

20th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference

Hong Kong, China, 7 March 2008

Speech by Commissioner of Hong Kong Police, Mr Tang King-Shing at the closing ceremony

Secretary General Noble, Chairman KHOO, Deputy Director General XUE (Dongzheng), Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has indeed been a great honour to hold the 20th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference in Hong Kong, China; the first time a statutory INTERPOL conference has ever been held here. Over the past two and a half days you have received updates on the work of INTERPOL. You have also shared knowledge and experience on tactics and strategies to address local and transnational crime affecting the communities we serve.

Clearly only through building mutual recognition, understanding and partnership, promoted by conferences like this, can law enforcement agencies advance the level of information sharing and multilateral cooperation so essential to addressing transnational crime in the local, regional and global settings.

To illustrate the success that can be achieved by adopting such an approach, I would like to briefly mention the INTERPOL operation codenamed VICO. You will recall this operation was conducted over three continents and targeted a child sex offender abusing children. The highlight was the innovative use of computer software to de-cipher swirled images of a notorious paedophile and to proactively disseminate clean images of the suspect via the worldwide media. As a result of these concerted efforts the suspect was identified and arrested within 10 days of the clean image being circulated in 2007.

I congratulate the Secretary General, his staff and the many dedicated law enforcement agents around the world who contributed to such a remarkable achievement. The overall success of the operation serves as an inspiration to us all. Reflecting how international law enforcement agencies can fully utilise their joint capabilities to bring to justice criminals operating on a global basis.

We in Hong Kong also continue to make significant strides in the important areas of cooperation, information sharing, use of technology and development of legal frameworks with other jurisdictions.

In August last year, acting on the basis of our mutual legal assistance ties to the United Kingdom, we activated our High Court's Technology Court to provide live witness video-link evidence to a presiding court in a UK murder trial. Our court, comprising a presiding Magistrate, facilitated the live evidence of a crucial witness, who was reluctant to travel to the UK to give evidence.

The evidence provided the basis of the defendant's conviction for a charge of murder that took place in Spain, and furthermore, without a human body having ever been recovered, in Spain or elsewhere. I cannot personally imagine a criminal case with a more international dimension!

Following successes such as these, I can assure you that the Hong Kong Police, through our INTERPOL Hong Kong, China Sub-Bureau, will continue to make a significant contribution to international criminal investigations and multilateral co-operation.

You may rely on us to assist your international enquiries, and where the necessary legal frameworks exist, to assist in all other areas of fugitive surrender, information and evidence gathering and mutual legal assistance.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the National Central Bureau, China for all the support and assistance they have provided to enable Hong Kong to be the host city for this conference. I would also like to thank the dedicated and diligent staff of the INTERPOL Secretary General, who worked very closely with my officers to facilitate the smooth running of the conference.

Lastly, I would like to thank you, the delegates, for attending - it is your presence and contributions that truly made the conference a great success. We look forward to your future visits to Hong Kong, and the opportunity to once again share with you those issues that are so vitally important to international collaboration and co-operation in protecting the communities we serve.

I trust you have all enjoyed the conference and your short stay in Hong Kong has been memorable. Thank you.