

## 19th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference

Opening remarks of Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia  
Jakarta, 11 April 2006

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,  
Assalmu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,  
President of INTERPOL Mr Jackie Selebi,  
Secretary General of INTERPOL Mr Ronald K. Noble,  
Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome all of you to Jakarta. You have come at the end of a rainy season, but I am sure here you will find that no matter what season you find yourself in, Indonesians will smile at you all year long, because we are naturally happy and friendly people.

Indonesia is truly honoured to host the [19th ICPO-INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference](#). The International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL), with its [184 members](#), has done outstanding work promoting police co-operation across borders and across oceans. Our world is safer thanks to the good work of ICPO.

You have come from many places throughout Asia: from Fiji to India, Uzbekistan to Bhutan, Australia to Japan. But no matter which uniform you wear, you all wear the same badge of honour. And you all have the same commitment to uphold the law and to protect and serve our citizens.

I have nothing but sheer admiration for all of you for the noble service and selfless sacrifice you have rendered to your fellow citizens. We are proud to be with you and we are proud to support you.

For those of you who have not been to Indonesia, let me do my usual sales pitch by telling you that you are in a country that is in the midst of a great transformation.

In 1998, after a severe financial crisis, the historic reformasi movement was set in motion, and Indonesia's political landscape was never the same again.

We went through a turbulent period of democratic transition. After a very difficult political rollercoaster ride, we achieved economic recovery and political stability, and Indonesia has now become the world's third-largest democracy, after India and the US.

The last eight years have been a very difficult process of soul-searching to reinvent Indonesia and to promote greater democracy, security, prosperity and justice for Indonesians. And in this process, the police – the Indonesian police – have been at the forefront of this great enterprise.

The way I see it, the Indonesian police are not just law enforcement people. They are key agents of change. The police are capturing terrorists, arresting corruptors, uncovering drug rings, preventing people smuggling and putting illegal loggers behind bars. And by doing this professionally, they are visibly demonstrating that no one is beyond the reach of the law.

You know, I come from a military background, and there is a saying that 'a nation cannot be great unless it has a great military.' Well, that may be true, but I think you will agree with me if I also say that: 'a nation cannot be great unless it has a great police force.' The people's trust and confidence in the nation's police is usually a good indicator of the people's confidence in the justice and legal system.

Distinguished participants,

This ICPO-INTERPOL conference is a very pertinent forum to enhance international police co-operation and to promote capacity-building for all its members.

What I wish to stress to you this morning is that your work is becoming increasingly critical to national security, international security and, perhaps most importantly to you, human security.

For better or worse, we are facing a new trend where non-traditional threats to security – [terrorism](#), financial crisis, natural disasters, [organized crime](#), infectious diseases – are becoming more pronounced than the so-called traditional threats to security, such as conventional military warfare. Look back at the last decade and you will most probably remember the Asian financial crisis, the September 11 attacks, SARS and avian flu, and the [tsunami](#) as key tragedies in our collective memory.

And if you make a list of all the things that threaten the well-being of our countries and our citizens today, you will find that many of these threats necessitate the involvement of police and law enforcement officials.

Fortunately, compared to military co-operation or intelligence co-operation, police co-operation can usually be done without much political inhibition.

There is therefore much that the world community expects from you to protect them from harm. And there is much that you can do.

Let me highlight several areas where I particularly hope ICPO co-operation can be strengthened.

First is the fight against corruption. I have declared corruption to be public enemy number one and that is why I am particularly glad that your conference this year will discuss, for the first time, how to strengthen co-operation to fight corruption.

Fighting corruption is a long-term effort, and it will require both structural and cultural remedies. Fighting corruption also requires strong top-bottom approach to lead and sustain the campaign. If the top is weak on corruption, the rest of the system will soon enough lose confidence in the battle. You may think I am over-optimistic, but I do believe that corruption can be significantly reversed in one generation. That is what happened in Hong Kong and Singapore.

