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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
Honourable Kim Jong Yang, President of INTERPOL
Excellency Jürgen Stock, Secretary General INTERPOL
Members of the INTERPOL Executive Committee
Distinguished Heads of Delegations
Dear Invited Guests and INTERPOL Partners
Executive Director of AFRIPOL
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor and privilege for me to deliver the keynote address, at this 88th General Assembly of INTERPOL. I specifically wish to express the gratitude of the Chairperson Moussa Faki and that of my own to the Secretary General of INTERPOL, Dr. Jürgen Stock, for inviting the African Union to deliver this address to this august Assembly.

Allow me Mr. President of INTERPOL to congratulate you for your able and competent chairmanship of this conference. At the outset, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Chile for the warm welcome and hospitality that my delegation and I have received, and that we are all enjoying. The offer by Chile to host the 88th INTERPOL General Assembly is a demonstration of the commitment of the Government to contribute to world stability and harmonious responses to challenges at hand.

Let me renew my gratitude to Secretary General Jurgen for his commitment to the partnership with AU and AFRIPOL. We in Africa value his leadership and support his action to adapt INTERPOL to the everchanging international environment and challenges at hand we firmly support the continuation of your efforts in the years to come and indeed you can count on us.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au côté des chefs de police africains présents en force ici, je souhaite vous dire que l’Afrique est en mouvement pour prendre en charge son destin. C’est une Afrique déterminée à taire les armes, une Afrique qui promeut ses propres solutions aux problèmes du continent comme en témoignent les accords de paix de Bangui en février 2019 et celui d’Aout dernier à Khartoum, une Afrique décidée à s’attaquer aux causes profondes des crises sur lesquelles prospère le crime organisé, le narcotrafic et la traite des êtres humains.

Notre réponse est certes sécuritaire mais comprend également le développement économique et social. Chaque jour, vos collègues au Sahel, dans la région du Lac Tchad, en Somalie notamment assumment leur responsabilité de protéger les citoyens du terrorisme et du
crime organisé avec bravoure et, souvent, consentent au sacrifice suprême. Je m’associe à l’hommage rendu ce matin à tous les policiers et agents de sécurité tombés au champ d’honneur.

C’est donc une Afrique résolue à mettre en œuvre sa vision 2063 avec une pleine intégration des femmes et des jeunes, l’approfondissement de la démocratie, le plein respect des droits de l’homme. Partout le maitre mot est dialogue et résolution pacifique des conflits comme vient de le consacrer le prix Nobel de la paix 2019 pour le Premier Ministre Abiy Ahmed de l’Éthiopie.

Soyez donc assurés de l’engagement de l’Afrique pour consacrer un monde meilleur, une vie sereine pour nos citoyens et une prospérité partagée pour l’humanité.

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Transnational organized crime and the threat of terrorism continue to put serious risks at national and global peace, security, stability and development. That is why we have no other choice than continue to exert efforts towards countering the growth and impact of organized crime.

Indeed, for decades, criminals and their networks have engaged in illicit activities like trafficking in drug, arms, humans, wildlife products, contraband; money laundering, piracy and armed robbery in the high seas, and theft and illegal exploitation of mineral and other natural resources cross borders. Criminals have continued to take advantage of new technologies and communication systems intended to improve the livelihoods of our society, to adapt and revitalize their criminal activities. The dynamism of these criminal networks has resulted into new or emerging forms of crime.

Criminal groups also continue to form multinational alliances to broaden their scope and reach, often operating across vast geographic areas, especially in those jurisdictions with weak criminal justice and law enforcement institutions. In the African continent, it is mainly countries in or emerging out of conflict that continue to experience heightened prevalence of organized crime. This scenario is not unique to Africa, but applies globally.

Terrorism and violent extremism are also serious threats that Africa and the world is facing. The international response to terrorism, including the recent global response to the so-called Islamic State, has remained largely specific to the most affected regions. However, terrorism is fundamentally international with terrorist groups finding safe havens in different parts of the world, while using some areas as launch pads to plan and attack or to raise illicit funding. This has been the case with the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters. The technical skills that returning and relocating foreign fighters have, for instance, brought to the African
continent has been responsible for increased lethality in recent terrorist attacks in the continent, and a rhetoric that inflames local grievances.

