

STATEMENT

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON MISSING PERSONS

KATHYRYNE BOMBERGER, DIRECTOR GENERAL

76th Session of the INTERPOL General Assembly, 8th November 2010

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Commission on Missing Persons, I would like to thank INTERPOL for spearheading a global initiative to help locate and identify victims of disasters. Starting with the overwhelming task of addressing the thousands of victims killed in the 2004 Asian Tsunami, INTERPOL has set – forth a visionary process that helps governments help their citizens during a period of intense emotional trauma.

Tens of thousands of family members were able to find a sense of closure that would not have been possible had INTERPOL not intervened. INTERPOL should be proud. Everyone in this room should be proud, as law enforcement officers, of their contribution in reaching out during times of crisis.

There is no question that police and other law enforcement officers are best suited to respond to such disasters and given the international importance of such a response and INTERPOL's impressive track record from Thailand to the Philippines; Haiti to Cameroon; and most recently perhaps Cuba, it is imperative that INTERPOL continue to expand its efforts in this field.

Recent efforts to crystallize INTERPOL's commitment to this issue include:

- The General Assembly's resolution to establish a Working Party to work on the modification of the DVI Form,

- The General Assembly resolution to approve the signature on the Co-operation Agreement entered into with the United Nations,
- The General Assembly resolution which recognized the need to implement an international “Missing Persons/Unidentified Dead Bodies” database at the INTERPOL General Secretariat in Lyon, and the recommendation to establish a Working Group of the Steering Group on DVI Teams,
- The General Assembly resolution which approved the Co-operation Agreement between INTERPOL and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP),
- The report by the INTERPOL Tsunami Evaluation Working Group regarding the DVI response to the 2004 Southeast Asian Tsunami; the joint report of the General Secretariat and ICMP regarding the DVI response to Typhoon Frank in the Philippines in 2008; and the joint assessment of the General Secretariat and ICMP on response options following the devastating earthquake in Haiti in 2010,
- The Strategic Plan of 2008-2011 of the INTERPOL Standing Committee on DVI included working in partnership with the General Secretariat to ensure the most appropriate and co-ordinated response to international DVI incidents, including the development of an international DVI IT system, on which considerable progress has been made,
- In addition, many member countries have sought to further strengthen the capacities of the General Secretariat to provide assistance in disaster response.

With these significant achievements in mind, it is now important to move forward, to take this process to the next stage. In this regard, I am glad to see that the General Secretariat will engage in a consultation process with member countries and with international and other organizations, to seek solutions to ensuring continuing adequate preparedness to respond to DVI events in a focused and targeted manner, and to propose improvements to

enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of DVI responses in line with existing mechanisms and instruments on the subject.

We look forward to the report and recommendations that will be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration and action at its next session in 2011.

Before concluding, I would like to thank a true visionary, the Secretary General of INTERPOL, Ron Noble. He has been instrumental in making this new world possible for thousands families who have lost their loved ones in horrific disasters.

ICMP stands ready to continue its excellent cooperation with INTERPOL to work together to help recover and identify victims of disaster.