

Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States—Plenary Statement

Delivered by SRIUN

29 May 2024 | Main Hall

Opening

- [Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Li Junhua;]
[Special Advisor for the Conference, Ms. Rabab Fatima;]
Excellencies;
Ladies and gentlemen;
Good morning/afternoon.
- It is my great privilege to address this plenary meeting.

Introduction to INTERPOL

- INTERPOL believes that security is the foundation for sustainable development. In this regard, INTERPOL has been a key implementing partner of the UN's 17 SDGs.

INTERPOL's mandate for the SIDS

- The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) clearly recognizes that security underpins the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS.
- In the document, SIDS “underline the need to promote peaceful, prosperous, inclusive societies and safe communities”, including by “assisting national and regional institutions to combat transnational crime and violence”.
- These demands are at the very heart of INTERPOL's mandate. INTERPOL has an ambitious vision for the SIDS: we work towards a future in which all SIDS have robust law enforcement capabilities that can counter threats to peace and security and build safer, stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient societies.

Small Islands' Lighthouse Programme



INTERPOL

- To realize this vision and deliver concrete action on the goals in ABAS, INTERPOL is launching **the Small Islands' Lighthouse Programme**, a holistic SIDS-centric programme to strengthen the security architecture of SIDS.
- To spotlight existing gaps and address key vulnerabilities, Lighthouse's three pillars will offer a combination of technical assistance, capacity building, and operational support to assist SIDS in confronting pressing security threats.
- In Pillar 1 **Environmental Security**, Lighthouse will help SIDS achieve planetary sustainability by countering environmental crimes.
 - For example, illegal logging and waste dumping in the Caribbean have led to significant deforestation and pollution.
 - By strengthening law enforcement capabilities and providing tools, INTERPOL can help SIDS protect their natural resources and the livelihoods dependent on them.
- In Pillar 2 **Maritime Security**, Lighthouse will help SIDS develop more resilient blue economies and safeguard their large exclusive economic zones.
 - For example, in the Pacific Islands, IUU fishing costs the region over \$600 million annually. By providing training and technology, INTERPOL can help SIDS protect their marine resources
- In Pillar 3 **Cultural Heritage Protection**, Lighthouse will assist SIDS in protecting their culture, identity, and way of life, thus promoting cohesive communities and sustainable tourism.
 - Climate change and the illegal trafficking of cultural artifacts endanger the rich histories and identities of these islands. For instance, in the Maldives, rising sea levels threaten to submerge ancient archaeological sites.



INTERPOL

- Digital documentation technologies, like INTERPOL's ID-Art Mobile Application, can create detailed geotagged inventories of sites, ensuring their protection and facilitating recovery in case of damage.
- Across these three pillars, SIDS will also develop competencies in the enhanced use of INTERPOL's tools and mechanisms, which will bolster SIDS' readiness to combat a range of threats, from cybercrime to illicit financial flows.

Conclusion

- Excellencies, colleagues,
- The time to act is now. Through Lighthouse, INTERPOL remains committed to strengthening international police cooperation for safer and stronger SIDS in the next ten years and beyond. In the face of mounting threats, we stand tall in solidarity with small islands.
- I thank you.