



Directional Statement

by
INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock

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Mr President,
Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,
Good morning, Bonjour, Buenos dias, As-Salaam-Alaikum.

In the year 1892, an Argentine policeman called Eduardo Alvarez is called to a crime scene.
Two children had been stabbed to death in their beds. Their mother barely survived the assault, as her throat had been cut open.
A single bloodied fingerprint was found on a wooden door.
That fingerprint proved decisive in refuting the mother's testimony.
The innocent put behind bars in her place, freed. She confessed to the crime and was convicted.
Eduardo Alvarez had been trained by Juan Vucetich, a Croatian immigrant and Argentine police official who had pioneered the use of dactyloscopy.
Fingerprints had for the first time brought a criminal to justice.

Twenty years later, in 1910, a mutilated body is found in London.
The victim's husband had gone missing. With his mistress, Dr Hawley Harvey Crippen had fled to Brussels. They had then boarded a steamship bound for Canada.
The ship's captain recognized Dr Crippen from the newspaper.
He telegraphed the British authorities - just a few minutes before the ship went out of range.
The race ended when Dr Crippen was handcuffed - once the ship docked at its destination, across the Atlantic.
For the first time, wireless communication was used to track and arrest a criminal who was crossing borders.

Progress was on the march.
The world was moving. Faster and faster. And so were criminals.
Distances became ever shorter. Communications were being transformed.
Criminal policing was also evolving.
Yet one piece was still missing. A piece essential for the emergence of modern policing as we know it.
In an era of political strife. Of intense geopolitical competition. Of a world still divided.
...An idea...
...A revolutionary idea.
In the words of Johannes Schober, it was "A NEW cultural idea".
The idea "of an international police force uniting peoples and serving all peoples".

Johannes Schober was then President of the Vienna Police. He would take this idea to the world.
To representatives gathering from every continent
Your predecessors.
Here in Vienna, one hundred years ago.
The vision was coming to life. That police had one color. One flag. One mission.
The International Criminal Police Commission was born.
To our founders, it did not matter whether this new idea was possible.
Because - it was necessary.
And above all, in order to be successful, it had to be neutral, because the world was fragmented.
Only five years from the end of World War I.
One hundred years on, here we stand, a single, global law enforcement organization.

We stand at 100 years of evolution. Of change. And of opportunities, for those who dared to seize them.
Time is unkind to those who cannot adapt.
This is why, turning 100, INTERPOL is still new.
Driven by the will to identify new solutions for police.

Experimenting, and field-testing new capabilities to connect police across borders.
A single, global network.
With no single nation owning it or controlling it.
And with a single set of rules.
A simple, yet radical concept, that keeps guiding us as we press ahead.

I-24/7 is now on the brink of a technological leap forward.
Our new Biometric Hub is bringing fast and automatic biometric matching to your investigations.
Earlier this month, we saw it at play. Hiding in plain sight among migrants traveling across the Balkans, a wanted smuggler from North Africa was arrested, after the biometrics shared by Bosnian authorities through the Hub led to his identification in under two hours.
Real-time biometric capabilities are set to start reaching the frontlines next year.

This is the vision driving the I-CORE Programme. And I wish to thank all the member countries currently contributing to our vision with financial support and expertise.
This ambition echoes INTERPOL's commitment to innovation, hard-coded into INTERPOL's DNA.
And this commitment took life in glass and steel when we inaugurated the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore in 2014.

Today, IGCI hosts multiple innovation labs. Scanning the horizon, new threats, and new opportunities for police.
Because it is not about embracing novelty for the mere sake of it.
It is about getting the basics right - and adding top-end solutions to them.
Remember the launch of INTERPOL's Translation as a Service in 2017.
For the first time, INTERPOL put artificial intelligence and neural networks to the service of our membership.
It will not be the last – as we work to bring artificial intelligence to the service of the global fight against child sexual exploitation and abuse; and as we help police navigate the opportunities artificial intelligence provides, through the INTERPOL Responsible AI Lab.

Then in 2021, INTERPOL went mobile.
The ID ART app saw more than 700,000 interactions with public users, and stolen cultural heritage recovered as a result.

Within weeks, we deployed the first Interpol Mobile Device. Access to key INTERPOL databases became possible from anywhere, and at any time.
Bringing global law enforcement one decisive step closer to the frontlines.
Yet it is not only about seeking out new products. But promoting a culture of innovation, including by not only supporting, but embracing diversity within our ranks.
To make us bolder, to keep exploring how we can change, how we can evolve, how we can push ourselves further.
It is about what is important to you. What your operating landscape demands. What your priorities, and what your officers, demand.
It is about relevance. If we're not moving forward, we are falling behind.

This also applies to our rules - which must evolve with our environment. And so they do, thanks to your input into our working groups, leading to some key decisions in this session.
Because technology is nothing less than the backbone of our operational support – which needs to remain fast, seamless, effective.
Because it is necessary.
Because INTERPOL is necessary.

When a European fugitive is arrested in Chile, wanted in connection to a massive explosion in Beirut.
When Australian information leads to children being rescued in Colombia from their abusers.
When a North African terrorist fighter who fought with ISIS is intercepted in Bulgaria, traveling with fraudulent documents.
When the UAE, Sudan, Ethiopia and the Netherlands join forces to arrest the kingpin of a human trafficking ring.
This is when bridges need to be built. When data must flow, and fast.

The International Criminal Police Commission was founded at a time when the threat came from a counterfeiter.
A murderer. A pickpocket. An escapee.
We are now in an age of large-scale, flexible criminal networks.
Grown from local street gangs and family ties into empires of crime. Spanning across cities, across countries, and ultimately, across continents.
This is why, in today's world, INTERPOL is so necessary.
To send once again one message: that hiding across the globe offers no protection.

