

**ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE  
CONFERENCE**

**OPENING REMARKS**

**29 April 2013**

Welcome.

Want to start by reflecting on the challenges you all face.

Every police service must reflect to some extent its own community. But there are many common challenges too in today's policing: gangs, guns, drugs, domestic violence, acquisitive crimes, including often sophisticated so-called 'white collar' crimes; as well as public safety problems such as crowd control – and, not least, things like drunk driving.

Some of these are as much social problems as purely police ones. But often society expects the police to be on the front line in dealing with society's problems. Police can't avoid this. Sometimes it will be right to point out quite clearly that some of these problems need other bits of society, other bits of government, to play their equally important parts as well.

To add to the overarching professional challenges, what you face is constantly changing. I have listed some of the policing and criminal challenges. To these you could add the technology challenges – both those used against you and, sometimes even scarier to manage, those which you can use. Both present difficulties. And, not least, you all have to face management challenge in leading your organisations. The British Civil Service Minister, Francis Maude, recently said that, nowadays, if an organisation doesn't change, it goes backwards. Uncomfortable, but true.

And it presents a particular extra challenge for policing smaller islands where, in the absence of immediate neighbours, a conscious effort often has to be made to keep in touch with new lessons as they are learned – sometimes painfully – elsewhere: if everyone has to invent the wheel individually, progress can be slow, and uneven.

In response to these challenges, police services have indeed been changing, rapidly. Within the broadly 'Peelite' tradition found in most of the Commonwealth, policing is by consent. It depends on maintaining the confidence of those you police. Within this, methods – and ethos – have been changing rapidly.

One example is the growing concept – and in some places the terminology – of police as a service rather than a force. This is still sometimes controversial, but it is right. I

believe it is an important recognition of how policing must evolve. And it certainly doesn't mean that police services can't be robust when they have to be.

Inevitably, many of the resources for developing new doctrines and adopting new technologies are to be found in bigger jurisdictions. There is a need to borrow, to be aware of new developments – but not to follow blindly. Adaptations will often have to be made for small and island communities. This isn't just for broad reasons of culture or resources. But it's also for hard practical reasons like there being no neighbouring police service to look to for back-up; or the diseconomies of scale which prevent each island having expensive state of the art forensic labs which in bigger jurisdictions can be shared among several police services. At the same time I have no doubt that things can be pioneered in smaller, nimbler police contexts which may be valuable to bigger police services.

Much of what I have said underscores the need for good communications between police services. That is one reason why I warmly welcome gatherings like this. It is also good that common linkages – and generally good relations – are made with neighbouring professions too. I think of the recent conferences which have been held here of Caribbean Prosecutors and of British Overseas Territories Attorneys-General. These are all good for effective policing.

I am also delighted that these meetings have been held in Bermuda. As I hope you will have time to discover, it is a truly wonderful place, with enormous amounts of an astonishing range of things sporty, nautical, cultural, historical – all sorts – to enjoy. It also has a very good police service. I hope you will only encounter them as good hosts, which I know you will, and as good colleagues, over the days of this conference. And I hope you will return both for business and for pleasure in the future.

Welcome; and good deliberations.

George Fergusson  
Governor of Bermuda