

75th General Assembly

Speech by INTERPOL President Jackie Selebi
Rio de Janeiro, 19 September 2006

Distinguished guests,
Members of the [Executive Committee](#),
Secretary General [Ronald Noble](#),
Fellow law enforcement officers,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This year, we commemorate five decades of the development of the constitution of our organization. Five decades ago, those who met were driven by two important considerations:

1. 'To ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the ['Universal Declaration of Human Rights'](#)'; and
2. 'To establish and develop all institutions likely to contribute effectively to the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes.'

Today, tomorrow and in the future this remains the intention of INTERPOL.

Those who set up this organization, when they met in Monaco there were only 23 countries. Today, as we meet here in Brazil, inside this hall, there are 152 countries. The organization has grown not only in terms of its size but also in terms of the programmes which have been put in place in order to achieve the goals that were set out by those who came before us.

This growth will be manifested by the addition of two countries so they too can be part of this growing organization. This growth has brought consequences for the organization and its members. As we strengthen our programmes, additional demands are made of us.

One such demand that I hope members of this organization gathered here will deliberate with all of the seriousness it deserves is that the space we occupied many years ago and today no longer suffices because our organization is continuing to grow.

At every assembly we add new members, and as we add new members, we develop our structure to be bigger in order to make sure we all can participate in the life of the organization.

During this assembly there is a topic which is a consequence of growth that we need to look at for the organization to be able to function. I hope we will not be afraid to deal with these issues, for if we are, we will be indicating that we are afraid of our own victories, of our own successes, a consequence that we might not want to deal with. Yes, we developed [I-24/7](#), yes, we have connected every country except Somalia, but what else do we need to do?

Obviously, we have to find systems to make sure that our borders and border control are on a firm footing. We have to discuss MIND & FIND because that programme says there are new challenges that we must be ready to deal with, hence this conference – which has grown not only in terms of size and programmes but also in terms of challenges we must say we have the capacity to meet or, if we do not, what programmes we can put in place in order to do this.

As a consequence of the growth of the organization, questions about resources that would enable us to manage this organization to meet the expectations of the people and of the organization itself, about how to develop this organization, we can no longer run away from these questions. Somehow, we need to discuss them.

I am sure that during our conference we will be saying set up a fund to do this, but the fundamental question as we grow, challenges grow, demands grow – resources are necessary for us to do this work. It is a challenge that maybe we do not want to hear about because maybe in our pockets there are not enough resources. But in my country, they say 'police always make a plan,' and I am sure the police organizations here faced with a challenge can always make a plan.

It is a matter that we need to deal with at this conference in order to make sure that those who set up this organization with those ideals can say indeed that those of us who are here today are still upholding the ideals of strengthening police cooperation to make sure we make our societies free of criminality.

Later in this conference some of the fine people who aid the [Executive Committee](#) that you chose, who must work with me on the Executive Committee in order to promote the programmes of this organization, some of them regrettably will have to terminate their daily engagement with the functions of the Executive Committee.

None other than the Secretary General and I feel more afraid of this, because with them, you have given us men and women who are ready to work in order to achieve the goals of the founders of this organization, men and women who are ready to sacrifice anything in order for us to build this organization.

Here in Brazil some of them are going to have to leave the Executive Committee. You have the power to elect new members of the Executive Committee. I trust that in the process of the election you will be as driven as these outgoing members of the Executive Committee by one ideal. That ideal is to serve the people of the world in order to reduce the levels of crime around the world, to make this world safer. That when you choose those you would want to replace them, you will think about the 23 countries that met to set up this organization, you will think about those who met to formulate the constitution of this organization, so that we choose men and women who are ready to serve, not those that are interested in elongating and strengthening their CVs, but those that want to act.

To those outgoing members of the Executive Committee, I will remain indebted to them forever. I was hoping they would all be here, but I know that Mr (Hiroaki) Takizawa from Japan has had to go home. He was a fine member of the Executive Committee. He together with those that I worked with were people that were driven by the ideals of the founding fathers of our organization. Let's elect those who will emulate these people that have served the organization.

Lastly, let me say, Brazil, thank you very much for putting together this assembly, thank you very much for arranging this assembly with 600-plus participants, which has grown in order to strengthen our organization. We have been the beneficiaries of your hospitality.

When you hear us complain, know it is because you have set a standard on the first day that you must keep up until we leave this space, so our complaints will be only to say to maintain the standard. But I am certain with the examples you have set that you have given us the conditions under which we can take decisive decisions in order to make our organization stronger, more efficient and ready to answer the call of those that set up this organization some years ago. Thank you very much.