

**Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police:
Opening Remarks 36th Annual General Meeting
Paul A. Rolle Esq, QPM, MS, BS
Commissioner of Police, RBPF
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"History doesn't change the past, but it most certainly changes the trajectory of the future," words coined by Mohd Mustafa.

Prime Minister, the Honorable Philip Davis

Honorable Wayne Munroe QC Minister of National Security

Mr. Colin John Commissioner of Police of the Royal Saint Vincent Police and President of the Caribbean Association of Commissioners of Police

Major General Ahmad Al Raisi, President INTERPOL

Mr. David Rausch< Director of the International Association of Chiefs of Police

Trebor Randle, Chairperson, International Committee for National Organizational of Black Law Enforcement Officers

Lt. Colonel Dana Humaid, Director General International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of the Interior, United Arab Emirate

Fellow Commissioners from throughout the Caribbean

Mrs. Cheryl Darville, Permanent Secretary Ministry of National Security

Ms. Marcia Manning Secretary to ACCP

Dr. Raymond King, Commodore Royal Bahamas Defense Force

Mr. Ralph Munroe, Deputy Comptroller of Customs

Mrs. Ketura Ferguson, Director of Immigration

Mr. Doan Cleare, Commissioner of Corrections

Mr. Anthony Ferguson QPM, Director of National Criminal Intelligence Agency

Mr. Clayton Fernander, Deputy Commissioner of Police

Dr. Loretta Mackey QPM, Deputy Commissioner of Police

Members of the Senior Executive Leadership Team, Our Sponsors and delegates

Senior Officers, Father Stephen Davies, Members of the press, Invited guests, ladies and gentlemen good morning.

It is my esteemed pleasure to greet you all on this momentous occasion. The Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP) was formally founded in 1987 in Castries, St. Lucia, by a resolution passed by 13 members on August 20th to engage its membership in a united approach to the fight against crime in the Caribbean region, and to develop mutual relationships with regional and international police officers. The overall consensus of the association is to establish proactive strategies for adopting ideas and practices that will boost policing throughout the Caribbean.

It is commonly acknowledged that the fight against crime will not be won alone through law enforcement operations; rather, our goals will be accomplished through partnerships with the communities and the people we have sworn to protect and serve.

As an organization, we recognize that the power of the police to fulfil their mandate and perform their duties is contingent upon public's approval of our existence, actions and behavior, and on our ability to secure and maintain public respect.

To that end, this year's ACCP commemorates its 36th Annual meeting, it is the fifth meeting that will be presented by the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

This year's theme is aimed at providing members, stakeholders, and participants with the tools they need to be more effective in achieving the organization's vision and constitutional purpose. The conference promotes regional collaboration in the fight against illicit activities such as narcotics, terrorism, and transnational organized crime. It also adds to law enforcement's continued development and the improvement of optimal policing methods.

Presently, the ACCP is furnished with 25 active members, including Commissioners from Anguilla, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Aruba, Haiti, The Bahamas, Jamaica, and St. Lucia, just to name a few. The association hopes to use this platform to influence regional policing policies, increase data and information sharing within the region, and support the institutional growth of police services.

Given the importance of policing to the region's and economies' well-being, the organization's Annual General Meetings have developed a strategic plan that outlines the future and the way forward.

By virtue of being the representative for Policing in the Caribbean, it is critical for the ACCP to uphold strong operating principles that guides how the Association achieves its mission. As a result, the ACCP has instituted fundamental values that embody its ideals and philosophy. One of its core

functions is to support the police services that they represent, with varying degrees of emphasis on advancing and promoting the law enforcement profession, providing advocacy, training, opportunities for collaboration and networking, and executing initiatives to improve crime-fighting strategies and approaches.

According to the Joint Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank, there are several key trends affecting policing in the Caribbean. Subsequent to reviewing the global and regional environments, we find that trends affecting regional police operations include the ability of the internet to provide borderless connectivity, anonymity, accessible target data, and an effective publicity platform when desired, as well as new forms of criminality, such as human trafficking, illegal immigration, sexual exploitation of women and children, domestic abuse, and hate crimes.

Violent crime is extremely high in our region, and it is the single biggest concern facing our police forces. Because of our reliance on tourism, the impact on our national image and psyche might be considerable. For that reason, it is vital that the ACCP focuses on programs that will improve our police forces' ability to combat violent crime.

Some initiatives we may wish to consider include for example to:

- Conduct impact evaluations of all types of crime and violence prevention/ reduction programs in the Caribbean region;
- Undertake institutional reform to promote systemic alignment and crime reduction while modernizing policing through the use of information systems and problem oriented policing;

- Scale up successful civil society crime and violence prevention programs;
- Undertake impact evaluations that systematically document what works in youth violence prevention in the Caribbean and provide skills training and internships for at-risk youths;
- We should advocate for our governments to enlist consuming countries to provide financial and technical assistance for improved drug interdiction and create alternative opportunities for youth engagement;
- Our countries need to change the gun culture. We need to implement and enforce international and regional agreements on the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW);
- This is a good time to create regional facilities for police training similar to the Caribbean Regional Drug Law Enforcement Training Centre, Caricom Impacs and CBSI

Connect. For the record The Bahamas stands ready to house these facilities.

- We may also wish to consider creating a regional forensics/ballistic laboratory and technical capacity to improve intelligence sharing. These require an endeavoring trust and friendship. The ACCP is the right platform for these discussions to begin.

These programs should prioritize opportunities for training, information sharing, and strategy sharing, as well as the provision of essential tools, information technology (IT), or equipment to aid in the battle against these crimes.

It is increasingly vital for regional police services to repair their image in a climate of growing skepticism of the police and their actions. This, however, can only be accomplished via increased national and community engagement, police

training, and improved tools for detecting and correcting non-policing behavior.

As a result, the ACCP will need to assist its members in developing projects that support training, the development of policing policies and procedures, and community involvement research.

Globalization has brought numerous benefits to the Caribbean, such as trade, tourism, and internet access to information, but it has also brought several risks to regional security. These new cross-border and cyber risks necessitate new skills and more collaboration among the countries of our region.

In an ever-changing economic climate (political, technological, and social) it is incumbent upon us as law enforcement agencies all over the region, to cultivate an innovative culture

that guides how we respond to the difficulties we will meet along the way.

Thus, new approaches to positively increase officer morale are required. In so doing, we will repair the breaches and shatter the glass ceilings while “delivering our service as a resourceful and professional organization.” Thank you and welcome as we look forward to a successful conference!