

29th ASEANAPOL conference

Opening remarks by Mr. [Khoo Boon Hui](#), INTERPOL president
Hanoi, Vietnam – 13 May 2009
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*The chairman of ASEANAPOL, Commissioner Of Police, Pehin Datu Kerma Setia CP Dato Paduka Seri Zainuddin Bin Jalani, Royal Brunei Police Force,
Our gracious host and Vice-Chairman of ASEANAPOL, Police Lieutenant General Pham Quy Ngo, Director General of General Department of Vietnam Police;
Honourable Heads of Delegation of the 29th ASEANAPOL Conference;
Distinguished representatives of our Dialogue Partners and ASEAN Secretariat;*

Thank you. I am delighted to be here in Hanoi among friends. As you may be aware, I have participated in this forum numerous times as the Commissioner of the Singapore Police Force, fondly remembering the last ASEANAPOL Conference held here in 1999. But I am speaking to you today for the first time in my capacity as President of INTERPOL, on behalf of the Secretary General of INTERPOL, Mr. [Ronald K. Noble](#), who unfortunately could not join us.

I am truly honoured to be entrusted with the responsibility of leading INTERPOL as its President and would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your strong support during my Presidency campaign.

As President of INTERPOL I must congratulate and as Commissioner of Police thank the Royal Malaysia Police and the Indonesian National Police for their efforts in recapturing Singapore's most wanted fugitive Mas Selamat Kastari. This has not only ensured the continued security of the region but also demonstrated to the rest of the world the excellent collaboration among ASEAN Police Forces against crime and terrorism.

ASEAN is widely recognized in the international community as an exemplar of "enlightened regionalism".

What this means for ASEANAPOL is that we all recognise that each of our countries faces distinct crime challenges and policing realities. This diversity is one of our biggest strengths, because we have all developed various areas of expertise and know-how and bring unique perspectives to the table.



His Excellency Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (*seated right to the left of the picture*), in discussion with INTERPOL President Khoo Boon Hui at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi.

But this also means we recognise that we are bound by the common desire to ensure the security of our citizens and countries in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

In other words, we may all have different voices but we speak the same language – the language of cooperation that all police officers understand.

Because of this, it is our responsibility to strive to do everything in our power to make the region more secure but also to contribute meaningfully to global policing efforts. Neither of these goals can be fully achieved alone.

I can tell you from my own experience that it was not until I became involved in INTERPOL's Executive Committee that I came to fully appreciate the inextricable link between any one country's national security and that of its neighbours and countries throughout the world. Let me use the Mas Selamat escape to explain what I mean. During the first day we searched for him in Singapore and sought the assistance of our counterparts in neighbouring Malaysia and Indonesia where we assessed he was most likely to have escaped to. The question then arose as to whether there was a need to inform anyone else and how we should do it. Should we update just the ASEANAPOL database or pass the information about him to our counterparts all over the world through INTERPOL?

We decided to inform INTERPOL of the escape and within hours, INTERPOL issued an Orange Notice. Subsequently, when the international arrest warrant was ready, we upgraded it to a Red Notice. This served a number of purposes. Firstly, it allowed us to draw on the strength of a global network of police to obtain leads and to help us track him down as we could not dismiss the possibility of him surfacing in other parts of the region or indeed anywhere else in the world. Secondly, it also allowed our colleagues around the world to better protect the citizens of their own countries. Thirdly, it allowed us to work more efficiently by using our bilateral and global channels of communication such as the INTERPOL Global Police Communications System I-24/7 as we saw fit. Finally, it also limited his ability to move about the world because the Red Notices act as global tripwires which set off alarms if he attempted to cross them. I was therefore personally not surprised that he was caught so near to Singapore as he must have found it very difficult to relocate himself further.

Furthermore, during times like these of economic and fiscal uncertainty, we must leverage our scarce resources to the maximum advantage and avoid duplication of investigative effort and fiscal waste by cooperating more closely with both regional and international partners like INTERPOL.

In just one example of the type of cooperation that can produce real operational results here – with implications for countries throughout the world – Operation Storm was conducted last year jointly by INTERPOL, the World Health Organization, the World Customs Organization and national authorities in Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. It resulted in almost 30 arrests and the seizures of more than 16 million counterfeit medicines worth millions of US dollars.

Operation Storm also included a training component so that customs, drug regulatory and police officials in the participating countries would be better equipped to identify counterfeits and handle samples in the future.

