

Sentencing conference held by DOJ

The Prosecutions Division of the Department of Justice today (January 15) held the Sentencing Conference 2012, which was attended by more than 80 participants, including members of the judiciary, prosecutors, criminal law practitioners and scholars.

Entitled "A New Sentencing Regime for Hong Kong?", the conference was the first of its kind organised by the Department of Justice to stimulate discussion on the pros and cons of establishing a sentencing council in Hong Kong and reflect upon the existing sentencing regime with reference to the experience of the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council.

In delivering the welcoming address, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Kevin Zervos, SC, said: "In the pursuit of upholding the rule of law and in serving the interests of justice and the community, a prosecutor must always act fairly and properly. The fundamental task of a prosecutor is to be a minister of justice." He also emphasised the need to protect the public bearing in mind the important public dimension of sentencing and the need to maintain public confidence and support in our criminal justice system.

The keynote speaker at the conference was the Dean of Law at the University of Monash, Professor Arie Freiberg, a leading expert on sentencing law in Australia. He is also the Chairman of the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council.

After giving a presentation on the experience of the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council, Professor Freiberg, together with Mr Clive Grossman, SC, Dr Gerard McCoy, SC, Mr Keith Yeung, SC, Mr Stephen Hung and Professor Simon Young, participated in the panel discussion with Mr Zervos, SC, as the moderator. The open floor discussion that followed also provided a valuable platform for engaging the views of the participants.

The major issues discussed during the conference included the victim's role in sentencing, the prosecutor's role in sentencing, the pros and cons of establishing a sentencing council in Hong Kong and issues relating to tariffs and guidelines.

Ends/Sunday, January 15, 2012