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OPENING REMARKS

by

INTERPOL PRESIDENT KHOO BOON HUI

At the  
41<sup>ST</sup> EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
(ISRAEL, TEL AVIV, 8 MAY 2012)

*Mr Ronald K Noble,*

*INTERPOL Secretary General;*

*Inspector General Yohanan Danino,*

*Commissioner of Police;*

*Mrs Mireille Ballestrazzi,*

*Vice-President for Europe and Chairperson of the ERC;*

*Major General Yoav Segalovitz,*

*Head of Investigations and Intelligence;*

*Members of the INTERPOL Executive Committee;*

*Chiefs of National Police;*

*Heads of INTERPOL National Central Bureaus;*

*Colleagues from INTERPOL General Secretariat;*

*Distinguished Guests;*

*Ladies and Gentlemen;*

Shalom and good morning.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 41st INTERPOL European Regional Conference here in Tel Aviv.

This is my third visit to Israel and my first for almost 20 years. Like you, I am fascinated by the fusion of Israel's rich history and modern developments. On behalf of INTERPOL, I would like to express my appreciation towards our host, the Israeli Police, for their warm hospitality and the opportunity to witness the merging of the past and present. I would also like to commend our Israeli colleagues for the excellent organization of this year's INTERPOL European Regional Conference.

These conferences are essential platforms to deliberate on region-specific crime and security concerns. Our European member countries will be sharing their experiences in fighting cybercrime, organized crime and terrorism over the next few days. Learning from past experiences helps us to better anticipate and prepare for our future. This will guide us towards advancing INTERPOL priorities that are aligned to global trends and which address all our member countries' needs.

INTERPOL has achieved much success in addressing regional and global security and crime concerns. You in the European region especially have demonstrated time and again your strong belief in and commitment to INTERPOL's initiatives. For example, European member countries contributed close to 89 per cent of the 124,000 profiles in our DNA Database. You are also strong advocates of the establishment of the INTERPOL Child Sexual Exploitation Database. Today, I am proud to share with you that this database has facilitated the identification of more than 2,600 victims, and the arrest of 1,500 child sexual predators, worldwide.

I would also like to acknowledge the European region's efforts in ensuring that other INTERPOL member countries benefit from INTERPOL's tools and services. The expansion of the I-24/7 system within Central Asian countries and the enhancing of border security management in selected Southeast Asian countries, are commendable testimonials of your efforts to share capabilities and enhance the capacity of other member countries. On behalf of the Organization, allow me to offer my appreciation to all of you, for your support and commitment towards INTERPOL's cause. I am confident that with your continued support, INTERPOL will remain the vital link between the European law enforcement community and the rest of the world.

On the same note, I would like to offer my gratitude to the INTERPOL European Committee (IEC), so ably led by chairman, Mr Borut Selan. The IEC plays a crucial role in enhancing cooperation and coordination between INTERPOL and other regional organizations in Europe. We will be electing two new candidates to the IEC over the next few days, and I encourage you to continue supporting the IEC in delivering invaluable work and commitment to INTERPOL.

Exposure to European expertise and experiences helps ensure that the rest of us in the INTERPOL family keep abreast of the latest trends and developments. This allows us to remain relevant and resilient in a dynamic environment. Our ability to address both known and unknown threats effectively serves to confirm our Organization's position as the leader in securing global safety, and in shaping the security landscape. It is therefore crucial for us to constantly take stock of the evolving situation to better understand the challenges we all face.

Some countries are experiencing decreases in street crime where perpetrators need to be physically present to commit their acts of violence. Such criminals take the risk of being arrested at the scene by the police and even bystanders, or of leaving behind evidence of their identity. Have other criminals gotten smarter and figured out that they can make much more money with significantly lower risk of being discovered let alone caught by turning to transnational non-confrontational crime? An academic study from the London Metropolitan University found that 80 per cent of crime committed online is now connected to organized gangs operating across borders. Criminal gangs now find that transnational and cybercrime are far more rewarding and profitable than other riskier forms of making money.

The impact of organized crime and terrorist acts is now no longer confined within a region's immediate vicinity. The United Nations recently reported that transnational threats, such as organized crime and illicit trafficking, violence and corruption are major obstacles to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These MDGs are eight globally agreed targets for halving extreme poverty, halting the spread of diseases, promoting access to education and improving health

care by 2015. Indeed, globalization and the development of the virtual world offer new and 'fertile' grounds for criminals to ply their illegal trade and commit crimes.

For example, just last month, 137 gang members from China and Taiwan were arrested by the Malaysian police in a raid on a syndicate that ran an illegal online soccer and internet gambling ring with profits of US\$1.3 billion from all over the world. This syndicate operated from six luxury homes equipped with call centres, computers and even training rooms in a gated community which was also home to a former prime minister.

