

19th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference

Speech by INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble
Jakarta, 11 April 2006

*Mr President,
Head of Indonesia's National Police General Sutanto,
INTERPOL President Jackie Selebi,
INTERPOL Executive Committee members Takizawa and Boustani,
Heads of police and NCBs from INTERPOL's Asia region,
Members of INTERPOL staff in Lyon and Bangkok,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Regional conferences, together with the [General Assembly](#), are important events for the organization. It is on these occasions that we take stock of our bearings and re-assess our best way forward. Through such continuous proactive improvement, INTERPOL has become a more relevant and dynamic organization, better able to serve our member countries' constantly evolving needs.

As you know, we schedule these meetings for the Asian region every two years to give us time to do some work between meetings and to allow us to catch our breath in the face of the extraordinary speed at which change is taking place at our INTERPOL National Central Bureaus and [member countries'](#) police services.

But before I go into the heart of my remarks to talk about what has changed at INTERPOL since we last met and about what lies ahead, let me thank Indonesia for having done such a wonderful job in organizing this, the [19th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference](#). We are truly appreciative of the work of Indonesia's police and its people in putting together such an excellent programme.

Let me also formally welcome Indonesia's newly appointed National Police Chief General Sutanto to the INTERPOL family.

As a point of reference in beginning my remarks, let me remind all of you that we last met at an [Asian regional conference, in March 2004 in Manila](#), Philippines. For INTERPOL, March 2004 seems like a lifetime ago.

Back then, we had not yet elected Jackie Selebi, South Africa's Commissioner of Police, as our President. For me as Secretary General, it is hard to imagine a world without [Jackie Selebi](#) as our President. As a national commissioner of one of INTERPOL's largest police services, our President is able to speak with a special voice in support of police that is heard around the world. When Jackie Selebi speaks, one has no option but to listen. He is a President and person whom I and all of us at the General Secretariat are honoured to follow.

But a President needs a strong [Executive Committee](#) in order to help push through important changes for the organization. This conference has two dedicated and strong members of our Executive Committee with us. Hiro Takizawa and George Boustani will co-chair this conference, and we thank them for doing so. Those of us who were here two years ago remember the wonderful job they did back then.

At the General Secretariat, we have made two major appointments from the Asian region since we last met. We have hired our first Director from Asia in the history of INTERPOL – from Singapore – and we have hired an officer from the Australian Federal Police as our Assistant Director for Public Security and [Terrorism](#).

I will now highlight some of the developments that have occurred since the last Asian conference. I will begin by talking about the expansion of [I-24/7](#), then I will discuss our new strategy to provide instant database access to front-line officers. Then I will talk about new developments regarding our [DNA database](#), our [crisis/disaster response](#) capabilities, our relationship with the [United Nations](#), our

regional policing initiatives, our work toward creating an anti-corruption academy, the latest activities of our bioterrorism unit, and, finally, I will explain why we created the INTERPOL Strategic Advisory Panel.

I-24/7

When one talks about change at INTERPOL over the last two years, one has to start with [I-24/7](#) . Think about it: just a little over two years ago, [I-24/7](#), our secure global police communications system, was barely a year old and barely tested.

At that time, only 20 out of our 48 Asian region member countries were connected to [I-24/7](#). Now, as I stand here before you, we have connected 100 percent of Asian region member countries to [I-24/7](#). Forty eight out of 48 countries are connected.

This is historic not only because of the speed with which we changed from an old system to a new system despite language, governmental and technical barriers. It is also historic because it is the first time in history that all of our Asian region member countries are connected to an INTERPOL communications system. When our old system was in place (X.400), Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Syria, Timor-Leste and Iraq were not connected. Now, no country has been left behind.

Two years ago, Bhutan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were not even [members](#) of INTERPOL. Now, not only are they members of INTERPOL, but they are already connected to [I-24/7](#) and they have already become fully participating members of our organization.

We have thus achieved full compliance with a core element of our constitution, which speaks about enhancing international police cooperation through facilitating the exchange of information.

How can one alert police partners in other countries about dangerous criminals or be alerted by them if one does not have the ability to communicate? One cannot and INTERPOL did not, but now it can, thanks to [I-24/7](#), and now it does.

[I-24/7](#) is giving our NCBs access to more and more important police information. As an example, contributions to the [stolen and lost travel documents](#) (SLTD) database have reached over 10.6 million records in just three years. But I am especially happy to report that the contributions by Asian member countries have increased by 438 per cent between 2004 and 2006.

I am also happy to report that the General Secretariat deployed 14 [Incident Response Teams](#) in Asia, upon the request of our Asian member countries, to assist them in their investigation of serious crime incidents and disaster management.

In addition, Asian member countries have also increased the number of seconded officers sent to the INTERPOL General Secretariat and to the INTERPOL Liaison Office in Bangkok (LOBANG), from eight seconded officers in 2000 to 17 seconded officers in March 2006. We hope that Indonesia will also agree to send an officer to the General Secretariat, and we hope that Indonesia will announce that new secondment during this conference.

All of these developments demonstrate that our Asian member countries recognise that [INTERPOL databases](#), dedicated staff and services provided by our NCBs and SRBs are cornerstones of global police co-operation in the fight against transnational crime.

Moving to the front line

Since its creation, INTERPOL has historically focused on supporting police in investigative and analytical activities through the NCBs.

With the development of the [I-24/7](#) system and the technology for integrated access, however, INTERPOL is now in a position to provide these powerful tools to front-line officers who engage in control activities at borders, airports and other field points.

The potential of our databases in preventing terrorist incidents and other serious crimes will significantly improve as officers operating in the field have direct access to these powerful tools.

