

SJ's statement upon the announcement of the early retirement of the Chief Justice

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The following is a statement of the Secretary for Justice upon the announcement of the early retirement of the Chief Justice:

The Secretary for Justice respects the personal decision of Chief Justice Andrew Li to take early retirement and pays him the highest tribute.

As the first Chief Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Chief Justice Li leads our Judiciary in faithfully administering justice and upholding the rule of law. He has made a monumental contribution in the successful implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

Chief Justice Li was instrumental in the firm establishment of the Court of Final Appeal, which is now acknowledged to be one of the models exemplifying the highest standard of judicial independence and professionalism in the common law world. As a reformer, he spearheaded the Civil Justice Reform putting in place significant changes in civil procedures aimed at improving access to justice at reasonable cost and speed, including the promotion of mediation. Under his leadership, the Judiciary has also rigorously extended the use of Chinese in the courts and assistance to litigants in person. As a judge, Chief Justice Li is well-known for his professional excellence, fairness and superb judicial temperament. Because of his personal inspiration and leadership, the Judiciary has attracted many top legal talents to join its ranks since 1997.

The Judiciary is a cornerstone of the rule of law in Hong Kong and Chief Justice Li stands at its summit with distinguished achievement and dedicated service. We in the Department of Justice join the community to sincerely salute him with deep gratitude.

Ends/Wednesday, September 2, 2009