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State of the Organization Address

by

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Honorable Annamaria CANCELLIERI, Minister of Interior of Italy;

Honorable Ministers of Justice, Interior and Home Affairs;

INTERPOL President KHOO Boon Hui;

Members of the Executive Committee;

Prefetto Antonio MANGANELLI, Chief of Police – Director General of Public Security of Italy;

Chiefs of Police, Heads of Delegations and National Central Bureaus;

Colleagues from INTERPOL;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning, Bonjour, Buenos días, A Salaam Alekoum.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2012 at 3:42pm, NCB Mogadishu sent a message to INTERPOL headquarters in Lyon.

In the subject heading was a single word: “Successful”.

“Successful” because NCB Mogadishu had just sent its first message via INTERPOL’s I-24/7 system, five years after being disconnected from it.

But this reconnection was a success for another reason.

The date and message represent the point at which the last remaining INTERPOL NCB was connected to the I-24/7 system; the same point when a shared, global network once again united all INTERPOL NCBs.

The commitment of INTERPOL to connecting police globally truly knows no bounds.

And it is this commitment that has led INTERPOL to assemble over 1,000 law enforcement authorities, ministers and heads of state from more than 170 countries in Rome on this historic week.

Historic because the 81st General Assembly marks the largest General Assembly INTERPOL has ever convened in its 90-year existence.

That you have all gathered here today makes a powerful statement.

It says to transnational criminals and anyone who supports them that INTERPOL member countries are coming together in unprecedented numbers to protect themselves and their citizens.

It says you are actively embracing your role as leaders in the fight against transnational organized crime;

That you are prepared to do this constructively with your counterparts;

And that you believe INTERPOL is critical in coordinating and assisting these efforts through our tools and services.

While I have heard this from you individually over the course of visiting 153 INTERPOL member countries as Secretary General, you say it in concert through your presence here at this General Assembly.

Your collective voice is loud and clear. Your determination is evident.

But compared to previous General Assemblies, this year your voice is louder than ever.

Let me assure you: INTERPOL is listening, has acted accordingly, and will continue to act in support of your efforts.

This past year we explored new groundbreaking initiatives that will contribute to building a more robust, holistic response to transnational organized crime – not a response built on paper, or one that could work in theory, but one modeled around the real threats and the real cases witnessed by law enforcement authorities on a daily basis across the globe.

That is the INTERPOL approach.

Consider a criminal, who has just produced, boxed and shipped counterfeit products in a container to another continent.

They may be mechanical components for an airplane engine or a nuclear plant, or even prescription medicines.

If this box is not among those checked by customs at the borders, it will reach the shelves, ready to be utilized or consumed by the next, unaware customer, who it may even harm or even kill.

But what if the real product had a unique identifier that the manufacturer created and shared with INTERPOL?

And what if this information could then be accessed from a Smartphone or tablet by the consumer seconds before buying the fake product off the shelf?

The decision – the right decision - would be made not to buy that product.

This is what INTERPOL envisioned when it developed the INTERPOL Global Register (IGR) concept.

Revealed at the Google IDEAS seminar this July, the IGR works to counter the trade of illicit goods and put counterfeiters out of business.

As a mobile, online screening application, the idea behind the IGR is to empower the public and private sector through enabling them to check the legitimacy of a product by way of their unique identifiers.

While there are currently just over a billion Smartphone and tablet users, five years from now it will almost be four billion; over half of the projected world population.

So even with a small percentage using the application, the potential is incredible.

Through the use of the IGR, information could then be shared via INTERPOL to all member countries.

The origin of the counterfeit products would be traced and the counterfeiter responsible would be identified.

Based on this information, an INTERPOL Red Notice would likely be issued and this individual would then be apprehended.

But in awaiting extradition, the established time period for detention may lapse because of bureaucratic processes, resulting in their release.

Free, they will simply continue to make counterfeit products, shipping them all over the globe and targeting even more unaware costumers.

This is the scenario INTERPOL had in mind when we first conceived the E-extradition initiative.

Although still in the early stages, this innovative initiative cultivates cooperation between national central authorities responsible for extradition processes by offering a state-of-the-art electronic platform to streamline and facilitate the communication of requests for extradition and supporting information.

Once again, a straightforward solution conceived for real life at the frontlines of international policing, just like those we implemented in the past that have made INTERPOL the globally relevant organization it has become.

It is no surprise then, that when 53 heads of state gathered in Seoul, Korea at the second-ever global Nuclear Security Summit this March, INTERPOL was sitting at the same table as one of the three international organizations present.

On this occasion, INTERPOL committed to curbing the illegal trade of nuclear and radioactive materials and dismantling the criminal networks responsible, through the work of our Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Programme.

We then bolstered this commitment last month by creating the Chemicals and Explosives Terrorism Prevention (ChemEx) unit as part of the CBRNE Programme.

Now, we are able to help law enforcement authorities prevent these materials from ever being used in the event they do reach their destination.

The illegal trade of nuclear and radioactive materials is not the only modern threat that has rapidly materialized and to which INTERPOL has responded.

Due to the increasing threat of cyber criminals, who can perpetrate their crimes internationally, instantaneously and anonymously, in 2010 you unanimously voted to establish the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) in Singapore.

