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Welcome speech

by

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Ministerial meeting

***“CHALLENGES FOR POLICE FACING CONTEMPORARY CRIMINAL
VIOLENCE”***

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Mr Secretary General, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to wish you a very warm welcome you to this ministerial meeting which precedes the 81st session of the INTERPOL General Assembly.

In order to underscore the political dimension of this international event, we wished to open the 81st General Assembly session with a ministerial summit to bring together the highest-level officials responsible for security matters to examine the most current security issues and those aspects of police work of common interest.

The battle being waged by States against crime is complicated by an imbalance of which we are all aware: the sovereignty of States stops at their national borders, but these borders present no obstacle to criminals. In the current context of intense globalization, this imbalance is far from negligible: in fact, crime can spread with great ease beyond national borders, and can seek out new business opportunities wherever they may be and develop new tactics to evade the efforts of law enforcement services.

This is why international cooperation in matters of security is essential.

INTERPOL, given the quality of its leadership, its expertise, its network of contact points and its sophisticated IT support tools, is therefore well positioned to face the global challenges of crime and to promote international police cooperation.

INTERPOL has achieved remarkable results in dismantling criminal organizations, and it has developed operational tools of great importance for police cooperation.

Now, the efforts deployed and INTERPOL's strengths must be directed towards even more ambitious goals.

I am thinking in particular of the telematics and telecommunications infrastructures which provide the foundations for INTERPOL's action, and the technical communications platforms which allow the system's users to share information in the context of investigations via the *I-24/7 network* – an essential component and one to which Italy makes a significant contribution.

Tools such as these have become vital to the work of the police. We must help INTERPOL to enhance their effectiveness, and ensure that the police on the ground can access them more easily.

The importance of INTERPOL's databases is just as vital, as shown by the fact that, over the past year, Member States made nearly a billion searches on them.

It is essential to have accurate and reliable information in real time to be able to track down and arrest criminals and fugitives. It is therefore in everyone's interest for INTERPOL to continue to develop its databases and to make them more accessible to investigators.

Another strategic priority which must be supported is police capacity building and training. It is important to train police professionals to use INTERPOL's instruments and services, but also to share new knowledge in order to face up to the changing nature of crime threats.

INTERPOL combines its own expertise with the cutting-edge resources of the international police community. This is a virtuous alliance which must be sustained and developed, especially for the benefit of developing countries.

Going further, I believe it is important for INTERPOL to enhance its interaction with the other international organizations working in the different areas of law enforcement, particularly in the strategic areas of combating the traffic in drugs and human beings, child abuse, illegal immigration and terrorism, without forgetting the new forms of crime which are causing ever greater concern.

INTERPOL has been in existence for nearly 90 years. Over its long life, the world, crime and the Organization itself have undergone profound changes.

Only one thing has not changed: INTERPOL remains the indefatigable engine for international police cooperation.

This is a role which we have come together today to strengthen, in a collective and practical way. We are convinced that international cooperation between police forces is the only way to defend our citizens effectively against the ever-more numerous and aggressive transnational threats which, these days, States alone are unable to counter.