

SJ meets Canadian Justice Minister

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Elsie Leung, met the Canadian Minister of Justice, the Hon Martin Cauchon, on November 18 (Canadian time) in Ottawa to update him on the successful implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" concept, the rule of law and the constitutional developments in Hong Kong.

She also briefed her Canadian counterpart of the "Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" recently signed between Hong Kong and Mainland China and the importance of Hong Kong as the best platform for foreign businesses and service providers, including those in Canada, to enter the huge China market.

Earlier on the first day of her visit to Canada, Ms Leung met the Secretary of State for Asia Pacific, the Hon David Kilgour, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

The Secretary for Justice also addressed a roundtable luncheon organised by the Conference Board of Canada for distinguished women leaders and met with academics, think tank representatives and legal professionals in a roundtable discussion organised by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and the Canadian Council on International Law.

At the roundtable discussion, Ms Leung reassured the Canadian audience that despite difficulties, the "One Country, Two Systems" concept was working well in Hong Kong.

She said that there was no doubt that Hong Kong's stability and continued development as an international city depended on the successful implementation of this concept.

She said: "The key strengths of our success remain as relevant and important now as they were six and a half years ago - the common law system upheld by an independent judiciary, the free and unfettered flow of news and information, a level playing field for business, and a clean, respected civil service. It is a city where the rule of law prevails."

The spirit of Hong Kong had not been stifled as some of the doomsayers

predicted, Ms Leung said, stressing that members of the community were quick to speak up if they perceived that their rights and freedoms, or the systems underpinning Hong Kong society, were in any way being compromised or undermined.

She concluded her Ottawa visit by calling on the People's Republic of China's Ambassador to Canada, Mr Mei Ping.

Ms Leung will visit Toronto on November 19 and Vancouver on November 20 and 21.

Ends/Wednesday, November 19, 2003