The police are necessarily at the forefront of this great battle. I am glad to see that Indonesians are now earning the reputation as corruption fighters, as can be seen by the large number of people being investigated and arrested for corrupt practices. The Indonesian police, under the able leadership of General Sutanto, are also cleaning up internally, and I expect this process to continue indefinitely.

The issue of corruption is also usually related to the crime of money laundering. I urge the police of all Asian countries to enhance co-operation in fighting the crime of corruption and money laundering. We should send a signal loud and clear to corruptors everywhere that there is no safe haven anywhere for them to hide their stolen money.

Secondly, I hope to see greater police co-operation in the fight against another public enemy for all: [illicit drugs and narcotics](#).

According to the World Drug Report published by the [United Nations](#), about 200 million people, or 5 per cent of the global population aged 15 to 64, have consumed illicit drugs at least once in the last 12 months. Meanwhile, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that the drug trade totals US\$321 billion, which is slightly larger than Indonesia's GDP. These are very serious statistics.

We cannot let the drug dealers snatch the future of our children. I have seen too many families broken, physically and mentally, by drugs.

A few months ago, the Indonesian police successfully uncovered an international drug ring which was operating one of the largest drugs factories in the region. We are still puzzled as to how they were able to build that drug factory just outside Jakarta without anyone detecting it. In any case, the bust was the product of close co-operation between the Indonesian police and INTERPOL. For the sake of our children, I hope to see many more successful raids in the future.

The third issue that we are counting on from you is the long-term fight against [terrorism](#). I am given to understand that many of the countries that are represented here have experienced terrorist attacks or have had their citizens hurt in foreign terrorist attacks.

Indonesia has suffered from consecutive major terrorist attacks in recent years: the Bali bomb, the [bomb at the Jakarta Marriott](#), the bomb at the Australian Embassy, the second [Bali bomb](#). Indonesia is therefore a frontline state in the fight against terrorism.

Fighting terrorism is not new to us, but what is new is fighting the more sophisticated generation of terrorist groups of today. This requires us to adapt our tactics and methods. The Indonesian police have had considerable success in capturing most of the perpetrators of the Bali bomb, Marriott bomb and Kuningan bomb, and I commend them for that.

But the threat is far from over. Terrorism remains a global, regional and national problem. Because terrorism is a long-term threat, we need to devise co-operation that is equally long term and adaptable.

We must remain vigilant about the security environment that is ahead of us. Many of us probably have won battles against terrorism. But we have not won the war.

For the law enforcement officers who are operating on the ground, counter-terrorism is therefore an evolving science. Because the terrorists are always changing strategy and tactics, there is always something new to learn about them.

In most cases, local knowledge alone is not enough to fight terrorist groups. And in many cases, successes in apprehending terrorists are obtained only by way of co-operation between law enforcement agencies of different nations.

This is why international police co-operation, more than ever, must be an integral part of how each and every nation deals with terrorism.

Your challenge here today is to advance that international co-operation.

And fourth, apart from terrorism, we also need to effectively fight other forms of transnational crimes: illegal logging, illegal fishing, illegal mining, people smuggling, organized crime and cyber crimes, among others. The economic, social and environmental costs of these crimes are, of course, enormous.

These crimes are assuming increasingly transnational character, functioning by way of networks and connections across national borders, and some are becoming even more sophisticated, such as people smuggling and cyber crimes. If we are to defeat them, we also need to intensify co-operation between the police and law enforcement officials across borders, including better sharing of information and intelligence.

We also need to prevent all these different types of criminals from developing an 'alliance,' a tactical marriage of convenience, as has apparently begun to happen in some areas.

These are all daunting tasks. But the future of our nations and the well-being of our citizens depend on you.

We count on you to perform your duty to serve and protect our citizens in the most professional, dedicated and apolitical way.

And most of all, we count on you to put corruptors, drug dealers, terrorists, illegal loggers, people smugglers and all other criminals behind bars.

I wish you all the best in your deliberations. Enjoy the conference. Enjoy Indonesia.

By saying *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*, I declare the 19th ICPO-INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference officially open.

I thank you.

Dr H Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono