

Security for citizens at home and abroad

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by [Ronald K. Noble](#), Secretary General of INTERPOL

Mr President,
Members of the Executive Committee
Heads of National Police Services
Heads of NCBs and staff from NCBs,
Delegates and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A few minutes ago, Tajikistan joined the INTERPOL family as our [nd member country](#). The new INTERPOL has been preparing for this moment so that by the end of today, Tajikistan will be connected to [I-24/7](#). Tajikistan, you are now part of our global police network and, today, you have acquired 181 new allies in your [fight against terrorism](#) and other serious transnational crime. Welcome to the INTERPOL family

Global police co-operation and thus INTERPOL is critical to the security of citizens, whether the citizens are at home or abroad.

This morning I will share with you what we have been doing to help provide such security and where I believe we must be going in the future. Let me start by updating two cases that I mentioned during last year's [General Assembly in Benidorm, Spain](#).

You might remember that I mentioned the case of Milorad Ulemek.

Last year, I raised the case of Ulemek because he was using a stolen Croatian passport to travel extensively throughout Europe and Asia. His passport showed 26 entry and export stamps from seven INTERPOL member countries.

He was charged with having been involved in the assassination of Zoran Djindjic, the Prime Minister of Serbia in 2003.

I am pleased to report that in May of this year, the Serbian police arrested Ulemek in Belgrade and he is now in custody.

There are a number of stories to explain his arrest, but the one I like the best is that he knew that Serbia and INTERPOL's 181 member countries were devoting such great effort to apprehending him that he just turned himself in and threw himself at the mercy of the court!

We must keep the pressure on all international fugitives and we must both contribute to and consult INTERPOL's stolen travel document database.

Last year, I also discussed a case of [children](#) who had been brutally and sexually abused. Images of this abuse were in a sex film had been transmitted over the Internet. On a visit to the Ukraine in August 2003, I hand delivered some sanitized photos seized by the Swedish police that showed two of the sexually

abused boys fully clothed standing next to a fountain in a square somewhere in the world. From the image we believed that the photo had been taken in one of the Commonwealth of Independent State Countries. Ukraine had not yet been connected to I-24/7; so I hand delivered the photos to the Ukrainian police authorities and asked them to help to identify the buildings and fountain in the background. Very quickly, NCB Moscow established that the pictures had been taken in Samara City, Russia.

I am happy to report that in February of this year, NCB Moscow informed us that these photographs have allowed the Russian police to identify one of the child abusers as a 30-year old Russian National. His victims were identified as well.

He has since been placed under arrest, and the young boys have been rescued!

The results obtained in these two cases show the power of INTERPOL and international police cooperation. Whether it concerns terrorists, assassins or paedophiles, police forces need INTERPOL's tools and need each other.

By connecting police to INTERPOL and to one another, we can make the world safer for our citizens.

This is precisely what we will be discussing in the following days.

This year's theme -Security for Citizens at Home and Abroad-was carefully chosen. It addresses the essence of why INTERPOL exists: By Connecting Police we are Securing the World.

In the four years since you chose me as your Secretary General, the threat and impact of terrorist attacks have forever changed the world and forever changed the demands on international policing and our member countries.

But [terrorism](#) is only one of the areas requiring our attention. We must continue our focus on all forms of serious transnational and organized crime that pose a danger to our citizens at home and abroad including the trafficking of [drugs](#), [human beings](#), and [weapons](#) as well as cyber-crime, [money laundering](#) and the theft of [intellectual property](#).

Governments and police in all regions of the world are grappling to come to terms with these new challenges. There is, unfortunately, no guidebook to address them. We must experiment, take risks, make plans, knowing that they might be changed daily if we are to respond effectively to the ever-changing threat environment.

We share a heavy burden. To a large extent, the well-being of society depends on our success. We have the obligation to live up to this responsibility, by constantly trying to find new ways to fight crime.

But there is no guarantee for success, and we cannot remain idle. We must act! We must try new approaches knowing sometimes we will be wrong; we must take risks and we must do all that is possible to meet one another's needs.

Albert Einstein, perhaps the greatest scientist in history once said:

'Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.'

We must risk mistakes in trying to address the new demands on policing. Perhaps we can be comforted by another Einstein observation. After puzzling to solve a problem, he said:

'I haven't failed. I just found 10,000 ways that don't work.'

However, taking risks and thinking creatively can eventually pay off.

The last four years as Secretary General have taught me that good ideas emerge from mistakes and that from doubt can come inspiration to prove the doubters wrong.

