

Building a global learning community – an Interpol perspective

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I. Introduction

I am delighted to be here with you today. The training of law enforcement is a subject very close to my heart.

I have witnessed first-hand the importance of training throughout my career. As a young 19 year-old police officer in Hesse, I relied on what I was taught in my training in order to uphold the law and preserve the order in my community. As an aside: an important part of my basic and advanced training at that time was using a mechanical typewriter — some of the younger participants among us might only know of these from museums!

Much later, as President of the University of Applied Police Science in Saxony-Anhalt, I saw the value we added in preparing our students for management positions in the police, and providing research into police-related topics. Some of these topics appear very academic from today's point of view — such as the outsourcing of training, the freedom of police-related internal research, and other such issues.

Now, as Secretary General of Interpol, I have a much broader and more diverse view of the kinds of issues involved in police training around the world. As a result, I am more convinced than ever that training and capacity building must be at the vanguard of policing, so that we can respond to the complex threat landscape we face today.

I am therefore grateful to CEPOL — with whom we are proud to partner on many key initiatives — and the National University for Public Service, for organising

this important conference for the thirteenth time, and convening here so many leading figures in the field of police education, research, and training.

For my part, I would like to share with you Interpol's objectives; its perspective; and its contributions, as a global organisation, as we work to build an international learning community.

II. Interpol's position and objectives

While the vast majority of police training is run by and for national authorities, it is Interpol's objective to provide and facilitate specialised training for global law enforcement in all 190 of our member countries.

Capacity building and training is fundamental to Interpol's mission to enhance cooperation and innovation on police and security matters. It is one of the five key objectives in our new strategic framework, which will be approved at our upcoming General Assembly. It is a transversal activity across all of our crime areas, and within our three global programmes: Organised and Emerging Crime, Counter-Terrorism, and Cybercrime.

The present security threat landscape is complex, globalised, and quickly-evolving. To assist our membership in meeting these new trends and challenges head-on, Interpol strives to continually improve our training delivery.

We endeavour first of all to meet the existing needs of our member countries, which are many and varied. We serve those with state-of-the-art equipment, just like

those persevering through electricity cuts. Those with stable economies and reputed academies, and those still struggling to recover from conflict. We tailor our training to take into account these disparities, and target their respective requirements.

In addition, we want to ensure that our members have a baseline knowledge and capacity for international police cooperation. There is a strong need for a more international dimension to national police services, and we seek to maximise their use of Interpol's global policing capabilities. National security is increasingly built on external issues.

Finally, we aim to anticipate what our member countries' requirements may be in the long-term and near future, so that their officers are well-equipped to deal with emerging crime challenges. Here, training acts as a vital form of foresight and preparation.

III. Interpol's perspective

It is impossible to achieve these ambitious objectives by simply repeating what has been done before; instead we must look forward to new horizons and possibilities. We have to take advantage of new technologies, embrace new applications, and take the advice of researchers and experts.

As Head of the German Bundeskriminalamt's Institute of Law Enforcement Studies and Training, I oversaw the linkage of research to the implementation of new methods and concepts in police work. At Interpol, we have also chosen to focus on promoting innovation in all aspects of our training:

In our processes, by enhancing forward-looking internal training policies and procedures, as well as working with our members to set common law enforcement standards, and promote harmonisation. For example, we will begin implementing a recommendation to establish a standard on digital forensics, which was made by member countries as part of our Interpol 2020 reform process.

We try to innovate in our methods, by using new technologies — such as in distance learning and mobile classrooms, and adapting new models — like our blended learning courses which incorporate an operational element. One example is the training component of the

three-year EU-ASEAN programme, which is funded by the EU and implemented by Interpol. The border management training includes operational activities at regional transit hubs in the ASEAN community, so that new skills can be applied immediately to real-life scenarios.

We also try to innovate in the subject matter of our training programmes, which are often specialist and cutting-edge. For example, earlier this year, in partnership with experts from the private sector, we created our very own private Darknet network, to train investigators on the practical tools and platforms increasingly involved in criminal enterprises — both online and offline.

In the participants we reach out to, who are no longer limited to the traditional audiences at our National Central Bureaus, but from a wider and more inclusive law enforcement community. In building bridges with new entities, we have also provided pre-deployment training to the military in evidence collection and preservation. This kind of hybrid model, which encompasses the conflict zone as well as police frontlines, is ever more applicable in domains such as counter-terrorism.

