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39th European Regional Conference

Address by Mr. Khoo Boon Hui, President of INTERPOL
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The Honourable Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro,
The Honourable Ivan Brajovic, Minister of the Interior and Public
Administration,
Mr Veselin Veljovic, Director of Police,
Heads of delegations,
Esteemed colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning.

On behalf of INTERPOL, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you. I am heartened to see so many leaders on security and law enforcement. Your presence is a clear indication of your commitment to international police co-operation and to making the world a safer place for our countrymen.

The gracious Government of Montenegro has truly been a great host. I felt the warm hospitality of the Montenegrin people the moment I arrived. I am sure all of us here share the same sentiments. I would like to thank our Montenegrin hosts for gathering us here in the scenic city of Budva on the Adriatic coast. Undertaking the painstaking efforts of organizing the European Regional Conference is certainly no mean feat. This is all the more commendable given that Montenegro is one of the newest INTERPOL members in Europe.

At the last European Regional Conference in San Marino, we discussed about INTERPOL's efforts to make strategic transformation. I am pleased to inform you that we have made headway in implementing an enhanced strategic planning framework and process to sharpen INTERPOL's strategic foresight. In these times of great change that we live in, INTERPOL has adopted an even more dynamic strategic management approach, including a formalized process of environmental scanning, consultations with both internal and external stakeholders, and review of the INTERPOL strategic priorities for the next three years.

Today, we gather as a region to deliberate the strategic priorities and objectives that Europe would like to achieve and to discuss how INTERPOL can work with Europe to fight crime and terrorism. It is indeed commendable that the INTERPOL European region has taken the initiative to develop an INTERPOL strategy for Europe. This is certainly in tune with INTERPOL's efforts. Following the last European Regional Conference, a working group comprising staff from the INTERPOL General Secretariat was formed to support the INTERPOL European Committee and INTERPOL Executive Committee members from Europe to develop the INTERPOL strategy for Europe.

I am heartened to learn that the group has made good progress and it will be presenting its recommended Strategic Priorities and Objectives at this conference. Two of these priorities are aimed at strengthening the outreach and use of the I-24/7 system amongst European region members and also at enhancing the quality of INTERPOL's databases and their interoperability with those of European entities. Successful implementation will allow more countries to benefit from the wide array of INTERPOL tools and services. I



Europe benefits from a strong spirit of regional co-operation, INTERPOL President Khoo Boon Hui told delegates.



Some 125 delegates from 48 countries attended the 39th European Regional Conference in Montenegro.

hope that the INTERPOL strategy for Europe will inspire other INTERPOL regions to develop their own strategies to fight crime and terrorism.

Law enforcement agencies in Europe have always been strong and active INTERPOL partners. They are amongst the most active users and contributors of INTERPOL tools and databases. European member countries also actively initiate anti-crime projects. Project Pink Panthers, which targets the group responsible for a series of high-value jewelry robberies, must count among the most well-known. The recent arrests of 'Pink Panthers' Bojan Vuckovic and Radovan Jelusic, within two weeks of each other here in Montenegro and in Italy, underscores the remarkable success of this transnational crime-busting initiative. These successes also reinforce INTERPOL's value in providing a secured channel for the exchange of reliable and timely criminal information between member countries.

The strong spirit of co-operation and close co-ordination are key elements to the success of law enforcement in the European region. Through systematic sharing of information and establishment of well-defined roles, the region strived to avoid costly duplication of work and effort. Many European law enforcement agencies have also adopted standard operating procedures to systematically compare unidentified fingerprints and DNA profiles taken from crime scenes against INTERPOL's databases. This has proven time and again to be an effective means of identifying leads into otherwise unsolvable crimes. Indeed, INTERPOL member countries in other parts of the world can learn a lot from this region.

In this tight fiscal time, INTERPOL recognizes the need to invest our resources strategically. You will hear from the Secretary General a piece of good news that will help alleviate member countries' financial burden – how INTERPOL will be doing more with less.

The global financial crisis reminded us that externalities can impact us locally. No one country or region can effectively stand alone against complex organized crime or terrorist groups. To fight international crimes successfully and keep our citizens safe, we need to look beyond borders and render support to other countries in tackling serious crimes before they fester and become international threats.

Project OASIS Africa, funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, exemplifies how countries can support the war against serious crimes in other countries. I hope that even in poor financial conditions, countries with the financial means can continue to help build up the operational capacity of law enforcement agencies in less well-off countries. Strengthening law enforcement capabilities in other regions will reinforce our own homeland security.

We have made substantial progress over the past year. The tireless involvement and active contributions of the European members on the Executive Committee made this possible. I would like to pay special tribute to INTERPOL Vice-President for Europe, Professor Dr Juergen Stock who also chairs the Strategic Development Sub-Committee. Dr Stock's term will come to an end this year. I certainly cannot bear to see my dear friend leave and hope that he would continue to be actively involved in INTERPOL's work in one way or another. Other European members on the Executive Committee that I would also like to acknowledge are Professor D. Suleyman Isildar and Mr Francisco Gil Monter o, both of whom concurrently serve in the Strategic Development Sub-Committee, and Mr Petter Dyhre, who chairs the Finance Sub-Committee.

I want to conclude my remarks by returning to where I began – adapting to changes. INTERPOL is constantly trying to serve its stakeholders better. In times of change, staying stagnant is not an option. We need to evolve to better meet future challenges, seize opportunities and exploit their potential. Just as criminals and terrorists constantly change their tactics, the forces of law and order have to work together and keep raising our game. I encourage all delegates to make full use of this Conference to strengthen this global force of law and order.

Once again, my heartfelt appreciation to our Montenegrin hosts for the wonderful conference arrangements in such a delightful setting. I wish you a fruitful conference and a pleasant stay. Thank you.