Let me mention four examples:

I-24/7. Who would have believed, in 2002, that barely two years later, police forces on five continents would be able to use the secure Internet for police purposes. The idea of having a real-time police communications system that was both user-friendly and secure seemed too ambitious, too high a goal for the international community. Few would have believed that having a state of the art communications network available to ALL of the world's nations, costing even less than the old system, would have been within the realm of possibility. Most of you have probably forgotten by now, but I-24/7 was born from the failed Atlas project. Good ideas can emerge from mistakes.

What about doubt? When INTERPOL started its **Fusion Task Force** initiative, people called us naïve for believing that countries would share sensitive information about terrorists and terrorist acts, other than on an extremely restrictive basis and only with their closest allies. Yet, over the last three years through the efforts of the Fusion Task Force and you our Member Countries, INTERPOL has received the names of 6,348 suspected terrorists previously unknown to us and who represented 67 different nationalities. Of special significance, this information was contributed by 117 countries.

When I heard these numbers I asked to have them checked because they seemed like extraordinarily large numbers. They have been confirmed! Whenever people tell me that police are not willing to co-operate internationally on sensitive cases, I use this example.

Doubt if you will, but if you have a person whom you suspect is a terrorist and you do not consult INTERPOL's databases, then you and your countrymen and women will never forgive you for any resulting terrorist act that this person or his terrorist group might commit. Worse yet, you will never forgive yourself.

Trying New Ideas: Orange 'Security Alert' Notices. Earlier this year, European Governmental Institutions were targeted by a spate of mailed parcel bombs. Italy asked us to help them alert European institutions about this threat. Nobody had ever tried to set up such a worldwide alert system. Yet in March 2004, INTERPOL created the Orange Security Alert Notice. We have since issued 10 Orange Notice security alerts. One of these 10 security alerts was for a gun that was disguised as a pen. We call it a **pen gun**. Just one day before the Athens Olympics, the great work of the Greek police authorities led to the discovery of a person possessing an illegal pen gun like the one about which INTERPOL had alerted the world.

Finally, trying different ways to respond to your needs in Emergency situations: Incident Response Teams/Command and Co-ordination Center: Just a few years ago, INTERPOL had no 24 hours a day /7 days a week response capability. We did not have I-24/7, and we did not have an operational support mandate. So, outside of normal business hours, we could not respond to urgent demands from police worldwide because people were going home and turning off the lights here at the INTERPOL General Secretariat. Since then, we have not only created the Command and Co-ordination Center, but also created Incident Response Teams, which can, on a moment's notice, be deployed at a member country's request.

I promised you that the lights will never again go out at INTERPOL. And, my dedicated staff in Lyon, Bangkok, Harare, Nairobi, El Salvador, Cote d'Ivoire and Buenos Aires have made sure that on any day at any time, there will be someone from the General Secretariat ready, willing and able to help you.

When we tried new ideas and when we challenged those who doubted the willingness of police around the world to share information with one another, there were no guarantees that we would succeed, but I believe that our record demonstrates that significant progress has been made over the last four years.

But, how can we help you in the most efficient, effective and systematic way?

INTERPOL identified three core functions that only INTERPOL could deliver globally. They are:

1. Provide Global Secure Police Communications Services.
2. Provide Data Services and Databases for Police.
3. Provide Operational Police Support Services.

Let me start with communication. You will hear much about the progress we have made in rolling out the state of the art Internet based I-24/7 system. In the early days of INTERPOL, it was not uncommon for police to wait for weeks, even months, for a response to a query sent through INTERPOL channels. Today, within a matter of seconds, INTERPOL provides police with access to photographs, [fingerprints](#), [DNA profiles](#), ... the leading-edge tools to do what is expected of us by our citizens at home and abroad..

But INTERPOL communication is not limited to its computers and its communications network. Just in 2004:

We have trained I-24/7 trainers in the NCB's of more than 115 countries at 10 different locations around the world.

We have hosted 67 police conferences, workshops and meetings in Lyon, in which more than 1,400 police officers from all over the world participated.

We organized 75 law enforcement events, workshops and conferences in 2004-- 15 in Asia, 13 in the Americas, 24 in Africa and 23 in Europe.

16 Heads of Police visited me in Lyon this year, as well as numerous other police delegations from member countries. Over the last three years, I have met with Chiefs of Police and Heads of NCBs in 78 member countries. Indeed, just in the last six weeks, I had the privilege of participating in an ASEANPOL meeting, three African Chiefs of Police Conferences, and a Commonwealth of Independent States Ministerial meeting. Next week, I will take part in a European Union Police Chiefs meeting.

Many of INTERPOL's important initiatives and developments are undertaken as a result of what I learn from you during my participation in regional chiefs of police conferences and visits to member countries. I am impressed by the commitment of our members to INTERPOL.

Our common goal must be to ensure that no country is left behind in gaining access to INTERPOL's services. I will talk to you about progress from October to October because that is the month of our General Assemblies and it is the period that you, our governing body, focus attention on what you are getting for your dues.