Two days later, 83 people from another syndicate again with members from China and Taiwan were arrested in another part of Malaysia for a huge scam that netted even more billions of dollars. They cheated victims in China and Taiwan through online scams involving a range of modus operandi from impersonating the authorities to phoney credit card and bank charges. They were on the verge of fleeing the country, having closed down their operational base and some had even made it to the airport where they were detained in the nick of time. They had been in Malaysia for just eight months when they were arrested. The scam apparently originated from Macau and had operated from other countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand therefore significantly reducing the risk of being detected and prosecuted. Indeed the perpetrators from both syndicates were eventually deported as the thousands of victims were out of Malaysian Police jurisdiction.

I was perturbed by this course of action and asked the Malaysian Police Chief for more details when I met him last Friday. It turned out that though the two syndicates were unknown to each other, they were controlled by a common Taiwanese boss. This was why the second syndicate had been alerted to pack up. Fortunately, the Taiwanese Police, which as we all know is not an INTERPOL member, was able to fully cooperate with its Chinese and Malaysian counterparts and had alerted them of what was happening from its own close monitoring. The Malaysian Police chief was confident that the gang members would get their just dues back in their homeland.

This case illustrates how organized crime is now able to recruit members from countries without diplomatic ties to commit crimes overseas operating from temporary safe bases in third countries equipped with the latest technology. It also shows that there are links between syndicates that operate scams and those which promote illegal betting and presumably match fixing using sophisticated MOs. In this case, exceptional international police cooperation within the region thwarted them.

I am sure that within the European region, you would have many similar success stories but would the result have been the same if these criminals chose to operate across regions? And what if, with the billions of dollars that they are reaping, they invest in even more advanced technologies to perpetrate and conceal their crimes? How can we match them even as many of our members face funding cuts and INTERPOL's annual budget is not more than 1/10th of a billion dollars? I will leave it to our indefatigable Secretary General to excite you with the many new initiatives that he has with great resourcefulness embarked upon to seek funds from a variety of sources. I will instead focus on our need to cooperate and innovate.

We are all too aware that the terrorist and organized crime groups are quick to take advantage of sophisticated tools that exploit vulnerabilities to penetrate critical and security infrastructures to facilitate their nefarious activities. Here in Israel alone, a reported number of over 1,000 cyber-attacks take place every minute. Experts have estimated that the cost of cybercrime is larger than the combined costs of cocaine, marijuana and heroin trafficking. In Europe, the cost of cybercrime has apparently reached 750 billion Euros a year. Likewise, we have seen global financial institutions suffer from major cyber-attacks on their networks and servers with US banks purportedly losing \$900 million to bank robbers but \$12 billion to cyber criminals last year. Even INTERPOL was not spared when the Anonymous group launched Distributed Denial of Service attacks against our website. In the words of a former Director of the CIA, "We have built our future upon a capability that we have not learned how to protect."

As part of our mandate to create a safer world, there is a need for a collective effort to work with key stakeholders and optimise information exchange among our member countries. We also need to focus our efforts on developing innovative solutions in order to stay ahead of criminals. We have done it successfully before and I am confident we can continue to do so. Three months ago, I received original documents from a former police officer from Norway that showed that INTERPOL conducted its first computer crime seminar over 30 years ago when most people were not even aware of the great impact computers would have on their lives let alone the devastating effects of cybercrime.

A key initiative we have in the pipeline is the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) in Singapore. When operational in 2014, the IGCI will be an excellent platform for INTERPOL to realise the full potential of public-private partnerships in developing cutting-edge solutions that are relevant to our needs. We will also enhance our capability against cybercrime by drawing on the strengths of our member countries and establish strategic partnerships with the private sector and academia in the area of research and development. We have already received many offers from around the world to second staff or collaborate in one way or another in the field of digital security and cybercrime. These collaborative multi-disciplinary efforts will set the foundation for INTERPOL's ability to remain both progressive and responsive to emerging threats.

The IGCI also symbolises INTERPOL's visionary and entrepreneurial spirit in ensuring the Organization's future developments. We need to innovate and engage with new partners without compromising on governance. This empowers our Organization to be better prepared to innovate and adapt to the ever-changing security landscape. With a multi-faceted strategy involving the close co-operation of our member countries and stakeholders, I am confident that we will achieve greater success in preventing and fighting regional and global crimes.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to invite all of you to the 81st INTERPOL General Assembly in Rome, Italy, this coming November when I will end my term as your President. A high-level Ministerial Meeting will be held on the first day of the General Assembly. This meeting will focus on issues ranging from human trafficking to urban, youth and terrorist violence, and the police's role in tackling them. Let us all encourage our ministers to participate in this very significant event which I am sure will be very well organized with great aplomb and style by our Italian colleagues.

INTERPOL's successes and achievements would not have been possible without your robust support and belief in the INTERPOL's mission to create a safer world. Let us forge stronger ties between the European region and the rest of our member countries. I am confident that these partnerships will continue to flourish in the future and pave the way towards achieving our noble mission.

I wish you a productive and enriching conference over the next few days. Thank you and good day. *Toda rahbah.*