7th International Conference on Cyber-Crime

12 September 2007, New Delhi, India
Opening speech by INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble

Hon. Shivraj Patil, Minister of Home Affairs, India
Hon. Suresh Pachouri, Minister of State, India
Mr Vijay Shanker, Director, Central Bureau of Investigation, India, and Delegate for Asia on the INTERPOL Executive Committee,
Dear colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to start by thanking our host country, India, and its ministers for opening this conference and the National Central Bureau in New Delhi and the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation led by Mr Vijay Shanker for organizing this 7th International Conference on Cyber-Crime. Mr Shanker also represents the Asian region as a Delegate on the INTERPOL Executive Committee, and it is thanks to his support that we are able to meet here today and work in optimal circumstances.

The first cyber-crime conference took place in Lyon, France, in 1995. Since then, information and communication technology has undergone a quiet, yet fundamental, revolution. In today's world, the Internet is an essential part of the daily lives of many of us. Not only do new web-based applications surface almost weekly, but more people than ever are using the Internet personally and professionally on a daily basis. According to the Indian Ministry of Information Technology and Communication, the number of Indian Internet subscribers has doubled just in the last six months alone. This is nothing short of breathtaking.

A single glance at the agenda for our work over the next three days shows how this global trend affects law enforcement throughout the world. We will discuss issues as diverse and wide-ranging as identity theft, online banking fraud, gaming on the Internet, the risks of terrorist use of the Internet and online child abuse, to name but a few.

Relatively new forms of crime such as 'phishing' or denial-of-service attacks continue to rise sharply from year to year. According to IBM, any given person is now more likely to become a victim of cyber-crime rather than a physical form of crime. But very often the two go hand in hand, as is the case with the sexual abuse of children.

With these – very real – threats in mind, the theme for this conference is particularly well chosen: 'Upcoming Capacity of Cyber-Police.'

Firstly, because it shows our collective resolve not to let the Internet become a 'no man's land' where criminals have the upper hand and risk no punishment for their crimes. Our essential role, as police, is to prevent and investigate crime. Cyber-crime is no different: we have an obligation to the world's citizens and societies to do everything necessary to enable ourselves to protect them online to the same extent as we protect them in their communities and on the streets.

Secondly, to be successful in this endeavour, the key element in the strategies we need to adopt is enhancing 'capacity.' Good police work requires skilled investigators and by joining our respective forces, by sharing the 'too few' professionals skilled in cyber-security and by training new officers to become experts in the field, the law enforcement community will be better equipped and stronger to fight cyber-crime.

One of INTERPOL's priorities in helping police forces around the world to strengthen their ability to combat cyber-crime was to have endorsed the creation of a worldwide operational network of National Central Reference Points using INTERPOL's global secure police communications system, I-24/7. The theory underlying such a creation was to enable police to immediately identify experts in other countries and obtain immediate assistance in computer-related investigations and evidence collection. Because these investigations are extremely time-sensitive, the National Central Reference Points were designed to respond to requests for assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The existence of such contact points on a 24/7 basis is explicitly foreseen by the G-8's work in this area and by the Convention on Cyber-Crime of the Council of Europe. INTERPOL National Central Bureaus have already established 111 reference points in their countries. But, in many countries, these reference points are not the same as those created and sponsored by the G-8 or those contemplated by the Council of Europe.

So, I would like this conference to provide honest feedback on whether the INTERPOL National Central Reference Points work in practice like they do in design. I also would like this conference to determine whether INTERPOL has created unnecessary duplication or competition with the 24/7 cyber-crime contact network established by the G-8. In combating cyber-crime the resources are too scarce for there to be unnecessary duplication or competition. We must integrate our work so that in each country there is one central contact point for emergency cyber-crime-related responses.

A second priority for INTERPOL to better fight cyber-crime is the provision of specific and specialised training. Training is such an important and intrinsic part of our efforts against crime that INTERPOL has decided to make it one of its core functions. It means that we are further increasing our training activities in many law enforcement areas. This is why INTERPOL now offers the Training and Operational Standards Initiative, known as TOPSI, aimed specifically at cyber-crime.

A main component of the TOPSI project is to enable officers to join 'train-the-trainer' workshops, which are held every year. The train-the-trainer formula is valuable and cost-effective to the global law enforcement community, especially in an area where our expertise and resources are already strained.

In the Asia-Pacific region, two train-the-trainer workshops will be held every year during the next five years. These will take place in great part thanks to a US$20,000 donation by JP Morgan, and Microsoft for its support of several of our initiatives to fight cyber-crime.

But if we are honest and look at the risks before us worldwide and the need for training by our police worldwide, INTERPOL and its member countries will need to raise 100, if not 1,000 times, this amount to keep pace with the cyber-criminal threat.

We need to build strong alliances between the private and public sectors to respond to the risk before us and to satisfy the demand for training. The law enforcement community needs to be able to rely on expertise more readily available in the private sector. The very people who have been pioneering the applications that have made the Internet so important to our daily lives can, and must, play an essential role in keeping the Internet safe.

In the near future, I want INTERPOL to enable police officers and experts from the private sector and other international organizations to work closely together to respond to and prevent cyber-crime. Currently, our organization is developing plans to create global and regional anti-crime centres, one of which will be dedicated to high-tech crime. We envision that a properly equipped center, where police officers from INTERPOL member countries can work alongside experts with specific skills from the private

sector who rotate through the centre on a needs basis, is something the law enforcement community as a whole would benefit from.

In combination with the experts from the integrated national points of contact network for responding to emergency cyber-crime alerts, a global anti-crime centre could help police around the world obtain investigative support, training and expert information from a combined team of police officers and computer experts. If the interest is there, INTERPOL is willing to help create such a global centre. INTERPOL realises that this is an ambitious idea, but we are determined to turn it into a reality, because this problem is too big for even the G-8 and Council of Europe. It requires a truly global response.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I said this is our 7th Cyber-Crime Conference. Based on the ever-increasing threat in front of us in this field and the ever-expanding global Internet community, it is time for us to be ambitious in the goals that we set for ourselves. As INTERPOL's Secretary General, I personally commit myself and my organization to do all in our power to meet and satisfy any ambitious goal that comes out of this conference – if it is built on consensus.

If we work towards building a consensus so that police are properly equipped and trained to prevent and investigate cyber-crime, we will and can catch up with criminals and terrorists using the Internet, and keep the world of the Internet safer for the benefit of us all.

I wish you a fruitful and successful conference.

Thank you.