In October 2002, at the [General Assembly in Yaoundé](#), I-24/7 was only an **idea** of what police should have in order to effectively share information without borders.

In Benidorm, October 2003, our ambition had become reality, as 88 I-24/7 connections were made.

Today, 119 countries are connected.

But INTERPOL has a lot of work left in Africa and in the Caribbean. Importantly, our regional procurement program in Africa will connect member countries to I-24/7. Most police agencies and their NCBs in the region could not afford the connection and the countries infrastructure could not support the I-24/7 system. Yet, the solution we found, a state of the art, sophisticated satellite connection, will ensure that

all our members have access to all INTERPOL services. This is our highest priority. We will meet the commitment that I made to you in Rhodes that no country will be left behind.

Finally, if we are to remain a truly global organization, and if we want global coverage against crime, then every country, even the smallest, should be encouraged to join INTERPOL. No country should be left out.

The Second Core function is to provide police with timely access to police data and information.... To fight global crime and terrorism, police officers require information that is accurate, relevant, and complete.

As of today, the following global databases are at the disposal of our member countries:

- Nominals**
- Fingerprints, DNA**
- Stolen/lost Travel Documents**
- Stolen Vehicles**
- Weapons & Explosives (IWETS) Criminal cases**
- The INTERPOL Child Abuse database**
- Works of Arts Database**

Let me return to the example about [sexual child abuse](#). INTERPOL's child abuse database contains images of sexually exploited children that were found on computers of suspects. The Ukrainian example that I gave you a few moments ago, shows that this approach works. It is designed to help identify victims of [child abuse](#). Police forces can immediately check whether an exploited child of whom they found photographs has been identified or can consult each other to help identify other victims. So far, the INTERPOL database has allowed the identification of 252 victims of sexual child abuse.

I have taken a particular interest in stolen travel documents and stolen administrative documents. The example of the assassination of the former Serbian Prime Minister shows that possession of a stolen travel document allows any terrorist or criminal to travel freely throughout the world under any identity he or she wishes to assume. There are too many examples to cite today of terrorists using stolen or fraudulent identity documents to move from one country to another undetected. INTERPOL could not afford to take the risk of doing nothing in the face of such a threat.

And, we are making significant progress:

- In two years time, we went from a system with three participating countries and just over 3000 documents to more than four million documents, entered by 52 different countries. The searches you make in the database increased from 110 to more than 8000.
- Since the beginning of this year, the number of positive hits found by users has gone up from 69 to 218, showing we are clearly on the right track.

Although there has been an increase in countries feeding the system, the continued support of member countries in this matter is urgent. More information in the database will automatically increase the chances of criminals and terrorists being apprehended. The European Union and the G-8 have strongly supported our pioneering efforts in this regard and you will be asked to pass a resolution calling for further support for this initiative.

More information in the databases is one part of the solution. Our purpose must also be to bring the right information to frontline police officers, in the right format, and at the right time. I call upon all of you to give direct access to INTERPOL databases to all officers that have a need for it. The global fight against transnational crime and terrorism will be most efficient if international police information can directly be shared at all levels: local, regional, national, and international.

INTERPOL's Third Core Function is the provision of Operational Police Support Services. Simply put, this means bringing INTERPOL expertise to all of you. During the General Assembly in 2002, we agreed that

Trafficking in Human Beings and Child Pornography over the Internet, Drugs and Criminal Organizations, Public Safety and Terrorism, Financial and High Tech Crime, and Fugitive Investigative Services are the five crime priority areas of the Organization.

The five crime areas are INTERPOL's current priority, however, the international security environment is constantly changing. INTERPOL's response to the changing threats has turned the Organization into a much more operational law enforcement organization. When I took on my duties as Secretary General, I wanted to enhance INTERPOL's response capacity. Remember, before September 11, INTERPOL did not even have a 24/7 capability. On September 12, 2001, we put in place a Command and Co-Ordination Centre, operational 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, and in the Organization's four official languages: Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. We replaced our outdated communication system with I-24/7. This permitted countries unable to access X-400 to move beyond faxes to full access to INTERPOL services. We have extended the reach of our communications beyond the NCBs to other users.

Over the past two years we have been experimenting with Incident Response Teams to attempt to provide, when requested, on site support. Since 2002, the Command and Co-ordination Center has offered emergency assistance to member countries in 51 instances, and 17 times we offered to deploy an Incident Response field team. Ten field teams designed to support countries with the international ramifications of their investigations, were actually deployed.

