

20th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference

Hong Kong, China, 5 March 2008

Opening Speech by the Honourable Henry Tang, Acting Chief Executive

Vice-Minister MENG, Secretary General Ronald Noble, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to join you all here today. A very warm welcome to all our guests from overseas.

I am delighted that Hong Kong has been chosen as the venue for the [INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference](#). This is an important event for all members of the INTERPOL family in Asia, especially in this era of globalization when we are all concerned about cross-border crime. Let me assure you that Hong Kong will continue to do all we can to tackle crime at home and beyond our borders.

Last year, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's reunification with our motherland. The unique "One Country, Two Systems" concept for reunification is working well. We continue to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, which includes our separate membership in various international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the World Customs Organisation. INTERPOL Hong Kong, China is a sub-bureau of our National Central Bureau, and continues to work closely with other members around the world. In fact, the hosting of this conference perfectly exemplifies how "One Country, Two Systems" works. Our National Central Bureau is the conference host, while Hong Kong is the host city. This highlights the close relationship and co-operation that we enjoy with our national law enforcement agencies.

As both a major city in China, and an international city, Hong Kong is fully plugged into the global village. Last year, Hong Kong and Cameroon wildlife enforcement agencies received INTERPOL'S Ecomessage Award. The award recognises co-operation, through the Ecomessage system, which helped track down an illegal smuggling ring. The ring was trafficking ivory from Africa to Southeast Asia. This demonstrates clearly the importance of intelligence sharing in these operations.

Nowadays, cross-border crime needs to be tackled by seamless cooperation among law enforcement agencies. Since Hong Kong joined INTERPOL almost half a century ago, our Police Force has worked closely with fellow members all over the world in intelligence exchange, operational support and joint operations. Drugs, organised crime, money laundering, counterfeiting, cyber crime and terrorism are among the key areas we are tackling. Collectively, we are doing a good job, but there is always room for improvement.

Our Police Force makes good use of the opportunity to place officers with the General Secretariat and the Asian Regional Liaison Office of INTERPOL. These placements help broaden the vision and perspectives of our officers on global law enforcement issues. We will continue to foster a closer partnership with INTERPOL Headquarters and fellow INTERPOL members in the years ahead.



Mr Henry Tang.

It takes certainly more than a spectacular skyline and state-of-the-art infrastructure for us to claim ourselves an international centre for business and finance. A tried and trusted legal system, the rule of law underpinned by an independent judiciary, a level playing field for business, a clean and efficient government and a free flow of information are all fundamental elements of our success and attraction. However, we must not miss out good public order. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Police Force, we enjoy a reputation as one of the safest cities in the world. We will continue to work hard to maintain and enhance these competitive advantages.

Ladies and gentlemen, the security capabilities of our Nation will come under the closest scrutiny later this year. In just five months, Beijing will host the 2008 Olympics Games. Here in Hong Kong we have the honour and privilege of staging the Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian events. This is an exciting time for our country, and for people in Hong Kong. It is also an enormous challenge for our law enforcement agencies as we shoulder the duty of looking after the safety of athletes, VIPs, spectators and visitors from around the world. Undoubtedly, we will be co-operating with our law enforcement colleagues throughout the region to make sure everything goes smoothly.

I am sure our fellow INTERPOL colleagues would grab this opportunity to exchange experience in staging world-class events. I hope some of you may even be able to join us for the Olympics. In the meantime, I wish this conference every success and look forward to seeing closer co-operation throughout this region in the fight against crime.

Thank you.