

2009 International Law Enforcement Intellectual Property Crime Conference

Opening remarks by [Ronald K. Noble](#), INTERPOL Secretary General
Dublin, Ireland, 29 September 2009

Honourable Judge Ronald S. W. Lew (Conference Chair),
Commissioner Fachtna Murphy, An Garda Síochána,
Chief Constable Matt Baggott, Police Service of Northern Ireland,
Mr. John Morton, Assistant Secretary of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Mr. Keith Williams, President and CEO, Underwriters Laboratories,
As we say in the motherland in recognition of the many other distinguished individuals in this room whom I have not named "all protocol observed,"
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is a great honour and pleasure to be here with all of you. What gives me additional pride is that we are having this important event here in Dublin, the birthplace of William Butler Yeats, the first Irishman to receive the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923 – the same year that INTERPOL was born.

Mr. Yeats served as one of the standard-bearers of Irish nationalism and cultural identity at a time when Ireland had just gained its independence. I am hopeful that the same spirit of unity shall inspire us all in forging a more cohesive front that would bring the fight against counterfeiting and piracy to the next level.

As many of you may know, INTERPOL has [187 member countries](#), and as its Secretary General I have been privileged to visit 126 of these countries to support the work of our National Central Bureaus and police colleagues around the world.

It is therefore rare for me to visit many countries more than one time officially. The Republic of Ireland is of course an exception. It seems that every five years, I will be invited by the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána to return to this great country. Thank you, Fachtna. And, it seems that every five years the theme of my remarks will be the need for us, all of us, to redouble our efforts to fight counterfeiting and piracy.

Indeed it was a little more than 5 years ago, right here in Dublin, that I gave my first major speech to mark the importance of INTERPOL's fighting counterfeiting and piracy. One of the examples that I used then to make my point was the experience in Northern Ireland where paramilitary groups and organized crime relied on counterfeiting (especially of cigarettes) to reap huge profits and even to fund terrorist activities.

I said then and I repeat today: in order to combat organized crime's ability to make easy profits from counterfeiting and piracy, all relevant law enforcement services, private sector entities and public sector health and regulatory agencies need to combine their efforts.

Simply stated, the danger presented to our communities from piracy and the counterfeiting of all products especially medical products requires our concerted and unrelenting efforts.

The enthusiastic support INTERPOL has received from our co-hosts - the An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland provides this conference with a great foundation on which to redouble our efforts at fighting counterfeiting and piracy.

I already have thanked Fachtna Murphy for his support; so let me take a moment to recognize and thank Matt Baggott who was recently appointed Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland for his support and presence here today. Matt's selection as Chief Constable followed an intense competition and the unanimous decision of the members of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. Matt brings 30 years of policing experience to the job; he is a thoughtful police leader with an extraordinary track record who is well equipped for the challenges that lie ahead. Matt, you could not have selected a more important conference to co-host because organized crime in Northern Ireland just like organized crime all around the world sees counterfeiting as a high profit, low risk endeavor.

But, I also mentioned that all of us have an essential role to play in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy. High-quality programs to fight this serious crime problem do not just happen. They have to be nurtured and refined -- if they are to consistently evolve and remain relevant.

They also have to be sustained by vibrant partnerships and dedicated persons. In this regard, I wish to single out two entities: First, my dedicated and loyal IPR team led by John Newton for their never ending and highly successful efforts to fight counterfeiting and piracy and second, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) -- for its consistent, dynamic and innovative support of INTERPOL's [IPR Program](#).

Let me now turn to the substance of the problem that brings us together.

Studies show that around 200 billion US dollars' worth of international trade involves counterfeit products, an amount that the OECD has said is larger than the GDP of about 150 economies. The negative impact of counterfeiting and piracy is felt in all sectors of society – from its damaging effects on innovation and economic growth, employment and international trade to reduced sales and brand values for legitimate products and perhaps most importantly, to increased risks for the safety and well-being of consumers.

On the economic side, the European Commission has reported that trade in counterfeit clothing, footwear, perfume and toiletries costs the European Union tens of thousands of jobs.

On the safety and public health side, counterfeiters strike us when and where they know us to be most vulnerable. In addition to targeting longstanding health problems like malaria and HIV/AIDs, last July, during the height of the H1N1 flu epidemic, Philippine authorities arrested an individual suspected of preying on this public fear by selling fake anti-flu vaccines that in fact consisted only of mineral water.

Counterfeit products of all kind are now produced and consumed globally, in both developed to developing economies alike. In 2008, agencies monitoring global counterfeit trends reported that seized counterfeit products originated from at least 106 countries and were destined for more than 140 countries.

At their core, we cannot forget that counterfeiting and piracy are crimes of widespread and costly theft. An equally organized and more robust global law enforcement response is therefore required.

INTERPOL is uniquely placed to facilitate and coordinate international efforts from all relevant sectors to combat transnational organized IP crime.