At this very moment, INTERPOL is waiting for the answer of two countries to whom we offered our help just last weekend. The services provided to member countries on site covered the whole range of INTERPOL's three core functions, most notably, real-time database queries in co-ordination with the Command Center at the General Secretariat, analytical assistance, and co-ordination of support from other INTERPOL member countries in specialized areas such as ballistics, Disaster Victim identification, expertise in the area of counterfeits, etc.

The experience gained from the Incident Response Teams and the public attention to the initiative leads us to try new approaches. So let me sketch out some thoughts for the future that tie together all three of INTERPOL's core functions.

The I-24/7 system created new ways of communicating. This communications system and the information flowing through the system is INTERPOL's life blood. Our heart tells us that we must begin to build in an international aspect to most basic police work. We can do it because I-24/7 permits it, and it will be done if our data bases are sufficiently robust to be of value.

When New Scotland Yard began to use I-24/7 two weeks ago, they immediately found information on a paedophile that they wished they had had earlier, as they could have intercepted his travel to the Philippines. When Brazil looked at the potential of the system, they connected it to their national data base, so significantly increasing the number of users. Many other countries have taken steps in the same direction. This brings change. It will change the role of the NCBs. It will make them more important as the number of users of INTERPOL services increases. We will be voting a resolution on revised NCB standards, replacing those of 10 years ago. These standards will profoundly strengthen our organization and network and raise the profile of the National Central Bureaus within their national administration.

INTERPOL's databases must grow with accurate and timely data provided by you. And our police must have easy access to that data, as well as share their data for the use by other police. This must all be done securely in order to maintain trust in the integrity of the system. And through our police support services we need to constantly support the national police agencies around the world as they respond to security challenges.

Novel approaches are essential. The nature of our job is such that we must prepare for the worst: it is not unimaginable that a terrorist group would successfully use a biological or chemical agent or detonate a nuclear device, resulting in thousands or even millions of victims. Some terrorist groups have, if not the capability, at least the willingness to use these types of weapons. INTERPOL can not just stand by. We sought and received nearly a million dollars from the Sloan foundation, a private institution. This money

will be used to enhance the preparedness of police forces to prevent bio-terrorist crime and to help train police.

It is also important for us to build bridges towards other international Organizations. Regular consultation will ensure that there is no duplication in what each of us tries to achieve. We have successfully done so with Europol. We must do the same with many others. With the agreement of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and full support of INTERPOL's Executive Committee, we have opened an INTERPOL office at the UN in New York for the first time in INTERPOL's history. I have appointed Dr. Kersten, former President of the BundesKriminalAmt and a former Executive Committee member as INTERPOL's Special Representative to the United Nations. This office will ensure that INTERPOL and the United Nations together can identify common areas in which we can join forces to fight serious international crime. No agency in these complex times can afford to go it alone.

This quick overview shows that we are trying to find new approaches that serve your needs and that work. Like every other police agency in the world, we are constantly changing and adjusting to face the threat posed by terrorists and criminals.

Despite our global responsibility, as you know we have a small general secretariat and therefore must remain efficient and operate cost-effectively. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness will be discussed in detail later, but it is something we keep uppermost in our minds.

To be efficient would be impossible without the police and administrative support of my staff at the General Secretariat and in our Sub Regional Bureaus. I am proud of them.

The Executive Committee members deserve recognition as well. I specifically want to recognize President [Jésus Espigares Mira](#), who after a outstanding service to INTERPOL for six years, the last four as our President, is now chairing his last INTERPOL General Assembly.

Mr. President, dear friend, having fulfilled your mandate with great distinction, we all remain indebted to you. On a personal note, I thank you for your unwavering support of me and my staff over the last four years.

I would like to close with one earnest request. You know that INTERPOL is **your** Organization and that the changes that are underway reflect our constant effort to serve you as best we can in the difficult and challenging business of international policing in the 21st Century. I also know that many of you are not involved in the day-to-day work of your NCB. This is your annual opportunity to meet friends and colleagues from other countries and catch up on trends and issues related to international policing, and maybe even find solutions to your problems.

It is also the General Secretariat's opportunity to hear from you. At last year's General Assembly, the Police Commissioner from the Bahamas asked for help from other INTERPOL member countries in investigating the disappearance of five young boys. Canada and other member countries in the region offered their help, and successfully so; the abductor and killer of the five boys was arrested while driving his car with the remains of the five abducted young boys in the trunk of his car in the Bahamas.

INTERPOL is not here to help you fight crime in and bring security to some far away place. INTERPOL is here to help you fight crime and bring security to the citizens in your respective member countries.

Bringing your issues to INTERPOL's attention will sometimes make the difference between success and failure. We want you to have an enjoyable conference but we need your experience, ideas and suggestions. We are not afraid of your complaints and criticisms. Indeed we welcome them, because it is important to us to know that you care, and we want you to challenge us to do even better.

Thank you for your attention