



Opening Address

by

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INTERPOL Secretary General

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Brazzaville, Congo

Votre Excellence, Monsieur Le Président, Denis Sassou Nguesso;
Minister of Interior and Decentralization; Raymond Zepherin Mboulou
Your Excellencies;
Director General of Police of the Republic of Congo, Mr Jean-François Ndengue;
INTERPOL Vice President for Africa of the Executive Committee, Mr Sebastian Haitota Ndeitunga;
Delegates of the Executive Committee, Mr Francis Ndegwa Muhoro; Mr Anbuen Naidoo; Mr Anselm Lopez and Alexander Prokopchuk;
Vice President of CEMAC; Mrs Rosario Mbasogo
Chiefs of Police and Heads of NCBs;
Distinguished Observers;
Dear Colleagues;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bonjour. Good morning. Assalam aleykum. Buenos días.

It is my great privilege to welcome you all to this 23rd INTERPOL African Regional Conference, here in Brazzaville, Congo. I am delighted to have the opportunity to meet you all again in Africa so soon after an exceptional General Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda, last November.

We are also extremely grateful for the warm welcome offered to us by the Congolese Authorities and the excellent organization of this conference. (*Votre Excellence, Monsieur Le Président, je vous remercie infiniment pour cela*).

I believe the Republic of Congo presents us with a perfect setting for this event and the pivotal recommendations which will emerge from it, to shape the future of international police cooperation here in Africa.

In many ways, our host country can be seen as a metaphor of what has brought us here today.

As many as 250 ethnic groups and 700 local languages and dialects are spoken in this land – all of them coming together under a single banner, and a common national identity.

We are hosted today by a country which among its first steps as an independent nation, chose to become part of INTERPOL - making international police cooperation a key component of its history.

As you join us from almost all over the world, from more than 30 countries, representing the extraordinary diversity of the African continent that is so dependent on all of you to keep it safe and protected, a duty which is now more important than ever. This year alone, the African economy is forecast to grow by 4.4 per cent, according to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2016 report, thus generating a growing middle class.

Indeed, more and more eyes around the world are now turning towards Africa with interest, confidence and hope. More and more countries from other continents are seeking to build and nurture ties with Africa and its nations.

Yet in parallel and unfortunately, those who seek to prey on Africa are also watching and waiting for the best moment to strike through criminal action. As the leadership of your

respective countries seek to build a new future for the continent, criminal action seeks to undermine it.

Criminals are looking at Africa as a target for violent ideology and a market for criminal enterprises ranging from narcotics, wildlife and human trafficking to cybercrime and terrorism.

Africa is setting standards in enhancing its regional police capacities to defeat these criminals through the establishment of regional centres of excellence such as the regional forensic laboratory in Sudan and the regional centre for Counter Terrorism in Kenya, among many.

INTERPOL continues to fully support these developments through its capacity building initiatives. The same applies for the newly established African continental police coordination mechanism, AFRIPOL, another milestone decision for policy in Africa.

As INTERPOL's Secretary General, I have spent the first year of my term reshaping INTERPOL's role in the global policing architecture so that our Global Programmes on Counter Terrorism, Organized and Emerging Crime and Cyber Crime can be aligned to your national police priorities.

Providing policing support in the areas you need most is at the core of my vision for INTERPOL. The operational character of our Organization is what makes us unique and must be preserved.

The INTERPOL 2020 initiative is about strengthening our capacity to deliver. In doing so, we must ensure our organization can grow and expand its activities to meet your daily policing needs in a sustainable manner.

This requires a dialogue with Governments and political decision makers to collectively ensure that the political security agenda is turned into action on the ground and leads to tangible results.

A good example of how INTERPOL is recognized at a high political level is the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 that sets clear expectations on how we can support global and regional efforts to curb terrorism.

INTERPOL has also been invited to participate in global decision-making fora such as the Arab Interior Minister's Council in Tunis and the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit in Washington DC, both taking place next month.

We need to continue this engagement and my aim is to ensure that this recognition also leads to a sustainable long-term funding model whereby Governments will finance INTERPOL and its programmes through means other than statutory contributions alone, to take the pressure away from your already strained policing budgets.

For criminals who seek to undermine the development of Africa, today we have come together under the INTERPOL banner to send a powerful message, in a single voice: that they shall not prevail; that thanks to police cooperation, justice shall know no borders; and we shall continue working for a safe Africa.

Thank you for your attention. Merci beaucoup.