

38th INTERPOL European Regional Conference

Address by Mr [Khoo Boon Hui](#), president of INTERPOL
San Marino, 27 May 2009

The Honourable Antonella Mularoni, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Most Serene Republic of San Marino

The Honourable Valeria Ciavatta, Secretary of State for Internal Affairs

INTERPOL Secretary General [Ronald K. Noble](#),

Colonel Achille Zechini, Commander of the Gendarmerie of San Marino,

Mr Maurizio Faraone, Head of National Central Bureau of INTERPOL in San Marino

Heads of delegations,

Esteemed colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

On behalf of INTERPOL, let me first take this opportunity to welcome all of you to the [38th European Regional Conference](#). Your presence here this morning is an indication of your unwavering commitment as leaders in the law enforcement agencies of your respective countries, to the cause of global security, and international police co-operation in combating transnational crime and [terrorism](#).

I would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to our Sammarinese hosts for the warm welcome and hospitality that you have extended to all delegates and visitors to your beautiful and historic country. As I entered the city yesterday, I was awestruck by its character and historic buildings and I was not surprised to learn of its entry last year in UNESCO's World Heritage List. I further learnt that San Marino is not only Europe's smallest republic; it is also the oldest sovereign state and constitutional Republic in the world having been founded in the year 301. I thank you for opening up your city gates to receive us, and for hosting this year's conference.

With the recent health concerns arising from the H1N1(A) influenza outbreak in 46 countries in various regions of the world, I initially feared that this conference would have to be re-scheduled. Make that 47 countries, as I was awoken this morning at 4.30 am by an SMS informing me that a young Singaporean lady returning from New York on the return flight of the plane I took on the way here had tested positive. I am heartened



Urging delegates to help shape new INTERPOL initiatives, President KHOO Boon Hui said that tangible results are best achieved when police forces make use of the organization's resources and support.



More than 130 delegates from 49 countries and 10 international organizations are attending the 38th INTERPOL European Conference.

that our resolve to meet has not been swayed by the influenza pandemic, because as we all know, even in such times criminals and terrorists do not cease their operations and their plots. Likewise, it is equally important that our law enforcement agencies continue our work unabated and professionally, while taking appropriate measures to ensure the safety of our fellow citizens.

At this conference, we once again have the opportunity to meet as a region to deliberate the priorities and goals in law enforcement that we would like to achieve collectively in Europe and discuss how INTERPOL can work with you to enhance the effectiveness of your police officers, fighting crime and terrorism in your countries. I would like to make just three points in my opening address.

Firstly, in October last year, when I was elected President, I spoke about the need for continual renewal in order for INTERPOL to remain relevant to your police forces and your officers in today's operating environment. At the same time, the [General Assembly](#) overwhelmingly endorsed the [Global Security Initiative](#) or GSI, a concept that our Secretary General has championed. This is my first Regional Conference since then and I am pleased to inform you that much progress has been made on both fronts.

Within the INTERPOL [General Secretariat](#) (IPSG), a Strategic Planning Group or SPG has been created to facilitate a focused strategic transformation of the organisation. Just two days ago, the Strategic Planning Group held an in-depth dialogue with IPSG staff to formulate a vision, goals, core functions and strategic priorities that will allow the Organisation to rise to the challenges that an increasingly uncertain future may present for the Organisation and for law enforcement agencies around the world. I have heard from Secretary General Noble that this was a very fruitful session. INTERPOL will be better placed to embark on projects relevant to the crime concerns of member countries, and introduce technological improvements to enhance the utility of [INTERPOL's global databases](#). Mr Zaccardelli, who heads the SPG, is scheduled to brief us on this issue just before we adjourn for lunch.

At the same time, GSI has embarked on a 'Cybercrime Initiative' that will focus on raising global capacity of law enforcement in combating [cybercrime](#). The decision to embark on the 'Cybercrime Initiative' was partly motivated by the results of a survey conducted with [National Central Bureaus](#), in which out of 65 responses received, about 75 per cent reported that their police forces had cybercrime units but lacked the capacity to handle high-profile incidents.