IV. Interpol's contribution: challenges and initiatives

This progressive approach underpinned our decision to locate our Capacity Building and Training teams within the Interpol Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore. It is also clearly visible throughout our four-year Capacity Building and Training Strategy, which assesses the current environment and future trends, and sets out initiatives to undertake in response. I shall briefly touch on three of these:

First — from our unique position as the world's largest international police organisation, it behoves us to share our view of the global law enforcement training landscape. This includes knowing where resources should be most effectively deployed, what the priority crime areas are for each country and region, and which institutions are providing which kinds of training. In other words, we need to map the landscape, before we navigate it.

Interpol seeks to provide opportunities for training providers and recipients to build contact networks and exchange information about ongoing training in-

initiatives. Our biennial Police Training Symposium is an opportunity to undertake this type of global gap analysis, and make plans based on the results.

We are committed to regular discussions with our member countries to understand their views and needs with regard to training. Our evaluations and meetings allow for continuous needs assessment. This is especially true of the ongoing consultations within our Interpol 2020 process, and I just participated in a very useful exchange of views with countries from the Middle East and North Africa on Tuesday at our headquarters. We can then share this information with practitioners, to facilitate action in accordance with the latest findings in policing research.

The annual Interpol Police Development Programme for our National Central Bureaus in Europe is a good example of an opportunity for our member countries to give input and explain which tools and skills are needed. We were privileged to be able to hold this meeting here at CEPOL for the last two years, and benefit from their hospitality and experience.

A second aspect relates to the need for a regular and sustainable exchange of best practices and knowledge amongst experts in the field, as well as the sharing of specialist trainers and facilities.

I have seen the value of this during my participation in the Dutch Pearls in Policing initiative, in which law enforcement executives from all over the world can benefit from peer-to-peer exchanges, work on assignments, and share future-oriented ideas. As I have outlined in a vision document, I believe that the concept could be expanded upon with a Global Executive Leadership Programme for future law enforcement leaders, which could help to ensure sustainable cooperation across continents. I think that international coordination in police management training is key, and I have been impressed by the example set by the Central European Police Academy (MEPA) in this regard.

Interpol has also relaunched its Training Advisory Board, which involves senior police training officers from national and regional institutions — including CEPOL — meeting for informal brainstorming sessions. I know that many of you took part in the most recent event in Singapore last June, and I believe that constructive ideas were exchanged.

Once these ideas are exchanged, we must find ways to retain them. While many of you will be aware of our databases, you might not have heard that Interpol also provides knowledge management systems. For instance, Project Stadia is a 10 year project funded by Qatar to develop a centre of excellence in policing and security for sporting events. As part of the project, we are constructing a web-based best practices repository and an online collaborative forum for our member countries responsible for major sporting event security.

The last point is the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration with national, regional, and international training providers. Interpol has built strong partnerships with key players and experts — including FLETC and CEPOL — to pool knowledge and facilities. We need to leverage each other's assets to succeed in our aims.

The same applies to building valuable connections with the private sector and academia. Last March, 64 cybercrime investigators and digital forensic experts from 26 countries assembled in Singapore for the Interpol Digital Security Challenge. The four-day scenario-based training was organised in close collaboration with industry and academic partners, who were able to provide advanced hardware, software, and demonstrations which would otherwise not have been available to police.

Across all of these activities, we insist on two key measures: quality assurance, which we seek to ensure through accreditation, monitoring and evaluation; and cost effectiveness. The latter is paramount to us — as an organisation with limited resources — and to our members; and so we work hard to make our training sustainable and worthwhile.

V. Conclusion

I would like to conclude with two examples to remind us about our purpose in training law enforcement, and why our continued cooperation and innovation is so necessary.

During a visit to Tunisia last November, I saw the value of training at the frontlines of policing. Following a digital forensic training course organised by Interpol, the skills being taught were translated into action right away when the Interpol experts were asked to support

the investigation into the recent attack on the Presidential Guard. Thanks to close cooperation and the sharing of investigative expertise, the team was able to assist Tunisian authorities in the exploitation of digital evidence targeting terrorist cells.

While I was in Rwanda in August, I saw the need to develop training to stay ahead of new and emerging criminal trends. Rwanda is becoming an information and communications technology hub, and a knowledge-based economy. The Rwandan National Police had assessed that cyber-enabled crime is a growing and cross-cutting problem, and so they asked Interpol to develop and deliver training on the issue, which they would host for officers from across the continent. The result was a five-day course involving a workshop and a

simulated international criminal investigation involving human trafficking, cyber-enabled crime, and cross-border cooperation. I observed the teams of participants using their newly-learned digital forensics skills to enthusiastically work through the realistic scenario exercise.

Ladies and Gentlemen, these are some examples of the training Interpol provides to global law enforcement, and would like to express my gratitude for the assistance of our member countries and our partners; especially the EU, Canada, and Germany.

In closing, my thanks for your support, and I look forward to continued close cooperation with you all in this vital field and international learning community.