

**Press Information Bureau  
Government of India  
Prime Minister's Office**

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**Text of PM's speech at the Sixth Global Focal Point Conference on Asset Recovery**

Secretary General, INTERPOL, Mr. Jurgen Stock

My ministerial colleague Dr Jitendra Singh

Other dignitaries on the dais

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am happy to be here today to address the delegates of the sixth Global Focal Point Conference on Asset Recovery, and the Annual Conference of CBI and State Anti-Corruption Bureaus. I also extend a warm welcome to the delegates from abroad who are attending this Conference. I hope that your visit to India is pleasant and memorable.

I also congratulate the officers of CBI who have received medals for distinguished service today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Governments across the world work to transform the lives of the poor and the marginalized. **Corruption is one of the principal challenges to that objective.**

We in India are currently in a crucial phase of nation building. Our mission is to build a prosperous India. An India where

- our farmers are capable;
- our workers satisfied;
- our women empowered;
- and our youth self-reliant;

This is not an impossible mission. However, to achieve this objective, it is essential to fight relentlessly against corruption. India stands committed in its fight against corruption.

My Government has taken significant steps to check corruption and the menace of black money in a short span of time. The very day that we assumed office, we constituted a Special Investigation Team under the supervision of the Supreme Court to look into the issue. We have entered into agreements with many countries for exchanging real time information on black money. The Government has signed the Inter Government Agreement with the United States to implement the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act. This Agreement enables Indian tax authorities to receive financial account information of Indians from foreign countries on an automatic basis.

A comprehensive and deterrent law, the Black Money Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets and Imposition of Tax Act has been enacted. It provides for stringent penalties and prosecution.

We have also introduced a provision under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act for restitution of assets. This will enable millions of poor investors who have lost money in ponzi schemes to recover a part of their hard earned money.

I hope that the partnership between Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR) and Interpol will help in confiscation and recovery of stolen assets. I am sure that this conference will go a long way towards elimination of safe havens for the proceeds of corruption and help build secure exchange platforms for recovery of criminal assets.

Our recent initiatives to curb systemic corruption such as auction of Coal Blocks and FM Radio spectrum have eliminated the element of discretion in allocation of national resources. This has brought about transparency in the system and restored

faith of the citizens in Government. It has also generated substantial revenues for the government which will benefit our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are focused on providing system based and policy driven governance. A governance structure that is sensitive, transparent and accountable. Let me share an example to illustrate how corruption can be eliminated silently and efficiently by simple technology and policy based initiatives.

When we assumed office, I was informed that cooking gas cylinders were being subsidized to the tune of approximately four hundred rupees per cylinder. This subsidy was being provided to rich and poor alike. We decided that the subsidy should be credited directly into bank accounts of consumers with each account being linked to a unique Aadhaar card. This single intervention has reduced the number of registered consumers claiming gas subsidy by about fifty million. Subsequently, we also launched a campaign for the "well off" to voluntarily give up cooking gas subsidy. The response has been very encouraging. As on date, more than 4.5 million people have given up their gas subsidy.

Friends.

One of the challenges that we must address is Governance Deficit. This includes:

- inadequate capacity to deliver public services effectively and efficiently
- lack of appropriate policy responses to emerging situations
- and delays in project implementation

My Government has taken several steps to make the bureaucracy more efficient performance-oriented and accountable. The Government is committed to ensuring probity among public servants and to protect them from frivolous allegations. Equally, the Government is unsparing when it comes to punishing the corrupt. We have so far removed and ensured pension cuts of 45 senior officers of various services for unsatisfactory performance and delivery in public service.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Globalization of organized crime poses a major threat to economies throughout the world. It is a well-known fact that 'dirty money' drives out 'good money.' Organized crime can hamper investment and economic growth. It can also infiltrate or acquire control of large sectors of the economy. Illicit funding promotes organized criminal activities like drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, and terrorism.

