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## 39th European Regional Conference

Opening remarks by [Ronald K. Noble](#) INTERPOL Secretary General  
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INTERPOL President Mr Khoo Boon Hui  
INTERPOL Vice-President for Europe, Dr Jürgen Stock,  
INTERPOL Executive Committee members,  
Heads of delegations,  
Heads of NCBS  
Dear staff members from IPSP Lyon  
Esteemed Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good morning,

I want to thank our extraordinary host of this 39th European Conference, my friend Veselin VELJOVIC, Director of Police of Montenegro for his warm welcome and for having organized this conference with so much professionalism.

I cannot think of a more beautiful venue for us to meet in this country than this beautiful Mediterranean town, whose roots plunge deep into history and even ancient mythology.

I must say that I am feeling now the same family-like warmth and kindness that I felt when I first visited Montenegro, back in August 2006. It was just a few months after the country had declared its independence. I had been invited here by Veselin VELJOVIC, Director of Police of Montenegro, a person whom I feel privileged to call a friend.

As you know, Montenegro became an INTERPOL member country in September 2006. Looking back at the four years that have gone by since then, I am amazed to see how this young country — which also happens to be one of INTERPOL's youngest member countries — has so quickly become a model of international police co-operation.

And the Montenegrin police have installed INTERPOL's MIND solution at 16 border points across the country to enable its border officers to instantly check the travel documents of incoming travellers against INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database.

It is therefore no surprise that via INTERPOL Montenegro is both helping to keep its citizens safer than they otherwise would be and is helping you and even countries outside the European Region to better investigate cases and apprehend wanted persons.

So, I use the success of Montenegro not to highlight the accomplishments of one country, but to highlight the fact that INTERPOL's model works for the benefit of all countries. The success of any one country in preventing crime, in investigating crime and in apprehending fugitives, enhances the collective success and security of all. Put another way, the safer and more secure that your neighbour is, the better chance your country and citizens have to be safe and secure.

At the Conference of the Association of Caribbean Chiefs of Police from which I have just come, I commended the Chiefs of Police for their pioneering vision. The Caribbean was the first and remains the



only region in the world where MIND and FIND have been integrated into the daily screening of passports and visitors to Caricom countries. They went from screening INTERPOL's databases 400 times per year to 240,000 in the first four months following the implementation of MIND and FIND. In so doing, they helped to secure their countries; their region and they helped you, the European Region, better solve crime and locate wanted persons.

The Caribbean region's police chiefs collectively understand that without security they could not count on as much foreign investment or tourism. Without the foreign investment and tourism, their countries' future would not be as secure.

Their concern for security is not unlike the concern that this region's countries have for security. Indeed, with experience police leaders in each and every INTERPOL region learn that the more secure that their country is physically and economically, and the more securely that the rule of law and respect for human dignity are embedded into the country's foundation, then the greater potential their countries have for a safe and secure environment in which all citizens can prosper and enjoy the fruits of their labour.

But, despite my speaking to the European Regional meeting of INTERPOL this morning, I have learned one important lesson as your Secretary General — regional borders are yesterday's borders. Let me repeat: Regional borders are yesterday's borders!

I want to focus on that theme during my remarks this morning.

I will use environmental scanning to reinforce this point.

As you know, we have been undergoing one of the most thorough strategic planning reviews in INTERPOL's history, and you already have heard a presentation from Zack Zaccardelli on this topic yesterday.

It is an ambitious review whose outcome will have a profound impact on the way that INTERPOL looks at itself and the way that we do our business.

One essential element to any strategic planning review is to conduct an environmental scan. The ways in which these scans occur can be focused on the goods and services that the scanning entity (in this case INTERPOL) is concerned about delivering or it can be much broader in scope.

I wish to begin much broader in scope because doing so will be indispensable to 'Meeting the Challenges of our Time'.

Any police body at the national level must be concerned with the possibility that its citizens will be confronted with a natural disaster at home or abroad. At the national level, each of you has a fairly good idea of what type of disaster might affect you or your citizens. But as soon as I speak about the issue globally, you have very little idea of what natural disaster might confront you or your citizens.