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The situation in Africa is a source of great concern. The Sahel region, for instance, is reeling from the activities of these groups. They are engaged in arms trafficking, human trafficking and smuggling, kidnap for ransom, and smuggling counterfeit goods and other contraband. These groups are also disrupting legitimate trade by taxing traders that transit through territories under their control. The proceeds from these activities only serve to sustain the terrorist and criminal activities of these groups.

Africa is also experiencing local conflicts and other forms of communal violence manipulated by armed terrorists and extremist groups for their own interests.

It is for these reasons that the Third AFRIPOL General Assembly, that was just concluded, 2-3 October 2019, analyzed the crime situation in Africa and emphasized on cooperation among the police agencies, as key to the success in countering transnational organized crime and terrorism. The Assembly also called for enhanced cooperation between the police agencies and the Internet Service Providers in combating cybercrime. Furthermore, the Assembly, strongly, recommended need to invest more to control the vast porous borders in the continent, including through joint cross border exercises.

I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Secretary General of INTERPOL, Dr. Stock and the African police chiefs for taken part in the Third AFRIPOL General Assembly and making concrete inputs to strengthen the efforts of AFRIPOL to implement its mandate.

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

As part of the efforts to fight transnational organized crime in all its forms, and terrorism, the African Union and INTERPOL are implementing a longstanding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that provides for an appropriate framework that enables the parties to facilitate and coordinate cooperation between them in areas of mutual interest.

Within the framework of the MOU, INTERPOL, in 2016, opened a special representation office to the African Union. This has enabled closer ties between the two institutions. In this
regard, I wish to thank the 87th INTERPOL General Assembly for approving the signing of a cooperation agreement between INTERPOL and the African Union on cooperation with AFRIPOL. On 15th January 2019, Mr Stock and I signed the cooperation agreement on behalf of the two institutions. This has provided an institutional mechanism that has enabled the extension of INTERPOL’s I-24/7 police communication system. It will also enable AFRIPOL to access INTERPOL’s various databases. On the other hand, the data that will be generated under AFRIPOL’s African Police Communication System (AFSECOM) will be available to INTERPOL, and the interoperability of the two systems is provided for. It is expected that all these efforts will ensure enhanced coordination between AFRIPOL and INTERPOL in the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism.

AFRIPOL will also work with INTERPOL to develop specific training to enhance capacity of African police agencies in the various areas of need. Capacity building, therefore, remains a key area of focus for INTERPOL, AFRIPOL, and other police cooperation organizations should work closely to provide generic and tailor-made trainings in a coordinated manner.

**Excellencies**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

All the above shows that more needs to be done on the response side. As we continue to meet as police and law enforcement agencies, there is need for ever deeper thinking and strategizing on how best to outwit these criminal and terrorist networks. Undoubtedly, developing better knowledge and understanding on the criminal and terrorist groups networks, their operations, and astonishing resilience is a critical starting point. This should remain one of our key strategies.

Certainly, the only viable response to transnational organized crime and threat of terrorism is an equally dynamic, innovative and cooperative police that constantly reviews, updates and revises the strategies it employs to counter such a dynamic crime environment.

On its part, the African Union remains committed to working closely with INTERPOL and the international partners, in building the capacities of the police agencies in order to realize effective prevention and combating of transnational organized crime and terrorism.

In concluding, **Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to reiterate that cooperation in identifying, disrupting and dismantling transnational organized crime groups by pooling resources, sharing expertise, and learning from the successes and challenges of each other is essential to effectively combating transnational organized crime. I encourage you to continue actively participating in the various fora in this regard.

La paix et la sécurité sont indivisibles, dès lors osons donner à la coopération et au partenariat une impulsion à la hauteur des défis qui nous assaillent et osons répondre à la
globalisation que nous imposent les criminels par leurs moyens et réseaux qui nécessitent de notre part des actions communes plus solidaire.

نشكر أنتربول على إعطائنا هذه الفرصة ونتطلع إلى نتائج عملية للدورة.

Je souhaite un franc succès à vos missions.

Thank you for your kind attention.