

Keynote address by the Acting Minister of Police, Professor Firoz Cachalia 27th INTERPOL African Regional Conference Century City, Cape Town Wednesday, 27 August 2025

2025/08/27

Description Details:

Thank you Programme Director, Brigadier Mokhine,

Let me acknowledge:

The Deputy Ministers of Police, Mr Cassel Mathale and Dr. Polly Boshielo,

Major General, Dr. Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi,

President of INTERPOL, Mr Valdecy Urquiza,

Secretary General of INTERPOL,

INTERPOL Executive Committee Members,

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E Mahmoud Ali Youssouf,

Police Chiefs in attendance,

The National Commissioner of Police, General SF Masemola,

Deputy National Commissioners,

SAPS Provincial Commissioners,

Heads of Law Enforcement Agencies,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocol observed,

Good morning.

1. It is both an honour and a privilege for me, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of South Africa, to welcome you to our country and to this 27th INTERPOL African Regional Conference. We are deeply appreciative of the trust and confidence placed in us to host this important gathering of leaders, experts, and practitioners committed to strengthening the rule of law and ensuring the safety and security of our nations, our continent, and indeed, the entire globe.

2. This Conference convenes at a critical juncture. Transnational organised crime remains one of the most serious threats to peace, stability, and development across Africa and beyond. Its manifestations are diverse: drug trafficking, human trafficking, illicit firearms, cybercrime (as technology evolves), wildlife crime, money laundering, and terrorism, to name but a few of the most threatening. These crimes transcend borders, exploit technological advances, and undermine the security of our people and the integrity of our respective states and economies.

3. We are all mindful particularly that syndicated crime today is not static. The evolving nature of criminal activities, the emergence of new trends, and the use of sophisticated technologies by criminal networks compel us to constantly adapt our responses. This is a task that demands a collective, concerted, and focused effort. It requires robust strategies, and the concrete implementation of agreed actions at national, regional, continental, and global levels.

4. The importance of this Conference lies not only in its policy agenda, but in its practical orientation. We are gathered here to generate solutions that are both strategic and pragmatic—solutions that can be implemented effectively within our countries and within the frameworks of our regional and continental organisations. Our deliberations will help to shape a more coordinated African response to transnational organised crime, one that strengthens the security of our borders while protecting the rights and wellbeing of our people.

5. For South Africa, our participation in this Conference is firmly rooted in our constitutional values and our long-term national vision. Our Constitution enshrines the right of every person to safety and security, and it compels the state to protect and uphold these rights. The Medium-Term Development Plan 2024 – 2029 outlines three priorities, the third one being: “Building a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State”. At the heart of this, ‘creating safer communities’ serves as a fundamental pillar for achieving inclusive growth, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Our engagement in regional and global security cooperation is therefore not only a matter of international solidarity but also an essential component of our domestic agenda.

6. We recognise that transnational organised crime undermines development and corrodes governance. By weakening institutions, fuelling corruption, and diverting resources, it impedes our ability to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the

Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. This is why we are committed to working alongside our partners in Africa and across the world to find lasting solutions.

7. The 26th Regional Conference, which was held in Luanda, Angola in 2023, resolved that information sharing in multiple areas – from wildlife trafficking to counter-terrorism needed to be increased. The call was for INTERPOL members to make the most of the tools and services available to them, tools that automatically connect police services internationally.

8. I hope that there has been progress in the implementation of the resolutions taken and that this Conference will continue to build on what has been achieved so far.

9. The Africa Initiative report showed that African countries suffered significant losses from illicit financial flows, estimated at \$ 50 billion to \$ 80 billion every year. INTERPOL plays a critical containing role in limiting these illicit financial flows and regional and continental cooperation is key to this. Data sharing and law enforcement liaisons across the continent can be one measure to curb illicit financial flows, along with integrated operations by the various law enforcement agencies.

10. In this regard, I wish to emphasise the importance of enhancing and strengthening the role of the INTERPOL Regional and National Central Bureaus. These institutions are critical nodes in our collective security architecture. Their effectiveness determines, to a large extent, our ability to prevent, detect, investigate, and prosecute complex, cross-border crimes. Equally, our collaboration with the African Regional Police Chiefs' security cooperation organisations must be deepened to ensure seamless communication, information sharing, and operational coordination across jurisdictions.

11. I have been advised that this Conference will also be used to establish an INTERPOL African Committee. Such a Committee will enable us to approach transnational organised crime in Africa in a more structured, coherent and unified manner, so we are better able to address our common challenges and achieve our shared aspirations for security and development. We must seize this moment to institutionalise cooperation that is durable, sustainable, and responsive to the realities of our continent.

12. In order to be efficient and credible, every organisation needs to ensure that its members are professional, capable, qualified and honourable. It is up to us to ensure that

we uproot corruption within the law enforcement agencies themselves and to ensure that we have leaders who serve with integrity.

13. Distinguished delegates, the task before us is daunting, but it is also inspiring. Our collective resolve, our shared expertise, and our commitment to cooperation give us reason to be hopeful. Let this Conference serve as a catalyst for renewed determination and practical collaboration. Let us leave here not only with well-articulated strategies, but with actionable plans that we are committed to implementing.

14. On behalf of South Africa, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to the values and objectives of INTERPOL and to the spirit of African and international solidarity. We will continue to play our part in building a safer continent and a more secure world. I thank you and wish this Conference fruitful deliberations and successful outcomes. I hereby declare the 27th African Regional Conference officially open.