Let me give you some examples:

If I were to ask you how many earthquakes have occurred around the world in the last 72 hours, what would your answer be?

Just in the last 72 hours, there have been almost 100 earthquakes detected around the world.

You are thinking that these were probably small earthquakes. In fact 40 or so of them registered above 4.5 on the Richter scale.

It would be much easier however for you to remember the earthquakes among these that were historic.

Chile was hit by one of the top ten earthquakes in all of history in terms of Richter scale measurements. On 27 February 2010, it was struck by an earthquake that measured 8.8.

This year was also tragically historic when the 5th deadliest earthquake in history (7.0) claimed over 250,000 lives in Haiti on 5 January 2010.

The impact of these earthquakes was far beyond their regions, and they definitely had an impact on INTERPOL's European Region. Your borders did not make you immune or even protect you.

A natural disaster need not even take many lives to have an impact beyond its region.

We learned this lesson again this year with the eruption of the volcano beneath the Eyjafjallajökull glacier in Iceland. It caused not only an estimated EUR 1.7 billion in airline losses and a disruption of global supply chains in ways that will take months if not years to understand. The Icelandic ash cloud also virtually shut down INTERPOL General Secretariat Lyon's ability to respond to the needs of our member countries both inside and outside of Europe. I know the same was true for many of the police bodies of the European member countries with us here today.

Accidents:

In addition to being required to deal with any natural disaster at the national level, police bodies need to be prepared for any accident that might occur. But, in today's globalized world with increased international travel, even an accident on your soil can have implications beyond your country and region.

Again, if I were to ask you about the number of major plane crashes that occurred in the last 12 months on your soil or that involved your citizens, you could probably easily give me the answer. But, if I asked you how many major plane crashes occurred around the world and potentially affecting both INTERPOL and the citizens of any of its 188 member countries, you probably would find it difficult to answer.

Let me go over just those plane crashes in the last 12 months considered major; that is where scores of lives were lost.

1. 1 June 2009 Air France Plane crashed in the Atlantic Ocean off of the coast of Brazil (more than 220),
2. 30 June 2009 Yemenia Airlines near the Comoros Islands (more than 150),
3. 15 July 2009 Caspian Airlines in Iran (more than 170),
4. 25 January 2010 Ethiopian Airlines, near Beirut ( 90 persons);
5. 10 April 2010 Polish Air Force plane carrying the Poland's President crashed near Smolensk Russia (more than 90 persons);
6. 12 May 2010 Afriqiyah Airlines near Tripoli (more than 100 persons);
7. 22 May 2010 Air India Express near Mangalore, India less than a week ago (more than 100 persons)

Although INTERPOL's assistance was offered in all of those tragic plane crashes only Brazil asked for our assistance with regard to the Air France crash. Imagine if we had been asked to assist in the three plane crashes in Russia, Libya and India that occurred in the last two months.

What impact would that have had on INTERPOL General Secretariat, but also on you our European member countries when we asked you for help? Our strategic planning has to consider these possibilities.

Let me now turn the question to you. How much planning do you do at the national level for natural disasters affecting your citizens outside your borders and/or where you will be called upon to help because the country hit can't handle the problem alone?

Here again, I submit that regional borders are yesterday's borders

Let me now include the reason that brings us together. Our concern is about crimes that affect your countries and your region.

Here again I would like to give you examples to show that Europe's interest lies beyond Europe, and it needs INTERPOL to help keep Europe and its interests safer than they would otherwise be.

Examples:

Take INTERPOL's involvement in the West African Coast Initiative.

We have known for some time now that cocaine traffickers increasingly take advantage of the lack of police infrastructures in some West African countries using them as transit points to Europe from South America. INTERPOL has engaged in a new partnership with the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States in this initiative to confront this threat more effectively.

INTERPOL's work in West Africa is a very concrete example of how INTERPOL, by helping curb the flow of cocaine towards Europe, will allow police in your region to save precious resources and channel them elsewhere.

