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Remarks

By

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Ministers, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour to address this ministerial conference on behalf of the Swedish government. I have heard the word “unprecedented” being mentioned regarding the number of ministers present at a meeting to discuss police issues. I would like to express my gratitude to our Italian hosts, to INTERPOL President Mr Khoo Boon Hui, to Secretary General Mr Noble and their staff for creating this opportunity for us all. Without doubt, this shows that police policies are on the political agenda worldwide. This is an opportunity for us all to inspire each other and to get new ideas on how police work can be developed.

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Adapting the security policy - In a global context such as this, one has to understand that we all meet quite different societies back home. A successful policy in one country may not be as successful in another. However, one key element for successful police work that is valid everywhere is the need to have the public’s trust.

Public trust is not primarily built by showing force against criminals. It is about creating a mutual relationship, where police and society have the feeling that they are playing in the same team. We all have neighbourhoods where this feeling needs to be reinforced.

Civil unrest due to economical set-backs, social or ethnic segregation, the use of new technologies for criminal purposes are just some factors that constantly change the conditions for police work. We have to adapt our policies as our societies evolve. Policymakers, academia and the police need to work close together to find the best methods of gaining trust and respect.

During this intervention I will focus on three ideas that I believe both contribute to building the public’s trust, and at the same time help prevent the new recruitment of young people to criminality.

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First – building local support. To do this the police services must be present in the local society, in the neighbourhoods. The police must show integrity and stand up for fundamental values and fairness. Support from society has to be earned. An accessible and supporting local police service creates trust. This is especially important in areas with social unrest or high crime rates. And in return we will see an increased willingness to give evidence and testify against criminal behaviour. This creates a win-win situation for both citizens and the police.

Secondly – it is a joint effort. To succeed we need a joint effort from society as a whole, not only from the Police. Police have the main responsibility in handling the emergencies, but

cannot solve modern challenges on their own. The police need to start thinking on how they can involve other parts of the public sector and society.

A multi-disciplinary approach should not be limited to better coordination between crime-fighting authorities, like police, customs and tax-crime units. We need to take one step further and also involve stakeholders outside the crime-fighting sector. The police have unique know-how on how criminality evolves. This can be used to make other parts of society work towards the same goals.

Partners like social welfare services, municipalities, schools and voluntary organizations can all take part in preventing crime if guided correctly by the police. I can give you many examples on how the police can become a prime mover of cooperation with other parts of society, and make these partners think of crime prevention in their daily work. The other day I heard of one municipality company close to Stockholm that was sponsoring the local football team. After consulting with the police, the sponsorship agreement was adjusted. The players of the team were encouraged to take part in the voluntary neighbourhood watch on patrol. A small innovation that increased the presence of grown-up's during hours where the risk of juvenile crime is high. And an increased presence of good role models for young people. Hopefully this small effort will contribute to take focus away from criminal behaviour.

Third – if possible, use early and tailored interventions. Let me expand on that. I initiated a project we call 'social action groups'. This is a joint project between the Swedish Police and social services. Working together, they improve their ability to detect young people in obvious risk of developing a criminal lifestyle. An individual action plan is drawn up by the police, the social services, the school and other concerned authorities, and agreed with the youngster and his guardians. It is operationally followed up on an individual base. I believe that identifying and preventing some key individuals from falling deeper into a criminal lifestyle is a great long-term investment. It is a good investment for the authorities, good for the society, but of course most of all good for the concerned young individual. Finally, it is a good financial investment. Society's long term costs for just one career criminal are indeed very high.

Lastly – the need to follow up. How do we know if we're on the right track? Well, one way is to work with surveys and polls. Each year I task The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention to measure the effect of our reforms in terms of victimization, perceived security, confidence in the judicial system and in particular confidence in the police. This gives the authorities and politicians the possibility to react and modify actions if we're not reaching our goals. If people have good confidence in the police, half the battle against criminality is won.