You may have already heard about the two major announcements under the Cybercrime Initiative since the General Assembly gave their mandate to the GSI last October. In April 2009, INTERPOL entered into an agreement with Microsoft to make available its Computer Online Forensic Evidence Extractor (COFEE) software tool to law enforcement investigators. Also in April this year, INTERPOL entered into an agreement with University College, Dublin to implement training and academic programmes that will enhance cybercrime investigation and forensic expertise amongst law enforcement agencies of [INTERPOL's 187 member countries](#).

These are just two examples of the progress that the GSI team has achieved so far. The GSI team and High-Tech Crime Sub-Directorate in IPSG are in the process of working out a master implementation plan that will roll out more initiatives in support of the cybercrime strategy.

Secondly, I must also applaud the law enforcement agencies in Europe for being an exemplar of police co-operation, and a model for the rest of the world to emulate. Earlier this month, close co-operation between Swiss and French police in the wake of a jewellery raid in Lausanne, Switzerland, led to the arrest of Nicolai Ivanovic, and Zoran Kostic. Both are suspected of being key members of the '[Pink Panthers](#)' gang suspected to have carried out a EUR 100 million series of jewel robberies over the past 10 years.

INTERPOL facilitates police co-operation by providing the resources and service support that only a global police organization can provide. But it is only when police forces make use of these resources that we achieve tangible results. Take the recent arrest of Rifat Hadziahmetovic from Montenegro, a suspected

member of the 'Pink Panthers' in March this year as an example. Hadziahmetovic, whose identity was initially undetermined, was taken into custody at Larnaca airport in Cyprus when officials discovered that he was travelling on a forged passport.

[Fingerprint](#) checks against INTERPOL's databases by the Cypriot police revealed his true identity – a criminal wanted internationally for suspected involvement in armed robberies and thefts across the world, including Bahrain, Japan, Spain and the United Arab Emirates. If the Cypriot police had not taken the initiative to check the fingerprints of the man arrested for travelling on a forged passport, his true identity may never have been discovered.

I would encourage more law enforcement agencies to put in place standard operating procedures to systematically compare unidentified fingerprints and [DNA](#) profiles taken from crime scenes against INTERPOL's databases. This has proven time and again to be an effective means of producing leads on otherwise unsolved crimes.

Thirdly, I am personally looking forward to the deliberations of this conference where we will learn about more successful operations resulting from excellent police collaboration with and through INTERPOL. I would also urge you to engage in frank discussion, and not hesitate to share your views on new initiatives and what you would like to see accomplished in the future. I am confident that in the very capable hands of the chairman, your Vice President Dr Juergen Stock, much will be achieved.

This conference serves as a very important platform for the exchange of ideas not only between law enforcement agencies, but also with IPSEG. In this way, INTERPOL will be able to better meet your needs and address your concerns. I am eager to meet with each and every one of you over the next few days on both a personal and professional level to hear your views.

In closing, I would like to recognise the active involvement and key contributions of the European members on the [Executive Committee](#): Professor Dr Juergen Stock chairs the Strategic Development Sub-Committee which also includes Professor D. Suleyman Isildar while Mr Petter Dyhre chairs the equally important Finance Sub-Committee.

I would also like to pay tribute to Konstantin Machabey, for his dedicated service and contributions to the Executive Committee since 2006. Konstantin's term as Delegate for Europe on the Executive Committee will come to an end this year and I would like to wish my dear friend well in his future endeavours. I will of course have the opportunity to honour him for his contributions when we meet in October in Singapore for our 78th General Assembly. I welcome all of you to Singapore, another small republic, but with a much shorter history having been founded in 1819.

Besides being small republics, there is one thing that our countries share in common and, if the wikipedia is to be believed, life expectancies in both countries are among the top four in the world and almost similar at 81.89 and 81.88 years. I will have to try to find out why as my first impressions are that we in Singapore live much more stressful lives. I am told that you are the only country entitled to use the term 'Most Serene Republic' which emphasises your sovereignty but I am sure that all of us will agree with me that we only need to look out at the view to understand what 'serene' can also mean. My heartfelt appreciation goes out to our Sammarinese hosts for the excellent conference arrangements in such a splendid setting. I wish you all a fruitful session. Thank you.