

2nd Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy

Opening speech by Secretary General [Ronald K. Noble](#)
Lyon, France 14 November 2005

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

It is my very great pleasure to welcome all of you to Lyon, the home of INTERPOL's headquarters and the site of the Second Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy.

This Congress is co-hosted by INTERPOL and the [World Customs Organization](#). Last year as you know, it was WCO's Secretary General, Michel Danet, and his colleagues at the WCO who were leading the first global conference. It is now our privilege to reciprocate.

Welcome Michel, it is a real pleasure to have a close personal working relationship with you and WCO on this and many other important issues.

I am proud to report that representatives from 66 countries have registered for this significant event, which is evidence of the growing importance of the Global Congress on the intellectual property rights calendar.

I am also delighted that we have with us here today a substantial contingent of colleagues from customs agencies from around the world.

In addition to the WCO, I must emphasise that the World Intellectual Property Organization is also a strong supporter of the Global Congress process, and we are pleased to welcome Mrs Rita Hayes, the Deputy Director General of the [World Intellectual Property Organization](#), to Lyon for her second Global Congress.

The World Customs Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization and INTERPOL are in strong agreement that the protection of intellectual property rights must and should be given a higher priority by policymakers in government, international organizations and law enforcement agencies.

But the real strength behind our efforts comes from the Global Congress Steering Group, which has worked hard to bring together the most knowledgeable and qualified people to discuss the most relevant topics in the area of the protection of intellectual property rights at this Congress.

Let us therefore give a special welcome to Neil, Anne and Guy. The contribution made by your organizations – the Global Business Leaders Alliance against Counterfeiting (GBLAAC), the [International Trademark Association](#) (INTA), the [International Chamber of Commerce](#) and, of course, the other Steering Group organization, the [International Security Management Association](#) (ISMA) – is evidence of our shared desire to make a lasting impact on counterfeiting and piracy.

Finally, let me thank John Newton and all of our colleagues at INTERPOL for the work that they have done to make this [Second Global Congress](#) possible.

At INTERPOL, we believe that we should be measured not just on our desire to work together and pool our respective expertise and resources. We must be able to show you and policymakers at a senior level in

your countries that we are having an impact on counterfeiting. All of our partners will share with you what has been achieved since the first Global Congress.

INTERPOL, for its part, has made real progress since May 2004 by implementing those parts of the Outcomes Statement which applied to us, especially on an operational level.

At INTERPOL, we use the phrase 'IP crime' as a generic term to describe all types of counterfeiting and piracy. The defining characteristic of IP crime for us is the involvement of transnational organized criminals in the manufacture and distribution of counterfeit and pirated goods on an industrialised scale.

As part of the threat assessment process, we were tasked with raising awareness about the extent of the link between IP crime and transnational organized criminals. We have contributed to, and invested resources in, all three regional forums, held in Rome, Shanghai and especially Rio de Janeiro, where we worked closely with the government of Brazil to deliver a high-level South America-wide regional event. We also used the Rio conference to announce the results of the INTERPOL-led 'Operation Jupiter – South America', a subject I will return to in a moment.

A personal responsibility I take very seriously in my role as Secretary General of INTERPOL is to champion the cause of IP crime at a national, regional and global level. It is essential that national police forces engage in combating IP crime. Doing so provides them with opportunities to disrupt the activities of transnational organized criminals that not only manipulate counterfeit and pirated goods to maximise illicit profits, but also trade in many other dangerous illicit commodities. For example, during Operation Jupiter in the Tri-Border area of South America many of the seizures of large consignments of IP crime-related products also contained illegal firearms and illicit drugs.

At a time when chief police officers are focused on terrorism and other serious crimes at a national level, it is important that they not underestimate the damage IP crime does to our economies and the potential threat to public safety that it causes. An encouraging development has been the number of police chiefs in INTERPOL member countries who have acknowledged the importance of IP crime and the growing number of dedicated IP crime units. Examples include Brazil, Latvia and Romania, to name but a few.

However, it is on an operational level that I am particularly proud of INTERPOL and the work of the INTERPOL IP Crime Unit. The Outcomes Statement encouraged us to fully implement the INTERPOL IP Crime Programme, and this we have done. The core objective of the programme was to develop a systematic capability to 'facilitate and co-ordinate' enforcement action against transnational organized criminals involved in IP crime. In 2004, we provided support for INTERPOL member countries on a case-by-case basis as they individually and collectively focused on transnational organized IP crime. We were responding to their requests for assistance and then facilitating joint law enforcement/industry enforcement actions.

