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REMARKS

by

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**Asian conference on Integrity in Sport  
'Match Fixing: The ugly side of the beautiful game'**

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I am happy to welcome all of you to this Interpol International Conference here in this beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur.

Your very presence here means you are deeply concerned, like me and millions of other football fans, about match-fixing, particularly in the Asian leagues and teams.

Your participation also proves that we are ready to work hand-in-hand to eradicate this cancer from the game. Match-fixing is too complex and widespread for one organisation to fight it alone. To fight this, we need a joint and coordinated effort.

Please remember, no continent is now left untouched by this disease. Match-fixing is a pandemic now in world football. It concerns each and everyone of us, right from the FIFA Executive Committee to the common club fan.

Friends,

Football, like any other sport, needs real matches. Last year, I received an email from a journalist of a well known London newspaper who wanted to know if a World Cup 2014 qualifying match was genuinely contested.

I told the journalist that I had not received any information that would give rise to doubts that it was not a genuinely contested match. So I had nothing to say.

But I told him that this doubt you have raised only proves the destructive nature of match-fixing because the result of any match, which is contested with the best of intentions and in the full competitive spirit of the game, whether in Asia or Europe, could be suspected. This is why match-fixing poses such a serious hazard to the foundations of the sport and must be eliminated.

It is well known that AFC has zero tolerance for match-fixing. We have been working together with FIFA and our Member Associations to tackle this serious problem for some time now.

We need to admit that match-fixing is a real danger to football's ethical values and needs to be eliminated to preserve the sanctity of the sport.

I can assure this conference that AFC will not rest until this plague is completely stamped out in Asia.

AFC will educate the players, officials and all stakeholders on raising awareness about this serious issue. We need to understand how match-fixing works in order to prevent it. We need more information on how crime syndicates operate.

It is in everybody's interests to launch a cooperative effort to save the sport's significance. I believe this conference is the right first step in bringing together all well wishers of the game on the same platform. We have a big stake in seeing our game survive. We want the results of our matches to be beyond the shred of a doubt.

And, we will do everything possible to make this happen.

I would like to end my opening address by thanking FIFA, the Interpol, and of course, the Football Association of Malaysia for organising this conference.

I wish all the participants a productive seminar.

Thank you.