This capacity-building effort has huge significance for countries in the ASEAN region, some of which are emerging as major centres for the production, distribution and sale of fake medicines. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that as many as 30 per cent of medicines sold in some areas of Southeast



Group photograph with President Nguyen Minh Triet (*front Row, 6th from the left*), Senior Lieutenant-General Le The Tiem, Deputy Minister of Public Security, (*front Row, 5th from the left*), Police Lieutenant General Pham Quy Ngo, Director General of the General Department of Vietnam Police, (*front Row, 4th from the left*), and ASEAN Police Chiefs and Dialogue Partners at the Presidential Palace.

Asia are counterfeit.

Two years ago, ASEANAPOL and INTERPOL signed an historic agreement to enhance information-sharing. The fruit of this effort is the Electronic-ASEANAPOL Database System (e-ADS), which gives instant access to INTERPOL data on wanted and missing persons, stolen motor vehicles, and stolen and lost travel documents to law enforcement officers in the ASEAN region. It provides access to the vital data held in ASEANAPOL's databases to officers working in INTERPOL's National Central Bureaus in its 187 member countries.

In a sign of its continued commitment to the region, INTERPOL assisted in the development of the system and supported the purchase of three new servers to enhance its capacity and accessibility.

Another area where ASEANAPOL can benefit greatly from INTERPOL's tools and services is the implementation of the ASEANAPOL Communication and Co-ordination Protocol for Crisis Management (ACCPCM). The protocol is intended to expedite the dissemination of information and provision of assistance in the event of any large-scale acts of terrorism resulting in mass casualties or the destruction of buildings and infrastructure.

INTERPOL, through its 24-hour Command and Co-ordination Centre at the General Secretariat in Lyon, France, has deployed 46 Incident Response Teams to the sites of natural and manmade disasters throughout the world since 2002, including at least 15 different acts of terrorism. These teams included not only specialised staff from INTERPOL, but also experts drawn from its member countries. Two of the organization's largest deployments have occurred here in Southeast Asia, in Thailand and Indonesia following the tsunami in 2004 and after the ferry disaster last year in Cebu, Philippines.

There will be opportunities for even closer cooperation between ASEANAPOL and INTERPOL after the establishment of the ASEANAPOL Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur next year. Particularly, INTERPOL's Liaison Office in Bangkok (LOBANG) will stand ready to provide whatever support it can, whether participating in working groups, providing training or analysis, or supporting joint operations.

INTERPOL has already seen great results from the strong cooperation between regional police chiefs' bodies in Africa and its Regional Bureaus on the continent, so I encourage all of you to make use of this valuable resource.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to recognise the work of Mr. Mick Keelty, the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, who is with us here today and who will be retiring in September after 35 years of service.

He has contributed substantially to security in the region, not only through his involvement in ASEANAPOL, but also the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Forum, the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation and the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering. For his efforts, he has been awarded the highest policing honours by the presidents of Indonesia, Singapore and Timor-Leste, among other achievements.

Mick has also been a powerful voice for international policing. The AFP participates, along with INTERPOL, in the Virtual Global Taskforce, an international partnership set up to fight online child sexual abuse. Thanks to his efforts, Australia has been heavily and actively involved in global efforts to fight terrorism, organized crime, wildlife trafficking, people smuggling and many other forms of criminality.

A year and a half into his first term as Police Commissioner, he led the police during what is considered one of the darkest chapters in the country's modern history, when 88 Australians were killed in the Bali bombings in 2002.

Mick is the consummate police professional, a devoted leader and my good friend. His absence will be felt deeply, not only here in the Asia-Pacific region but throughout the world. Thank you, Mick, for everything

you have done. I hope you will use this time to finally slow down!

Ladies and gentlemen,

I will leave you with a final thought by Lê Thánh Tông, one of Vietnam's greatest emperors and also a poet: "May we and all our neighbors live at peace."

Mr. Lê also wrote: "In crisis able men reveal themselves." I would, of course, add "women" to that sentence.

Although we have, time and again, demonstrated the skills and capabilities of police forces in the ASEAN region during numerous crises like terrorist attacks, pandemics and natural disasters, I believe it is the everyday work we do to protect our citizens, secure our borders and catch the criminals and terrorists that truly reveals how able we are.

Thank you. I am sure all of us will have a productive conference and on your behalf would like to thank our gracious hosts for bringing us together to this beautiful and historic city of Hanoi.