

20th African Regional Conference

Address by Mr [Khoo Boon Hui](#), INTERPOL President
Cairo, Egypt, 07 July 2009

Major General Adly Fayed, First Assistant Minister of the Interior (Egypt),
Secretary General Ronald Noble,
Heads of delegations,
Esteemed colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning.

Welcome to the [20th African Regional Conference](#). On behalf of INTERPOL, allow me to first express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to our Egyptian friends and colleagues for graciously hosting the conference in Cairo.

Being here has a special significance for me as this is my first visit to Egypt. I have long looked forward to visiting this fascinating country: rich in cultural heritage and cradle of a great ancient civilisation. Some people have told me that Egypt and especially this historic city of Cairo is like an 'open museum' – with historical monuments such as the Giza pyramid complex and the Great Sphinx part of the city's landscape. Furthermore in a city of a thousand minarets, my visit yesterday to the Ben-Ezra Synagogue, the Coptic Hanging Church and the Greek Orthodox St George's Church reminded me of how Egypt has been able to assimilate foreign influences with great confidence in its own past, present and future, and is welcoming of diverse views. Indeed, just across the road from here is the Al-Azhar University, the chief centre of Islamic learning in the world. These qualities, together with the impressive levels of safety and security so evident on the streets and the wonderful conference facilities and programme, make Cairo an ideal venue for our conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of you for being here, despite the health concerns arising from the Influenza A (H1N1) outbreak. Your presence shows your staunch commitment as law enforcement leaders to the cause of global security, and international police co-operation in combating transnational crime and terrorism. While governments around the world are doing their utmost to contain the pandemic, we, as members of the global law enforcement community, must also continue our relentless fight against the scourge of transnational crime and terrorism.

At this Conference, we will have the opportunity to take stock of the existing initiatives and programmes specially developed for the African region. I am happy to note that [OASIS](#) Africa has achieved early successes. We will continue to build on the success in the year 2009 and beyond.

At this Conference, we will deliberate on the priorities for the African region as well as the outcomes which we would like to achieve. In addition, we shall discuss how best to further strengthen our operational capabilities for policing in Africa and throughout the world. Please do feel free to exchange your ideas and views candidly during the discussions. And to get you started, I shall now touch on three issues which are of current concern to all of us.



The conference will review the priorities for Africa and strengthening operational capabilities for policing, said INTERPOL President Khoo Boon Hui.

Firstly, I shall talk about INTERPOL's strategic partnerships. INTERPOL understands that Africa faces complex problems that no single organisation alone will be able to solve. We believe that a multi-faceted approach pushed forward by multiple key actors is crucial in creating change on the ground. Forging strategic partnerships with other like-minded international organisations is therefore a key strategy of bringing about change.

Strategic partnerships are force multipliers that can substantially increase the effectiveness of INTERPOL against transnational crime and [terrorism](#). By pooling resources and creating mutually beneficial links with other international organizations, INTERPOL can deliver better services to its member countries. INTERPOL member countries can benefit from the greater synergy created as a result of such partnerships.

Many of these strategic partnerships have begun to reap benefits for the African continent. The International Medical Products Anti-counterfeiting Task Force, or IMPACT, for short, for example, is a partnership between INTERPOL and the World Health Organisation to fight against counterfeit medical products. INTERPOL has also worked with the United Nations to assist the Economic Community of West African countries to combat transnational crime such as drug trafficking in West Africa. Finally, INTERPOL has also sought to strengthen co-operation with the African Union to deal with international crime and terrorism. A revised Memorandum of Understanding is being drafted to provide an updated legal framework to enhance co-operation between INTERPOL and the African Union.

Secondly, maritime piracy is an issue of increasing concern to the international community. So far, most efforts to counter maritime piracy have focused on providing military responses to the threat. INTERPOL, however, takes a different perspective and views maritime piracy primarily as a crime. Law enforcement is an essential part of the solution so that the perpetrators can be identified and brought to justice. Effective law enforcement requires a strategic approach that goes beyond what individual countries can provide, especially when dealing with an international crime like maritime piracy.

INTERPOL can bring significant added value to international efforts to combat maritime piracy. As the largest international law enforcement organisation with [187 member countries](#), INTERPOL is well-placed to coordinate an international approach of law enforcement on maritime piracy. INTERPOL can help to combat maritime piracy by engaging the United Nations while INTERPOL member countries will be encouraged to share relevant investigative information. There are also plans for INTERPOL's regional bureau in Nairobi to play a key role by raising situational awareness and providing guidance on the gathering of information to the countries in Eastern Africa.

Thirdly, on the global front, INTERPOL recognises that conflicts can threaten regional and international stability. Similarly, countries recovering from conflicts are vulnerable to lawlessness. The rule of law will help to reinstate orderliness and stability into post-conflict countries. It is therefore important that police plays the crucial role as custodian of law to restore safety and security to the people of these countries.

For this reason, INTERPOL is creating a partnership with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. By combining the strengths of both organisations, we can create a powerful partnership and a wide-reaching network that will drive changes on the ground and help restore peace as well as security.

To launch the significant partnership, a Ministerial Meeting will be held during INTERPOL's 2009 General Assembly in my country, Singapore, this October. The one-day meeting will unite decision-makers at the highest level from the United Nations, INTERPOL member countries and other international stakeholders.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite all of you to Singapore and look forward to welcoming you to my country. Singapore, unlike Egypt with its long history and vast spaces, is a small island state founded in 1819. Yet it is also like Egypt in that it is a vibrant place and welcoming of diverse people and cultures.

Before I end my address, I wish to highlight the contributions of a fellow member of the [Executive Committee](#), Eduardo Fernandes Cerqueira, whose term of office will end this year. His dedicated services and involvement in the Executive Committee have been commendable. I wish him good health and all the very best in his future undertakings.

In conclusion, to our Egyptian hosts, thank you once again for the warm welcome and hospitality we have all had the honour of receiving. I look forward to the lively discussions that will be held and wish all of us a fruitful session at this Conference.