

## 78th INTERPOL General Assembly

Opening Speech by Khoo Boon Hui, President of INTERPOL  
11 to 15 October 2009, Singapore

Secretary General [Ronald Noble](#);  
Fellow members of the [Executive Committee](#);  
Heads of Delegation;  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Welcome

Good morning.

As host, I am humbled by the turnout to the 78th General Assembly. There are more than 1,100 ministers, senior officials, delegates and their spouses, observers and exhibitors from 151 countries present here. Yet as President, I am proud to see our commitment to INTERPOL. This is the largest turnout we have seen thus far, symbolic of our dedication to the cause of global security.

Imagine having this General Assembly a few months back, when H1N1 was prevalent. We would all be wearing face masks! I'm not sure whether we would be able to comfortably engage each other at such a personal level then. Our spirits might also have been less exuberant, given the poor economic outlook.

The global outlook has since improved dramatically. Just yesterday, Singapore announced it has come out of recession. We had the first positive quarterly GDP growth after 5 quarters of negative performance. This, as you can imagine, is probably a good time to visit. Apart from the formal engagements, I urge you to spend time enjoying what Singapore has to offer.

Challenges Faced in Organizing the General Assembly

When Singapore put in our bid to host this event at the 76th General Assembly, I never imagined events would unfold as they have today. I have the privilege of delivering this speech as both President and host. Having gone through the rigour of organizing this event, I appreciate even more the hard work of previous hosts. As police officers, we know that things do not often go as planned. We therefore apologise for any inconvenience that you may have encountered. I gladly welcome any feedback, good and bad.

Setting the ground rules

This General Assembly creates a rare opportunity for us to forge new ground and expand our common space. All in the hope of creating a safer world. I therefore urge you to share your thoughts freely, even have constructive disagreements. We hope to move towards a better consensus and sharpen the INTERPOL edge.

Reiteration of shared vision



INTERPOL President Khoo Boon Hui urged delegates to use the General Assembly to strengthen the global force of law and order so that police can outwit and outpace criminals.

A year ago in St. Petersburg, I shared with you my vision for the organization during my election campaign. By voting me into the presidency, you not only signalled your desire to make this our shared vision but also gave me the mandate to take steps towards realizing it. For the benefit of those who were not there, I would like to recapitulate the three tenets.

Firstly, we would like to see INTERPOL play a larger role in fostering co-operation. Secondly, we hope that the organization can leverage on its far-reaching network to grow operational capabilities. Last but not least, we want to see good governance and optimal resource management within INTERPOL.

#### Progress Report

So where are we now, a year on after St Petersburg? Allow me to share with you the progress made.

#### Fostering co-operation

Firstly, to enhance the role of INTERPOL globally, we have created new platforms for co-operation.

Two weeks ago, I was in Brussels to officiate at the opening of our liaison office with the European Union. Just yesterday, we witnessed the conclusion of the first INTERPOL-UN Ministerial Meeting. This is symbolic of our commitment to contribute resources and expertise to UN peacekeeping missions. International policing has no doubt been elevated in the global security agenda through these partnerships.

We have also broken new ground in partnership with the private sector. Earlier this year, an agreement was reached for Microsoft to provide its Computer Online Forensic Evidence Extractor, or COFEE in short, software tool to all member countries. COFEE allows investigators to extract digital evidence from computers, critical for cybercrime investigations.

#### Conducting large scale coordinated operations

Secondly, I am happy to announce that we have taken steps to enhance INTERPOL's joint operation capabilities. My Prime Minister has already cited our co-ordinated operations against illegal bookmaking syndicates and we have also taken action to disrupt the distribution of counterfeit medicine.

#### Supporting the operational needs of member countries; building capacity

Since 2004, we have also developed our Incident Response Team (IRT) and INTERPOL Major Event Support Team (IMEST) capabilities. These, as you would be aware, were designed to provide swift support on the ground for organizations facing knowledge gaps. More than 98 such teams have completed their missions so far. The increase in demand for IRTs and IMESTs echoes a similar trend for other services such as the Command and Coordination Centre and INTERPOL's various databases.

As mentioned by the Prime Minister yesterday, to win against determined foes, we need to work together and keep raising our game. You may be aware that INTERPOL is working on enhancing the status of its red notices and encouraging member countries to share data. This will hopefully expand our DNA and fingerprint databases.

The Organization's efforts to develop an INTERPOL passport have also borne fruit. At a strategic level, the adoption of a common identity document by all member countries would set global security standards for travel documents. Executive Committee members have registered for their passports through the EDAPS booth. In fact, I will be receiving my passport from the Secretary General later today.

I encourage you to support this initiative, which is a stellar example of how we are, literally, breaking down borders.

#### Good Governance – Strategic Planning and Resource Management

Thirdly, we have made headway in implementing a strategic planning framework at INTERPOL. This is in line with our desire to sharpen the Organization's strategic foresight, particularly of our leaders.

Our inter-disciplinary Strategic Planning Group, incepted in December 2008, has since matured into a full-fledged Strategic Planning Directorate. This will be led by our able colleague, Giuliano Zaccardelli. Its purpose is to engender a culture of change within the organization; change in how we manage our work, change in how we communicate, and change in how we measure performance.

Another objective of the Strategic Planning Directorate is to develop a practical and shared corporate planning process. The long-term vision is for INTERPOL to strategize in a well-coordinated manner, and allow member countries as well as the General Secretariat to align towards a common goal.

Given limited resources, and multiple demands, it is necessary for us to re-examine how our resources can be better utilized. This was put into practice during the organization of this event. The global financial crisis forced us to brainstorm how costs could be lowered.

We were most happy when Professor Tommy Koh, our Ambassador-at-large, agreed to serve as our moderator. This not only saved the Organization a substantial honorarium but he also set a high bar as chairperson; all of you must therefore help me by keeping closely to your allocated time! We have also tried to save all of you money; working out attractive packages with hotels and discounts from Singapore Airlines. Additionally, we have transformed our Police Coast Guard Base into a venue for the Gala Dinner.

I am sure in the same spirit, INTERPOL will be able to do more with less.

#### Appreciation

We have made substantial progress over the past one year. Thank you for your unwavering support. At this juncture, I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Executive Committee members who are ending their terms. They are Mr. Arturo Herrera Verdugo, Vice-President for the Americas, Mr. Eduardo Fernandes Cerqueira, Mr Thomas Fuentes, Mr. Konstantin Machabely, Mr Park Ki Ryun and Mr Vijay Shanker.

Gentlemen, may I invite you to stand and be recognised. Please join me in showing our heartfelt appreciation to these fine gentlemen for their leadership.

End

In closing, let me encourage all delegates to make full use of this General Assembly to strengthen this global force of law and order, now enhanced with our partnership with the UN. For it is only through collective action that we can out-pace, out-wit and out-do our enemies. We have much work to be done.

In light of this, the Executive Committee has agreed to re-nominate the Secretary General when his term ends next year. We look forward to having Mr. Ronald Noble for another five years. I am sure we will all support his renewal of office when the matter is formally brought up at next year's General Assembly.

I wish you a fruitful General Assembly. Thank you.