Through a technical solution developed and implemented by INTERPOL and Switzerland, for example, some 20,000 Swiss officers throughout the country, including those in Swiss embassies, consulates and border points, now have real-time access to the INTERPOL stolen and lost travel documents database. Each month the Swiss conduct nearly 300,000 database searches – 60 times more than all other countries in the world combined.

And because, as I said, this database contains information on nearly 11 million stolen passports, these searches get results – each month the Swiss searches detect over 100 persons traveling with stolen passports. Following on from the great success of the Swiss model, Singapore has agreed to be part of a similar pilot project in this region.

As more authorised law enforcement officers gain instant access to INTERPOL databases, more international criminals will be apprehended at borders, airports and other field points. We will thus provide a level of border protection never before thought possible.

DNA database

Another new development relates to the INTERPOL DNA database. INTERPOL has now acquired the capability to match DNA profiles derived from all major marker systems used by major forensic laboratories worldwide.

Our DNA database now contains over 57,000 DNA profiles from 36 countries, and the database has already yielded over 50 positive hits – allowing investigators to make international connections between individuals and crimes, connections that otherwise would likely have escaped detection.

Crisis/disaster response capabilities

INTERPOL has also been very active in developing its capabilities regarding its [Command and Co-ordination Centre](#) and its [Incident Response Teams](#) (IRTs). We have been significantly increasing the assistance we give to our member countries through such services and deployments, particularly to the Asian member countries that were hit by the [tsunami](#) disaster in December 2004.

IRTs were sent to Thailand, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia as part of the international [disaster victim identification](#) (DVI) efforts in these areas.

United Nations relationship

Aside from developing its databases and services, INTERPOL has also strengthened its relationship with other international organizations, particularly with the [United Nations](#).

One major development in this area has been the creation of a special [INTERPOL-United Nations Notice](#) to identify suspected terrorists who are barred from international travel or from using financial institutions.

To date, a total of 29 such special notices have been published, including, for example, for the notorious Al Qaeda terrorist suspect [Al-Zarqawi](#). These notices give police more valuable information with which to identify terrorists.

INTERPOL has also completed a disaster response exercise with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#). The objective of this exercise, which was called Bright Horizon, was to facilitate co-ordination between humanitarian organizations and the international law enforcement community in responding to man-made or natural disasters.

More SRBs

Another development relates to regional policing. To provide more immediate assistance and expertise to our member countries, INTERPOL is planning to establish additional Sub-Regional Bureaus (SRBs) in strategic locations around the world. In fact, a new SRB in Cameroon will be coming online very soon to serve our member countries in the Central African region.

Anti-corruption academy

Another exciting new development is that INTERPOL, in close co-operation with the Austrian government, is in the process of exploring the possibility of creating an INTERPOL Anti-Corruption Academy in Vienna, Austria. We do not yet have the approval of the Executive Committee or of member countries to create this academy, but we believe that everyone will recognise that the time for its creation is now upon us. We hope to hear from you on this topic this week.

You heard Indonesia's President, our President and the Chief of Police talk about how important it is to fight corruption. If created, the INTERPOL Anti-Corruption Academy would be the world's first dedicated international anti-corruption academy, and it would be the most innovative provider of anti-corruption education, training and technical assistance on the planet.

The academy will strive to assist INTERPOL member countries with the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption. In addition, the academy will also conduct research on anti-corruption issues, including trends, best practices and learning measurements, among others.

Bioterrorism unit

Another development is that our new [bioterrorism](#) unit has been conducting regional workshops. Our last one was in [Singapore](#), for the Asian region, and it was attended by over 85 participants from 27 countries. We will be conducting the next regional workshop in Chile in July. Thereafter, we plan to conduct workshops in the Middle East and in the Commonwealth of Independent State republics.

The bioterrorism unit has also been engaging in a number of other initiatives, including the creation of a [Bioterrorism Prevention Resource Center](#) on our website, and I encourage you all to avail yourself of this important new tool. And the unit will also be releasing a *Bioterrorism Pre-Planning and Response Guide* later this year.

ISAP creation

In addition to all of these tactical, operational and training initiatives, we have also taken steps to ensure that we maintain a clear strategic vision regarding all of our [core functions](#).

For example, together with INTERPOL President, Mr Jackie Selebi, we have established the INTERPOL Strategic Advisory Panel (ISAP) composed of eminent international law enforcement experts from the different regions of the world in order to provide strategic advice on emerging issues in international police co-operation and to identify areas in which we can improve our services.

Members of the Strategic Advisory Panel include, among others, two distinguished gentlemen from the Asian region, the former Hong Kong-China Police Commissioner, Mr. Tsang Yam Pui, and the President of the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences (NAASS), Professor Abdulaziz Sagr Al-Ghamdi.

Conclusion

With your strong support, we have reached some important milestones in global police co-operation.

The United Nations Security Council, the G8 group of countries and the member economies of [Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation \(APEC\)](#) have all endorsed the use of the different INTERPOL tools and services, particularly the SLTD database, because they recognise that our databases and services have a direct and positive impact on the world's police forces' ability to fight crime and prevent terrorism.

It is now time for us to explore ways to bring our fight to the next level – to the next level in their conventional applications and also to extend them to the front-line law enforcement officers at borders, airports and other field points.

To the terrorists and other international criminals who would travel through our countries in the planning and perpetration of their attacks or in their flights from justice, let us in the law enforcement community be heard to say, loud and clear: Not on our watch.

I look forward to our discussions and your ideas in working toward this ideal – at this conference and beyond.