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Ground Breaking Ceremony of Interpol Global Complex

Speech By Mr K Shanmugam, Minister For Home Affairs And Minister For Law

11 February 2011

President INTERPOL Mr Khoo Boon Hui
Secretary General Mr Ronald Noble
Commissioner of Police Mr Ng Joo Hee,
National Crime Prevention Council Chairman Mr Tan Kian Hoon,
National Crime Prevention Council Vice-Chairman Mr Eric Low,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and a very warm welcome to all.

INTRODUCTION

2 The decision to establish the INTERPOL Global Complex in Singapore was a significant milestone for both INTERPOL and Singapore. It marks the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in Singapore's involvement in and partnership with INTERPOL. It will lay the foundation for a stronger international policing community, ready to take on the policing challenges of tomorrow's world.

INTERPOL

3 As global economies become more closely linked, organized crime has also become sophisticated, and global. Without international collaboration across police agencies, criminal syndicates will run riot.

4 In this context INTERPOL's role has become vital. Under the very able leadership of Mr Noble, INTERPOL has risen to the global challenges of international policing.

5 Mr Noble, your vision led to the bold idea of INTERPOL establishing a global facility in the Asia-Pacific. This Global Complex is not about INTERPOL becoming less Euro-centric. Rather it reflects Interpol's status as a truly global entity, with an East-West axis. This new Global Complex will drive INTERPOL's efforts to stay ahead of the challenges of a new generation of policing. It will strengthen global law enforcement, develop cutting-edge crime-fighting tools and services, as well as enhance INTERPOL's global operational capabilities.

SINGAPORE'S ACTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERPOL

6 The safety and security of the region and beyond is fundamental to Singapore's continued stability and prosperity. We strive to be an active and responsible global citizen.

7 Singapore has been an active member state of INTERPOL. We have fully supported initiatives to facilitate collaboration and competency building across the international policing community. Apart from our involvement in joint operations, Singapore has actively provided training and expertise to INTERPOL on a regular basis.

8 We have also played host to the 78th INTERPOL General Assembly in 2009. That Assembly brought together over a thousand delegates from all around the world.

9 By hosting the INTERPOL Global Complex, we are taking a big step towards strengthening and institutionalizing our strong relationship with INTERPOL.

THE IGC IN SINGAPORE

10 Today's groundbreaking ceremony follows the unanimous vote by member states at the 79th INTERPOL GA to establish the IGC in Singapore. The clear mandate received at the GA in Doha late last year was a reflection of the strong sentiment amongst the international policing community, that this is a very important initiative.

11 We are truly honoured that Singapore was chosen to host the new Global Complex. I am confident that we will be able to partner INTERPOL to achieve its missions in the twenty-first century.

12 Singapore is committed to the concept of the IGC and we have worked closely with the INTERPOL General Secretariat in developing this idea. In addition, we have identified this prime and prestigious site to be the home of the IGC.

FINDING THE RIGHT SITE

13 Right from the start we wanted to make sure that the location would serve INTERPOL's needs and which is befitting of its status as a premier international organization.

14 The ground that we are standing on was shortlisted by Singapore and the INTERPOL General Secretariat after a thorough search. We felt that by being located in the heart of the embassy belt and city area, the new complex would give INTERPOL easy access to the international community as well as its local partners.

15 This site bears special significance to the Singapore Police Force. It was the site of the Tanglin Division headquarters.

16 Tanglin Division was and is responsible for the security of the shopping and entertainment district within central Singapore, including Orchard Road and Clark Quay.

17 Following the relocation of the HQ to Kampong Java road, this site continues to be used by some of our specialized police units. I am therefore pleased to note that with the IGC, this site will now take on a global role.

INTERPOL TRAVEL DOCUMENT INITIATIVE

18 Singapore's support of INTERPOL and its initiatives will continue beyond the construction of the Global Complex.

19 INTERPOL recently launched the INTERPOL Travel Document to facilitate easy travel between countries for holders of the document. In support of this initiative, Singapore will accord special visa status to INTERPOL Travel Document holders.

20 We will grant a Multiple Journey Visa of up to 5 years for visa-required nationals who need to travel to Singapore for official INTERPOL duties on their national passports.

CONCLUSION

21 The symbolic groundbreaking ceremony of the INTERPOL Global Complex will take place today, to commemorate the forging of new level of partnership between INTERPOL and Singapore.

22 I am confident that this relationship will scale new heights as the building takes shape and turns operational in end 2013.

23 Thank you, and in particular, Sec Gen Noble – we thank you for all your effort and vision.