The dastardly acts committed in Paris a few days ago are a grim reminder that terrorists have shown remarkable flexibility and adaptability in meeting their funding requirements. They derive funding from a variety of criminal activities which include smuggling of narcotics, bank robbery, vehicle theft, fake currency, or from state sponsors and activities in failed states.

Disrupting fund flows constrains the capabilities of terrorists and reduces their ability to execute attacks. This involves putting in place both systemic safeguards, and targeted economic sanctions based on credible counter-terrorism intelligence.

Targeting proceeds of crime is an important element in this fight against crime. Hence, there is an imperative need to focus our efforts to enhance international cooperation in the field of Asset Recovery for fighting crime, corruption and terrorism.

Confiscation of property of offenders not only serves as punishment but also discourages commission of crime. In fact, **Kautilya** in his '**Artha Shastra**,' had suggested confiscation of illegitimate income as one of the punishments for corrupt public servants.

I am also pleased to note that the heads of State Anti-Corruption Bureaus and CBI will deliberate on the related theme of tracking proceeds of corruption. This two decade old forum must not only focus on prosecution of offenders involved in corruption but also modify their Standard Operating Procedures to more effectively target the proceeds of corruption.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Economic liberalism and globalization have drastically increased the ability to park profits of crime anywhere in the world. Today proceeds of crime can be routed through dozens of countries within seconds. By a process of layering the money-trail can be concealed. Investigation agencies are limited by national boundaries. Our Government is committed to the implementation of a uniform global standard on Automatic Exchange of Information, on a fully reciprocal basis. This will facilitate exchange of information regarding persons who have concealed their money in offshore financial centres and tax havens.

INTERPOL is playing an increasingly active role in asset recovery. Since 2009, Global Focal Point Forum is actively promoting the exchange of corruption data among law enforcement agencies and anti-corruption entities worldwide. In this context mention must be made of INTERPOL's initiatives such as I-SECOM, a secure web-based encrypted channel for the exchange of sensitive data among the specialized anti-corruption community. The new INTERPOL notice could add value to asset-tracing investigations and facilitate real time information sharing in complex cases. I appreciate the efforts of INTERPOL and its partners - World Bank and UNODC - in conceiving the idea and giving leadership to this forum that has the potential to put an end to safe havens for the corrupt.

I am told that the excellent and proactive cooperation between INTERPOL and Indian investigative agencies has resulted in tracking of many fugitive criminals and their subsequent deportation or extradition. I would like this cooperation to deepen. CBI has been effectively assisting the Indian law enforcement agencies and their foreign counterparts in overcoming the barriers that complicate the exchange of investigative information. I am also informed that CBI has been making use of INTERPOL tools and databases for securing greater cooperation among law enforcement organizations throughout the world. It has also been consistently partnering INTERPOL Capacity Building Programmes.

We are in the process of establishing an International Centre of Excellence in Investigation at Ghaziabad. This Centre will render world class Certified Courses on Investigation and Prosecution in specialized and emerging domains of crime including cybercrime, to the Law enforcement community of India and abroad. A Centralized Technology Vertical to focus on combating new age crimes like cybercrime, is also being planned.

There are several cases in the annals of Indian judicial history in which conviction was secured solely on the basis of forensic expert opinion. India must, therefore, have adequate facilities to be able to clear the huge backlog of forensic opinion.

The proceeds of crime and corruption are stolen assets. They do not belong to the country where they are stashed. They rightfully belong to the citizens of the country from which they have been plundered. I am well aware of the legal and procedural obstacles and differences in evidentiary standards that hinder Asset Recovery. To overcome these challenges, Police and Law Enforcement Agencies should forge formal and informal relationships. I hope this conference provides all of you such an opportunity. I also hope that the delegates will seriously deliberate and devise proper procedures and protocols to quicken the process of tracing, identifying, restraining, confiscating, and repatriating the stolen assets.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.

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