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St Kitts-Nevis to accord INTERPOL travel document holders special visa status

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BASSETERRE, St Kitts -- On Saturday 15 May, INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald Noble held an historic meeting with Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Sam Condor, and senior officials from the Ministry of National Security.

During this meeting between the leadership of the twin island Federation and the head of INTERPOL, it was agreed that the increasing transnational crime threats confronting the region required greater collaboration between INTERPOL and St Kitts and Nevis. Towards that end, Prime Minister Douglas agreed to take immediate steps for his country to accord special visa status to INTERPOL travel document holders, thereby ensuring that the citizens of, and visitors to, St Kitts and Nevis would benefit from any needed international police support from INTERPOL without any unnecessary red tape.

INTERPOL's presence and importance in the Caribbean has increased since the region hosted the 2007 Cricket World Cup and INTERPOL put in place a state-of-the-art passport and passenger screening system.

The Caribbean now leads all INTERPOL regional bodies in terms of member country participation in the systematic screening of travelers seeking entry. During his first visit to St Kitts and Nevis, Secretary General Noble identified additional ways that the citizens of St Kitts and Nevis as well as those of the entire region could benefit from INTERPOL travel document holders having standard visa requirements waived in order for them to respond more quickly to any needs of the country or region when requested.

Douglas stated, "Our number one concern has always been ensuring that both citizens and visitors to St Kitts and Nevis be afforded the best possible security and assistance. By according INTERPOL travel document holders special visa status we are able to enhance our security by forging even closer links to INTERPOL and the support it provides."

A variety of crime areas where INTERPOL could be of assistance in providing training were also identified during discussions involving Douglas, Condor, Permanent Secretary for National Security Astona Browne, Special Advisor on National Security Dr Norgen Wilson, Commissioner of Police Austin Williams and INTERPOL Secretary General Noble.

"Any country that needs support in police training or in international crime prevention and response can best do so by ensuring that it has a strong and vibrant relationship with INTERPOL. Based on my discussions with Prime Minister Douglas and other high-ranking

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government officials, I am persuaded that St Kitts and Nevis is aware of the challenges confronting it and other countries in the region and is ready to take bold steps to meet these challenges," concluded Noble.

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