



INTERPOL

SPEECH • DISCOURS • DISCURSO • خطابات

OPENING REMARKS

by

Ronald K. Noble

INTERPOL Secretary General

16th International Forensic Science Symposium (IFSS)

5 October 2010

IPSG

Lyon, France

Ms. Dominique SAINT-DIZIER, Scientific advisor
from the French *Police Technique et Scientifique* and
Chairperson of the International Forensic Science
Symposium organizing Committee,

Distinguished Delegates,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, and welcome to INTERPOL's
General Secretariat Headquarters– which I hope you
will consider your home for the next 4 days – and
welcome to the beautiful city of Lyon.

Let me extend a special welcome to our colleagues
from the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
and from the International Criminal Court, two

institutions that we are proud to have at our side in the promotion of the role of forensics in investigations across the globe.

No better timing could have been chosen to convene this 16th International Forensic Science Symposium.

As we speak, not far from here on the premises of the *Cour d'Appel*, a special exhibition celebrates the 100th anniversary of a special moment in the history of science and law enforcement.

It was in 1910, in fact, that Dr. Edmond LOCARD established the first official police crime laboratory in the attic of the *Palais de Justice*.

To commemorate this event, I am happy to announce that Dr LOCARD's daughter and granddaughter, Ms STAGNARA and Ms LACROIX, will be attending

the delegates' reception tonight.

And in the early days of his laboratory, Dr. LOCARD only had a Bunsen burner, a microscope, a forest guard and a young recruit at his disposal.

Despite limited resources, results in the field were soon achieved. For instance, in 1912 the murder case of young Mlle Emile GOURBIN, found strangled to death, was solved thanks to forensics.

The main suspect in the case, the victim's boyfriend, had apparently a rock-solid alibi. Yet Dr. Locard was convinced that applying sciences to the investigation could provide new answers.

Analyzing tissue removed from under the suspect's fingernails, it was found to be covered in a powder. Its chemical composition appeared extremely similar

to the face powder prepared by Mlle GOURBIN's druggist the day of the murder. His alibi now came apart since he had claimed not to have seen her or been with her the day of the murder. Faced with this evidence, the suspect confessed to the crime.

And almost a century after the solving of this case, more than 140 forensic science experts, representing more than 50 different countries from five regions of the world are gathered here on the premises of the World's largest police organization, to continue the important work of using forensic science in analyzing criminal cases.

What does this tell us?

First - it tells us that forensic sciences have become an integral part of our common work.

Today, thousands of crime laboratories exist and operate embedded in local and national law enforcement agencies. Crime scene investigations by forensic experts are now a part of the daily life of police departments across the world.

Second - it tells us that the only way to unleash the full potential of forensic sciences is to bring together experts from around the world.

Dr LOCARD himself realized this, when in the early years of his work he toured laboratories across France, Belgium, Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom to see what could be learned and applied to his work.

And today, as the threats we face are increasingly global, it is more than natural that INTERPOL stands as a global point of reference in this realm, in several

ways.

First of all, we act as multipliers of the power of forensics in the field, thanks to the tools and services we provide to our 188 member countries.

I am referring for example to our global forensic databases, which will be described in more detail in tomorrow's session.

More than 150 countries contribute to our fingerprints database and almost 60 to our DNA profile database, which to date contain each more than 100,000 records.

Every piece of evidence extracted from a crime scene, once checked against this wealth of information, is a potential breakthrough in an investigation which would be otherwise missed.

The same can be said about our recently established INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network, the world's first vehicle for the sharing and comparison of ballistics data across national borders. To date, about 77,000 records provided by five countries are included in the database. And this past summer, we obtained the first positive hit, only a few months after the system went live.

These and other INTERPOL tools are based on the same, basic principle: comparing evidence against a larger pool of data can only increase chances for success.

Recognizing this, in 2009 INTERPOL member countries adopted a General Assembly resolution which calls for systematic sharing and updating of DNA profiles and fingerprints internationally via

INTERPOL.

Today, I urge those of you already accessing these tools to support the implementation of this resolution. I also hope that member countries present here, but not yet participating in our databases, will soon do so and will thereby enjoy the full benefits of these tools and of the new instruments technology will offer you and your countries.

A second role INTERPOL is in fact proud to play, is to act as a **unique forum for forensic managers** to discuss scientific advancements made in this rapidly evolving field.

The forensic science community must have access to the latest advancement in techniques, protocols and tools, to enhance its effectiveness and harmonize its

standards across national borders.

We must work to minimize the lag between the emergence of an innovation and its application into law enforcement worldwide. The landscape we operate in demands this.

And that is why INTERPOL will propose to its member countries to establish a global facility – the INTERPOL Global Complex – in a major international innovation hub like Singapore, which will focus among others on research and capacity building on forensics and identification techniques.

However, we are very much aware that technology alone cannot be seen as a one-stop solution. Constant transnational cooperation and networking among forensic science experts is equally pivotal.

That is why INTERPOL fully supports the key alliances that have been forged among forensic institutions and professionals across the world.

As rightly underlined by the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice last May, entities such as:

- the American Society of Crime Lab Directors,
- The European Network of Forensic Science Institutes ,
- Senior Managers - Australian and New Zealand Forensic Laboratories,

And

- the *Academia Iberoamericana de Criminalística y Estudios Forenses*,

...play a fundamental role in the application of forensic sciences to criminal investigations across the

globe.

Equally important is the creation of a strategic partnership linking all these players together, such as the International Forensic Strategic Alliance.

INTERPOL will always be ready to provide to this alliance and its members a global platform to access at once 188 police forces and their forensic capabilities.

And today, I am happy to announce that during this edition of our symposium, the Asian Forensic Science Network will formally join the International Forensic Strategic Alliance.

It is my hope – which I am sure all of you share – that these steps will bring the forensic science community closer to overcoming the challenges it

faces everyday, in fulfilling its noble mandate.

And this is precisely INTERPOL's third role in this realm: to offer member countries solutions, via access to worldwide expertise.

For instance, we have done so with our capacity building initiatives, under which together with the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime we delivered forensic awareness training involving more than 80 officers from 17 countries.

At the same time, we are very much aware of the challenges faced also by countries with well-established forensic capabilities.

Among them is the tension between rising expectations for clear-cut answers and resource constraints in a time of worldwide financial distress.

In closing, let me urge you to take advantage of the unique expertise that is in this room. Make sure to share your insights, and bring even more home with you in exchange.

As Dr. LOCARD would remind us, “*every contact leaves a trace*”.

I wish you all a productive symposium.