Two years later, INTERPOL found itself facing this threat head-on, showing that back in Doha, Qatar, you were absolutely right.

When the global hacker group Anonymous attacked our IT system in February, INTERPOL security measures ensured that at no point could the integrity of our tools and services be compromised or the capacity of our member countries to exchange information be weakened.

Anonymous targeted INTERPOL because days before we had coordinated Operation Unmask against them. In the aftermath, 31 individuals across four countries in Latin America and Europe were arrested and their equipment seized.

All these examples – the IGR, E-extradition, CBRNE, ChemEx and Operation Unmask – share a common thread. They represent a glimpse into where the evolution of INTERPOL has taken us.

By embracing evolution, INTERPOL then adapts to modern-day threats and overcomes the challenges they pose with innovative, effective solutions.

Solutions, which rely on state-of-the-art technology in the hands of dedicated, well-trained law enforcement officers.

But while history tells us that evolution is about change, it also tells us it is important not to betray our roots and inner nature.

INTERPOL does not escape this fundamental principle.

While we evolve into a more dynamic organization, we remain focused, first and foremost, on strengthening our core tools and services – the backbone of our relationship with NCBs and member countries.

As you all know, behind each new database search can be the potential break in a criminal case, and that this break might come from information shared globally via INTERPOL years ago and stored in our databases.

But recently, we were reminded of this once again.

In 2009, fingerprints gathered from the scene of a maritime piracy case were checked against our databases without a hit.

However, the decision was made to keep that information so that member countries could access it in the future.

In 2011, new fingerprints were taken from an individual on a suspected vessel detained at sea; another check, leading this time to a positive hit, linking him back to the 2009 case.

This case demonstrate a key fact: there is simply no way to predict when information shared via INTERPOL channels will lead to a break in a case.

What is certain, however, is that by not utilizing these channels the global law enforcement community is deprived of that potential.

That is why we are working relentlessly to make sure that our tools and services can be readily accessible like never before.

Consider that between 2007 and 2012, the cost of a single INTERPOL database search decreased by over two euros, and now only costs five euro cents.

Five euro cents – that is the price of a possible break in one of your cases.

Yet another demonstration of the staggering progress we have made together, and explanation for why INTERPOL is growing at such an impressive rate.

Our tools and services are in greater demand; our knowledge and insight is more frequently sought; and member countries, organizations and businesses desire to collaborate with us now more than ever – and rightfully so.

The challenge is securing the resources that support our work and match our growth.

While statutory and in-kind contributions from member countries continue to dominate our pool of resources, external sources need to be introduced to supplement these contributions.

This is why we are currently carrying out over 80 different initiatives based on assistance from these external sources.

These initiatives allow us to build partnerships; partnerships allow us to acquire greater technical skills and expertise; greater technical skills and expertise allow us to better serve INTERPOL member countries, and by extension, the individuals and communities within them.

Our recent partnership with a group of 27 pharmaceutical companies in the fight against pharmaceutical crime demonstrates these benefits. With their support, INTERPOL will be able provide improved investigative support to law enforcement authorities and conduct additional multi-country operations with them as they work to stop the large-scale manufacture, sale and distribution of illegal medical products.

But as we build these partnerships and draw from external sources, maintaining our neutrality and preserving our integrity is paramount.

The work of INTERPOL must stay firmly focused on our mandate – aiding cooperation and information sharing between the law enforcement authorities of our member countries.

This has been the case since our inception and our progress will not undermine this moving forward.

Adjusting our rules, procedures and mechanisms to reflect the increasing use of resources from external sources is the next step.

Given the complexity and importance of these adjustments, INTERPOL and its member countries must work collectively on this issue so that our activities continue to assist you – the member countries.

The decision made in September to establish the Working Group on INTERPOL's Evolving Funding Model underscores the pressing need for us to mobilize.

To be convened early next year and led by Dr. Jürgen Stock of the German *Bundeskriminalamt*, the working group will ensure this transition proceeds as smoothly, transparently and effectively as possible.

This is our pledge to you today.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The message sent by NCB Mogadishu last month had a ripple effect throughout the INTERPOL community.

But remember, NCB Mogadishu was the same NCB originally connected to I-24/7 in 2007 only to be disconnected from it weeks later due to civil unrest.

So although the subject line of the message read “successful” and its reconnection to I-24/7 was indeed a success, what the example of NCB Mogadishu really teaches us is that the sustainability of success is what really matters, and is what will define us.

Over the past few years, under their strong guidance and direction, the Executive Committee and President of INTERPOL have been the driving force of our resiliency.

And beyond its landmark size and stature, what makes this General Assembly even more exceptional is that at its conclusion INTERPOL will elect a new President and a large number of Executive Committee members.

These are some of the key decisions that you, as INTERPOL member countries, will be called on to make this week.

Looking at the profiles of those who have volunteered to help guide and direct INTERPOL into the future, I strongly believe that our resiliency will not waver.

Nor has it wavered this past year.

This we have demonstrated through our continued evolution, through strengthening our core and through diversifying our sources of support.

And all this, with a single vision in our sight: to bring about a better, safer world.

Thank you, Merci, Gracias, Shukran, Grazie