

Third Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy

Geneva, 30-31 January 2007

Speech by Interpol Secretary General Ronald K. Noble

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues from partner international organizations, NGOs and the private sector,

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you for this Third Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy.

First of all, I would like to thank our colleagues from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for supporting and hosting this congress here in Geneva, as well as the Global Congress Steering Group for organizing this important event. I would also like to thank the World Customs Organization (WCO) for its active support. For many years now, our three organizations have joined forces in fighting counterfeiting and piracy, and I would like to take this opportunity to underline how valuable this partnership is for Interpol and how it has enabled us to shape ever-more coherent and effective strategies. We are gathered now to bring them a step further.

But we are not alone in this fight. One crucial aspect of our action against counterfeiting and piracy is our fruitful partnership with the business community. Together, we strive to eradicate counterfeiting and piracy, because this form of crime – to which we generally refer to at Interpol as ‘intellectual property crime’ or ‘IP crime’ – is not mere petty crime.

Law enforcement now recognizes IP crime as a serious threat that requires the urgent attention of the international police community. As with all new crime phenomena, it took time to overcome the obstacles brought about by the lack of awareness, but I am confident that we are now dealing with the question of ‘*How* should law enforcement combat counterfeiting and piracy most effectively?’, and no longer with the question of ‘*Why* should law enforcement do this?’

This is the third time already since May 2004 that we gather to discuss international co-ordination and co-operation in fighting counterfeiting and piracy.

Today, I will focus on three very important initiatives which we believe will go a long way in fighting IP crime.

I. Database on International Intellectual Property Crime (DIIP)

The first initiative concerns data collection and exchange.

The collection and exchange of information is a key element for law enforcement in fighting IP crime. This is why Interpol collects operational information from law enforcement agencies worldwide and makes it available to investigators everywhere in the world through its global police communications system called I-24/7.

Although storing information about IP crime in the Interpol Criminal Information System and making it available to law enforcement worldwide is indeed useful for international investigations, we thought we could go further in facilitating the exchange of information on IP crime. This is why we are currently working on the development of a new Interpol global database called the Database on International Intellectual Property Crime (DIIP).

By devoting a database to IP crime-related information and, I should say, by creating the first global database devoted to IP crime, Interpol will send a clear message to law enforcement worldwide that IP crime is an important form of crime that requires permanent international co-operation.

This new global police tool will help Interpol gather more information on IP crime and will allow investigators to gain easier and quicker access to the information stored.

But more than that, this database will help Interpol develop even closer co-operation with the business sector in fighting IP crime by allowing the inclusion of data originating from the brand holders. Until this day, all information concerning IP crime contained in our database is exclusively collected from law enforcement agencies. However, this approach fails to take into account the wealth of specialized knowledge and expertise available in the private sector, which is vital for police to effectively combat counterfeiting and piracy.

The new Interpol global database, by allowing the inclusion of data originating from the private sector but yet granting access only to law enforcement agencies, will facilitate the exchange of international intelligence on IP crime and help law enforcement agencies fight IP crime worldwide.

It will also enable Interpol to conduct finer analysis of patterns and trends, in particular for the tracing of trafficking routes. Furthermore, all entries in the database will automatically trigger queries of other Interpol databases, such as the money laundering database, allowing for data matching that will enhance the information's operational value and feed into Interpol's criminal intelligence reports.

II. WHO's International Medical Product Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT)

The second initiative is about global co-operation in fighting counterfeit pharmaceuticals.

Fake drugs kill thousands of people each year.

And this is no small business: according to the World Health Organization, fake drugs represent as much as 30% of all drugs sold in some developing countries.

Interpol has initiated an important co-operation effort with the World Health Organization through the recently-created International Medical Product Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce, or IMPACT. This is a partnership comprised of all of the major anti-counterfeiting players and aimed at building co-ordinated networks across and between countries in order to halt the production, trading and selling of fake medicines around the globe.

In the framework of IMPACT, Interpol will carry out what we call 'Operation Jupiter', which aims to facilitate and co-ordinate international operations to fight IP crime by involving all relevant stakeholders. The first Operation Jupiter was carried out in the very sensitive Tri-border area of Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil between November 2004 and April 2005. This Interpol operation allowed for co-ordination between law enforcement and customs in the concerned countries, as well as with cross-industry representatives, and led to significant disruption in the activities of organized criminals involved in the transnational counterfeiting of pharmaceuticals, CDs, DVDs and tobacco products. A second operation was conducted in the past months in the same region and brought about outstanding results, including a number of important arrests and the issue of eight Red Notices, which are Interpol's international wanted persons notices. Finally, the third Operation Jupiter currently ongoing in Southeast Asia aims to dismantle a number of factories producing counterfeit pharmaceuticals and disrupt the supply and distribution channels in the whole region.

This is the first time that law enforcement is teaming up with scientists, pharmaceutical experts and international organizations in this type of anti-counterfeiting operation.

III. **IP crime and Global Anti-Crime Centers**

Finally, I would like to take a few minutes to tell you about one of Interpol's most ambitious projects. Interpol's General Assembly has recently given its agreement for the creation of Global Anti-Crime Centers in line with the organization's five main crime areas. The concept behind these Global Anti-Crime Centers is not to simply add resources to existing programmes, but to develop whole centers dedicated to a certain crime area and which are meant to become global hubs for intelligence, data collection and analysis, operational co-ordination and training.

One of those centers will focus on IP crime. The main advantage that the Global Anti-Crime Centers will have in comparison to Interpol's current working environment is their openness. The centers are conceived as hubs because, although their core will be composed of permanent teams of specialized Interpol officers, these officers will work in co-operation with a flow of police officers from Interpol member countries who will come on short-term assignments to work within a certain centre. By using a centre's resources, visiting officers will at the same time bring their own expertise and knowledge and further develop operational working relationships.

This will significantly enhance the centre's operational capacity and expertise:

Operational capacity: A much larger number of police officers will be working on and receiving training in IP crime *from a global perspective*. Knowing that counterfeiting and piracy are by nature transnational phenomena, this will significantly impact the capacity of national police forces to launch joint operations against international crime groups involved in counterfeiting and piracy.

Expertise: the intake of expertise from the high number of visiting officers will feed into what is likely to become the largest pool of law enforcement knowledge in the area of IP crime in the world.

But there is yet one obstacle to be overcome before we can put this idea into practice: financial support.

This centre will bring significant value to the global effort to fight counterfeiting and piracy. That is why I am calling on you today, and especially on our partners from the private sector, to support this important Interpol initiative.

Finally, before we start working today, I would like to call on all of you to bear in mind that our unity is our greatest strength and that we shall not be successful without each other's active support.

I wish you a very good congress.

Thank you very much.