Let me provide you with a few examples of how we have been working together to do this with our core supporters.

All types of counterfeiting are a cause for concern; however, I want to start with counterfeit medical products. *"The evil of fake drugs is worse than the combined scourge of malaria and HIV/AIDS put together. [...] Anyone can be a victim."* These are the words of the director general of Nigeria's drug regulatory agency, Dr. Dora Akunyili, one of Africa's most formidable advocates in fighting drug counterfeiting, whose own battle was inspired by the death of her sister from fake diabetes medicine.

INTERPOL is the driving force behind collective international law enforcement interventions deployed in partnership with public health authorities, drug regulatory bodies and the private sector. These interventions take place within the framework of the International Medical Products Anti-counterfeiting Task Force (IMPACT). Our partnership with the World Health Organization enables INTERPOL to bridge the gap between the public health sector and national police forces.

These INTERPOL-led IMPACT interventions managed by Aline Plançon have achieved significant operational success in Africa and Southeast Asia. In Africa, Operation Mamba which was deployed in Tanzania and Uganda led to 226 pharmacies, warehouse and market stalls being examined by the authorities. More than 100 types of fake and illicit medical products were seized. In Southeast Asia, Operation Storm was deployed for five months in Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. It resulted in over 200 raids leading to 27 arrests and the seizure of more than 16 million fake medicine tablets with an estimated value of 6.6 million US dollars.

In 2009, member country participation in these operations has grown and early indications suggest that the level of success has also increased.

A feature of IMPACT-related interventions – common to all INTERPOL IPR Programme operational initiatives – is that training and operational deployments are integrated to ensure that all participants - whether from the police, customs, public health sector or drug regulatory authority representatives - receive the same training to enable them to work as a team to achieve collective objectives and give investigations the best possible chance of success.

The importance of integrating training with operations cannot be overstated. I am therefore delighted to tell you that the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and INTERPOL are finalizing a joint programme that aims to deliver quality training for police, customs and drug regulatory authority representatives over the next three years. This will enable national authorities to fully contribute to all INTERPOL-led operational interventions against transnational organized IP crime.

While the counterfeiting of medical products is certainly the most cynical form of this type of crime, INTERPOL believes that it would be short-sighted – and self-defeating – not to address counterfeiting and piracy in all its manifestations. While there is some specialization in types of counterfeiting, increasingly, there is evidence that the same people are involved in a wide variety of counterfeiting and piracy. Indeed, the modern organized criminal is like a commodities broker and he will manipulate any commodity to generate significant profits.

This became evident during the three-month Jupiter operation last year coordinated by INTERPOL and WCO, which was the fourth in a series of large-scale IP crime deployments in South America. Since 2005, operations in seven countries in the region have resulted in nearly 700 arrests and the seizures of all types of counterfeit and pirated goods worth an estimated 300 million US dollars.

I have mentioned our public sector partners. The operational support of Europol, WCO, WHO, the World Intellectual Property Organization, USPTO, national police forces such as the Garda and the PSNI for the IPR Programme continues to be invaluable. However, the public sector cannot operate in a vacuum if we are to take on the counterfeiters and win.

Today's conference reinforces the importance of private sector support and participation in partnership efforts. This theme is evident in almost every agenda item and certainly every workshop. The workshops are designed to exploit every opportunity for maximizing the benefits we collectively derive from developing and maintaining close, productive working relationships between the public and private sectors.

We have benefitted from our interaction with you. It is my privilege to announce the creation of the fully interactive on-line INTERPOL IP Crime Investigators College developed in partnership with Underwriters Laboratory University. The College is unique in law enforcement terms in that it is fully inclusive. All public and private sector investigators - regardless of the agencies or entity they represent - will have access to the same high quality, relevant and timely training material. This in turn will enable them to make meaningful contributions to INTERPOL-led regional proactive interventions in transnational organized IP crime. It will also enable us to consistently deliver INTERPOL quality assured IP crime training on a global basis to those who need it most – ALL front line operational IP crime investigators. This is something we have aspired to do for several years and the vision has now become a striking reality thanks to the collective efforts and determination of the INTERPOL IPR Programme and UL University.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me close now by reinforcing the theme of my remarks. As with other transnational crimes, no single country or entity alone can effectively fight piracy or production and sale of counterfeit products. It is only by working together, not just in one particular industry or region but with the rest of the world, that we can find collaborative and sustainable ways to face this complex security challenge.

This conference provides us with great opportunities. There are over 300 specialist IP crime investigators, prosecutors and IP crime experts here to share practical, relevant expertise, experiences and knowledge. It is rare to have so many specialists in one place.

Establishing strong partnerships brings synergy to our collective efforts to fighting counterfeiting and piracy. I am confident that this conference brings us a step closer to that goal.

I therefore urge all of you to take advantage of this great opportunity to meet and establish connections with your different counterparts.

After all, the great Irish poet once said, "There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met.

Thank you