INTERPOL is now much more proactive and provides member countries with IP crime leadership and expertise. Operation Jupiter – South America was launched in November 2004 with the support and participation of the national police forces of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Brazil customs also joined us, together with representatives from pharmaceutical, recording, motion picture and tobacco cross-industry representative bodies. At the planning meeting held in Buenos Aires, collectively we prioritised 12 IP crime targets. They were all significant counterfeiting plants or distribution centers. Operations commenced in November 2004 and continued until April 2005.

The Tri-Border area of South America is, to say the least, a challenging area for law enforcement to operate. If Operation Jupiter could be made to work there it could work anywhere. The results were impressive. It was the first time four different industry sectors joined together with representatives of federal police and customs agencies from the three countries to combat IP crime. There were immediate benefits for participating industry sectors. These included the identification of common efficiencies; crime prevention measures; investigation methodologies; and good practice.

Between November 2004 and April 2005, the International Federation for the Recording Industries (IFPI) worked with the federal authorities in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay in conjunction with Operation Jupiter's goals, objectives and timetable. As a result, IFPI was able to file a total of 14 complaints with supporting evidence and five individuals were arrested. Two of the arrests were of Taiwanese nationals with suspected organized crime links.

In Brazil, customs authorities made 36 seizures and detained 79 prisoners for smuggling and counterfeiting offences. The estimated value of the seized contraband/counterfeit goods was approximately 6.2 million reais (US\$3.5 million). Of the 36 seizures, three were specific anti-counterfeiting operations which resulted in 29 prisoners and seizures estimated at 747,000 reais.

Specifically, on the border with Paraguay, Brazil customs seized 2.24 million blank CDs, an increase of 80 per cent over previous levels. The Federal Highway Police also routinely seized bus and truck loads of blank CDs and DVDs in the border area destined to be used for the piracy of optical disks.

In Paraguay, there were seizures of some 8,700 cartons containing over 87 million counterfeit cigarettes. In the port of Asunción, as a result of information from one of the pharmaceutical companies participating in Operation Jupiter, over 5 million counterfeit toothbrushes originating from China were seized.

Operation Jupiter – South America proved that INTERPOL can act as a catalyst for action and secure the support of national police and, in partnership with WCO, customs agencies for combined enforcement action. These operations were dependent upon a willingness by representatives of participating industries to engage in the frank exchange of information with their counterparts in other industry sectors for the common good. The four industry sectors involved in the operation immediately recognised the benefits of doing so and enthusiastically pooled their expertise.

INTERPOL is an international organization and cannot itself make these interventions. Our role is to act as a catalyst by 'facilitating and co-ordinating' them. It was the national law enforcement agencies who actually did the hard work, invested resources and put their people in harm's way to deliver these results. I would like to take this opportunity to publically thank the national police forces and customs authorities of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay for their outstanding contribution to the success of Operation Jupiter – South America.

Insofar as the future is concerned, a second Operation Jupiter, led, facilitated and co-ordinated by the INTERPOL Sub-Regional Bureau in Buenos Aires, is planned to commence in early 2006. We are currently engaged in developing and deploying other confidential IP crime operations in other parts of the world, and the challenge for INTERPOL is to make an even greater operational impact, especially in regions such as Africa.

All IP crime is damaging, but some have the potential to cause serious harm and even death. We are fortunate to have a wealth of noteworthy and respected speakers participating in the second Global Congress. Each will give you their perspective on the problems and identify potential solutions for both the developed and developing world. For example, you will hear how counterfeit pharmaceuticals in Africa and other parts of the world wreak havoc on the health and well-being of many thousands of unfortunate people suffering from a range of life-threatening diseases.

The challenge for INTERPOL now and in the coming months is to develop Operation Jupiter to the stage where we act as a catalyst for significant interventions in the production and distribution of destructive commodities such as counterfeit anti-malarial drugs. This will not be easy because often the source or sources of these counterfeits is in another country or even continent.

Few, if any, other organizations have the ability to do this. INTERPOL has proven itself able to deliver significant results in South America. I am looking forward to coming to the third Global Congress to report further progress INTERPOL and its member countries will have made taking the fight to transnational organized criminals involved in a wide variety of IP crime.

It just remains for me to hope you enjoy your stay in Lyon. Most importantly, enjoy the Second Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy. I encourage you to make your own contribution to our collective efforts to identify and develop concrete, tangible recommendations that will be useful to national governments and the business sector.

Thank you.