

Secretary for Justice visits Toronto

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Elsie Leung, started her visit to Toronto on November 19 (Canadian Time) by holding a bilateral meeting with the Attorney General of Ontario, the Hon Michael Bryant.

Updating him on Hong Kong's new constitutional order under the "One Country, Two Systems" concept, Ms Leung also discussed with her Ontario counterpart the opportunities offered by the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) signed between Hong Kong and Mainland China and mutual efforts to enhance closer ties between Ontario and Hong Kong.

On the second day of her first visit to Canada, Ms Leung addressed a luncheon at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre co-organised by the Canadian Club, the Hong Kong-Canada Business Association (Toronto), the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and supported by the Law Society of Upper Canada.

She told the luncheon gathering that the signing of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement between the Mainland and Hong Kong was an excellent example of "One Country, Two Systems".

Ms Leung described CEPA as a landmark agreement in that it was the first free trade agreement signed by either China or Hong Kong.

"It highlights the Mainland's unwavering commitment to the faithful implementation of 'One Country, Two Systems' and it underscores the Mainland's more recent commitment to the rules-based global trading system," she said.

Ms Leung also noted that it was "One Country, Two Systems" that allowed Hong Kong to take part, in its own right, in international forums such as the World Trade Organisation, the World Customs Organisation, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Asian Development Bank.

"It allows us to invite esteemed judges from other common law jurisdictions to sit on the bench of our Court of Final Appeal. This not only helps us to maintain

links with other common law jurisdictions, it also allows us to draw on a considerable reserve of international jurisprudence," she said.

Ms Leung also met Ontario lawyers, academics and opinion leaders in separate roundtable discussions organised by the Women's Law Association of Ontario and the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies.

She later attended a reception hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office to meet Chinese business and community leaders in Toronto.

Ms Leung will fly to Vancouver on November 20 for a two-day visit to the city.

Ends/Thursday, November 20, 2003