Another example, is the work that INTERPOL is doing to fight Intellectual Property Crime globally and Medical Product Counterfeiting alongside the WHO with our IMPACT Project. These are two crime areas that greatly affect European interests, but where the sources of the crime problem tend frequently to be outside of Europe. Through experience, we have learned that these two crime problems need to be considered and addressed separately because the interested communities inside and outside of Europe view the issues so differently.

Another example is INTERPOL's efforts in addressing the threat posed by maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia.

INTERPOL is actively working to develop information sharing on piracy in the region. We created a special office in the Kenyan port of Mombasa to collect information first-hand following the capture of pirates and we take part in several international concerted efforts to tackle this threat. Very recently, our co-operation with the government of the Seychelles led to their handing to INTERPOL all piracy-related investigative files. This was an extraordinary accomplishment for both European and non-European member countries.

I am proud to say we also established a fruitful partnership with Europol in this area. While INTERPOL has a global network on the field and a secure global communications system, Europol has remarkable analytical capabilities. So it is very natural that we should combine our respective strengths — INTERPOL will work at collecting and sharing information coming from non-EU member countries like the Seychelles, and Europol will work on the analysis of this data.

I wish to publicly thank Europol Director Rob Wainright and his Europol colleagues for their fine support and cooperation in this area.

I have consciously avoided the other types of environmental scanning that INTERPOL also undertakes on a regular basis.

These involve conflicts between our member countries that could have profound effects on the way that we do business. They also involve Security Council sanctions against our member countries as well as indictments issued by the International Criminal Court against a Head of Government of one of our member countries.

Way Forward:

In conclusion, I have intentionally given a non-traditional speech to this regional conference because I believe that more and more INTERPOL's regions are going to be affected by what happens outside the region or by threats coming from outside the region. Our concept of regional borders as barriers to crime or protecting us from crime is already a concept for yesterday.

The question for INTERPOL and the European Region will be how do we meet the challenges of our time when they coincide with an economic crisis confronting much of the world?

As the global financial crisis limits your resources and as you are constantly asked to do more with less, INTERPOL has committed itself to helping you more without asking you to pay more.

A soon-to-be-published study by three economics professors and paid for by a grant from the US's Department of Homeland Security concludes that "INTERPOL gets about \$200 in gain for every \$1 it spends on the fight against terrorism."

Moreover, shortly after the economic crisis hit the world, we decided to formalize our strategic planning functions and initiate a process through which INTERPOL would reflect on its strategic priorities and on the short-, medium- and long-term objectives and initiatives the Organization should strive to achieve to meet those strategic priorities.

We did this because we understood that, in times of financial constraint, we need to enhance our ability to take the right strategic decisions at the right time, focus our resources on what really matters to you, and deliver our services to you in the most cost-effective way.

Starting from this year, we will be taking gradual steps to ensure greater transparency and alignment between the Organization's strategic priorities and objectives, and the resources planned in our budget.

We also have taken steps to examine our Red Notices to ensure that they are of the best value to our member countries.

We have persuaded the Government of Singapore to invest substantial resources to construct a state of the art INTERPOL Global Complex in Singapore. We are committed to persuading the Executive Committee and General Assembly that our future and your future will depend on our having a global footprint in Southeast Asia. We are confident that we can achieve this goal without raising dues.

We also have successfully tested our INTERPOL e-Travel and Identity Card and hope to roll it out for use during the upcoming General Assembly.

Finally, out of respect for the financial crisis affecting so many of our member countries at this time, we will not propose an increase of dues for 2011. I also will propose that the Executive Committee endorse a pay freeze for all INTERPOL staff in 2011.

Yet, despite these financial constraints, we will not stop being visionaries. We will continue developing new ways to help you fight transnational crime and terrorism. And we are looking at the world as it evolves before our eyes, to develop with you and with our member countries from Asia, Africa and the Americas, the cooperation strategies that will ensure our common success for the years ahead.

We will work with your and other regions, but I hope that you will agree that our work can never be constrained by or confined to any one region.

I wish you a very good conference.

Thank you very much.