such a distinguished audience. And with the greatest joy I return to this continent, which I am proud to call my motherland.

Let me also thank you, Excellency, for the hospitality provided by the Government of Gabon, and the warm welcome we found upon our arrival.

While this is my first visit to this beautiful land as INTERPOL's Secretary General, rest assured: what I have seen so far, made sure many others will come.

I was equally amazed to learn of the extraordinary story of Libreville's birth.

How more than 160 years ago, a slave ship was captured not far from here. Those onboard were left on the coast, their chains removed. The name of the village where they

started their new lives celebrated their newly found freedom.

Libreville.

Clearly, those men and women had very little certainty about what was to come in their future. But they knew the only way to face those challenges was to rely on each other, working as one.

Today, almost two centuries after that day, Libreville stands as the capital of a proud, independent nation and a key Central African country like Gabon.

And our presence here today sends a similar message to the citizens of this region, to the rest of Africa, and to the world.

Just like the founders of Libreville, we are very much aware of the challenges to international security we will likely find on our path. And in a difficult global economic landscape, we face even more uncertain days.

At the same time, we know for sure that we cannot address these issues as individuals. Co-operation against international crime can – and must – go beyond national and regional borders.

This is particularly true, when we think of Central Africa.

Or, as I often refer to it, the heart of this continent.

As such, the countries represented here today are in a unique position.

On the one hand, you are potentially exposed to illicit trafficking routes cutting across Africa, and ranging from drugs trading to weapon smuggling and the illegal exploitation of minerals. In turn, these criminal ventures provide enormous profits that allow organized crime to thrive and generate more instability in this region, across Africa, and beyond.

On the other hand, because of its strategic location, this region can and must seize the opportunity to become the fulcrum of cross-border security efforts in this continent.

And it was recognizing this potential, that in 1997 the Chiefs of Police of Central Africa decided to establish CAPCCO as a framework under which they could work together to better address the threats to the security of Central African citizens.

Since then, CAPCCO has been a key platform both to design joint security strategies in Central Africa, and to plan and execute successful cross-border operations in the field against international crime.

As the world's largest police Organization, INTERPOL has been proudly at CAPCCO's side in the fulfillment of its mandate. And recently, our ties with this region have grown in depth and strength like never before.

Recognizing the key role of Central Africa, we made sure that starting in 2009 CAPCCO could rely on a dedicated INTERPOL Regional Bureau in Yaoundé, Cameroon, solely focusing its activities on this region.

Over the past year, under the leadership of Mr. Emmanuel ASSAMA the Regional Bureau has already supported Central African National Central Bureaus in a variety of cases, from fugitive identification and apprehensions to seizure of major quantitative of illicit drugs.

For example, INTERPOL and CAPCCO have planned and implemented a series of multilateral operations against the trafficking in stolen vehicles, involving a growing number of member countries and officers on the ground, and targeting more and more vehicles transiting through Central Africa.

I am referring of course to Operations GBANDA I, II and III, which in the last stage saw the training of almost 900 officers including police, custom officials and – for the first

time – magistrates, and more than 18,000 vehicles checked against our international databases.

These operations resulted not only in stolen vehicles being recovered, but also in the adoption of common standard operating procedures by several CAPCCO countries, for systematic checks of imported vehicles against INTERPOL records. This will ensure long term benefits to each of the countries involved, and to the region as a whole.

And in the next few months, our Regional Bureau in Yaoundé will be involved in many new INTERPOL initiatives ranging from operations against human and drug trafficking to a major counter-terrorism conference for CAPCCO member countries.

What has been achieved so far, and what will be achieved in the future in Central Africa against international crime, was made possible by two pivotal elements.

The first - is the growing use of INTERPOL tools.

If we compare 2005 and 2010, each year CAPCCO police forces have made five times as many searches against our global nominal databases. Positive nominal hits have seen almost a threefold increase. Ten times as many searches have been conducted against our Stolen and Lost Travel Document Database.

And in the same year, CAPCCO accounted for almost 15% of requests for arrest or location of wanted individuals issued by Africa as a whole through INTERPOL.

It is my hope that this trend will continue with even more intensity in the future, progressively giving access to more and more officers in the field and even reaching border posts to have INTERPOL tools as the first line of defense against international crime.

Yet tools alone are not a guarantee for results. As key decision makers, you are all well aware of the importance

of strategic alliances in attaining major objectives like regional security.

And the second main element behind the results achieved against international crime in this region is precisely our partnership with key regional players in Central Africa.

In this context, the role of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) is a crucial one. INTERPOL fully supports the CEMAC vision for Central Africa: that of an “*emerging, integrated economic space where security, solidarity and good governance rule*”.

A vision that sees security as a key element in the quest for sustained growth and development.

A vision that has been translated into concrete action.

As early as 2000, CEMAC formally made CAPCCO one of its specialized bodies. Since 2003, it has been supporting

financially the membership of CEMAC member countries to INTERPOL.

CAPCCO, CEMAC and INTERPOL are clearly looking at the future through the same eyes.

Just like the Community will soon distribute a biometric passport to foster free movement within its economic zone, the first INTERPOL Travel Documents – featuring highly advanced security features – will be issued by INTERPOL this same year.

The INTERPOL Travel Document – which can take the form of an electronic identification card or an electronic-Passport Booklet – is designed to allow INTERPOL staff carrying out official duties to travel as rapidly as possible internationally, allowing prompt police assistance and investigation co-ordination.

Last year in Yaoundé, we witnessed with enthusiasm this same forum recognize the value of this initiative and endorse the project.

In order to effectively implement that historical decision, a dedicated Team at our General Secretariat will be ready to assist your administration to choose which special visa status to accord to the INTERPOL Travel Document, and under which conditions.

This, in full compliance with your respective national legislations.

By doing so, we will ensure that assistance by INTERPOL can be provided as rapidly as possible in the future at the request of our member countries, as in the case of the INTERPOL Major Event Support Team to be deployed here in Gabon for the 2012 African Cup of Nations.

And another important element we share with CEMAC is the focus on innovation and technology as key factors in

tomorrow's successes, be they in the realms of economic development or international security.

Accessing the latest technological breakthroughs, in particular in the domain of communication, is a key step in fostering the integration of this region. Yet to fully reap the benefits of this revolution, Central Africa will also have to protect its citizens from threats stemming from new technologies.

In facing this challenge, you will find INTERPOL at your side.

Next month, at our next General Assembly in Doha, Qatar, we will submit a proposal to our member countries to establish an INTERPOL Global Complex in a major innovation hub such as Singapore.

The generosity of Singaporean authorities, who offered a new facility to the Organization free of rental, will allow us to conduct cutting edge research on new technologies, their

vulnerabilities and their potential use to better identify crimes and criminals, such as in the realm of forensics and biometrics.

This, in turn, will allow INTERPOL to act as the main channel to transmit these breakthroughs to our whole membership – including Central Africa – thanks to our Regional Bureaus and our capacity building initiatives.

I am confident that because of your role as leaders, you fully understand the importance of this step in INTERPOL's evolution, and in further empowering police forces in Africa and elsewhere in the world. That is why I hope that next November we will have your support in taking this major step.

Because there is no doubt in my mind that all of us here today, are looking at the same horizon, and walking in the same direction towards the future.

A future where a safer Central Africa will stand as a building block for a safer world.

Thank you.