

Speech by Secretary for Justice at signing ceremony of HK/Ireland Surrender of Fugitive Offenders Agreement (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Wong Yan Lung, SC, at the signing ceremony of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region/Ireland Surrender of Fugitive Offenders Agreement in Dublin, Ireland today (October 5, Dublin time):

Honourable Minister Lenihan, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be in Dublin today representing the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to sign the Agreement for the Surrender of Fugitive Offenders with Mr Brian Lenihan, Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Hong Kong is fully committed to combating transnational crime and to strengthening international cooperation for that purpose.

Most of the UN Conventions against terrorism, money laundering, corruption and transnational organised crimes are applicable in Hong Kong.

We are also an active member of the Financial Action Task Force in the battle against worldwide money laundering.

A crucial element of such international cooperation is of course the setting up of an effective extradition mechanism through the agreements for the surrender of fugitives, so as to eliminate any safe haven for criminals.

The Surrender of Fugitive Offenders Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of Hong Kong SAR is the 17th of its kind that we have concluded. Earlier in 2001, we have already signed an agreement with Ireland on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters. The signing of the Agreement today is an important landmark resulting in a more effective and comprehensive judicial cooperation system between the two sides.

Every effort has been made to ensure the agreements we signed contain all the internationally recognised safeguards.

Like Minister Lenihan, I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to colleagues of both sides who have taken part in the negotiation process of the Agreement. Without your dedicated efforts, the successful conclusion of the Agreement would not have been possible.

Thank you.

Ends/Friday, October 5, 2007