In West Africa, we saw the power of merging policing, operational support and global reach.
When Cote d'Ivoire authorities decided to go further than just another cocaine seizure.
They decided to see how far that shipment would take them. They decided to go global. So they reached out to INTERPOL.
INTERPOL immediately deployed an operational support team with experts in drugs and crime analysis from three regions.

This time around, our experts were supported by our new INSIGHT analytical platform, its processing power, and the restricted sharing environment it enabled.
The cross-regional Task Force built on that data led to four arrests in the Americas and five in Europe.
But perhaps the most notable outcome, was the arrest of a High Value 'Ndrangheta Target located in Lebanon, thanks to the expertise and intelligence available in our I-CAN project.

This is the present, and the future of INTERPOL.
We will keep hosting global databases.
We will keep building capacity for police.
And then we will go further.
We have proven that live investigative data can be exploited effectively and securely through our global platform.
We have proven that our global reach can be laser-focused on a single case, group or corridor, and make a difference for your case officers.
These are the results we should be proud of.
And we should remember why they are possible.

The impetus for the International Criminal Police Commission came from representatives from 20 countries.
Today, you are 196.
Every country, every node, every message makes us collectively stronger. This is at the heart of project Blue Pacific which will see enhanced connectivity in the South Pacific with the support of Australia, New Zealand and the UK.
Every additional agency that connects to our Child Sexual Exploitation database adds an extra chance to save a child's life.
Every piece of content uploaded into our RELIEF database connects another dot, to map the networks we are looking to disrupt – and that are getting so big, yet so elusive.

The reality is that bilateral cooperation is not enough.

Regional cooperation is not enough.

But combine them with global reach – and we will have built the most powerful global security architecture.

This is why INTERPOL called to the table representatives from regional law enforcement and security organizations to a Dialogue in recent years.

To embrace the new era of regional police cooperation.

To reap the benefits of an increasingly rich data landscape, while mitigating the risk of vital intelligence falling through the gaps.

Because the global organized criminal networks we face are not bound to regional lines or geopolitical affinities.

Several Member Countries have approached INTERPOL to map organized crime groups in all their global ramifications. As we move ahead, know that these mapping exercises will hinge on steady information flows from your agencies.

So we may create a comprehensive situational picture that will feed into targeted international operations.

We cannot push against global threats without a global response.

We cannot ignore that we live in an increasingly fragmented world.

But we cannot let this recreate the barriers to cooperation that we have worked so hard to overcome.

This is why, as we contemplate our Vision for 2030, INTERPOL is compelled to serve as an orchestrator. To bring together the diversity and the complexity of our global security architecture.

Because INTERPOL is neutral.

It is the very same neutrality that carried us throughout the decades.

It is the core principle of our Organization.

One we cannot, and will not compromise on.

One without which INTERPOL would not exist today.

This is a principle we must observe in everything we do – especially in the processing of data.

This is why INTERPOL created the Notices and Diffusions Task Force in 2016 – to ensure quality and legal compliance of notices and diffusions with our rules.

And why the CCF Statute was reformed– leading the path to its recognition as an effective remedy mechanism for individuals affected by our data processing.

Our rules are the armor underneath, for our operations to succeed, no matter the tensions out there.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

Neutrality gives us the very common ground that criminals hope we can never find.

As Johannes Schober said in 1923; *“The objective that we are pursuing, is devoid of all political aims”.*
“We are addressing ourselves solely to the common enemy of all human society, the criminal of general law.”

That is how we unite, so we may protect those we swore to protect. So we may serve those we pledged to serve. So we can share what made us police.

To accomplish the mission. Whatever the danger.

We know that mission is far from over.

Too many continue to suffer every day.

Too many lives are lost every day.

To terror attacks, to organized crime, and to the violence that spares no part of the world.

A world that seems more dangerous to those we serve. It certainly is more fragmented.

As a result, our neutrality will be tested. Our unity will be challenged.

At a time when we need to build bridges, now more than ever.

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said, “We need a coalition of the world.”

For police, that coalition was built 100 years ago. Today, it keeps fighting the enemies of justice – no matter where they hide.

For INTERPOL, it is a mission. As it is a privilege.

To stand alongside your officers on the frontlines. And to carry your voice.

A neutral voice. A global voice of police - to be heard at the United Nations, and key international fora, from the G7, to the G20, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the African Union, the European Union, the Arab Interior Ministers Council and beyond.

A voice that will be especially crucial in the face of heightened criminal threats – which, beyond public safety, threaten economic prospects, threaten the rule of law, and threaten the very foundations on which governance structures are built.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

Let me extend INTERPOL’s gratitude to our Austrian hosts, for welcoming us – once again – to their magnificent capital of Vienna, to honor the birth of our Organization.

One hundred years on, it is with immense gratitude that I address you.

For the work of the women and men of the General Secretariat, across every duty station, from El Salvador to Singapore.

For the work of the National Central Bureaus connecting our unique global network.

And for your work. As members of the Organization. And as police.

For taking on the mantle of those who came before you. And blazing the trail your successors will one day walk.

Thank you for your faith in our mission. Thank you for your belief in the fight for justice. Thank you for your contribution to making the world safer.

There is much we have accomplished together. More than a celebration, this is an opportunity to remember why we work for our mission.

To remember why we chose cooperation, over isolation.

And how the past can serve to light up the future – towards another hundred years.

Thank you. Merci. Gracias. Shukran.