

Heads of Prosecuting Agencies Conference opens in HK (with photo)

The 12th Heads of Prosecuting Agencies Conference (HOPAC) hosted by the Department of Justice opened in Hong Kong today (May 30).

More than 40 heads of international prosecuting agencies are attending the conference and exchanging views on prosecution matters of general principle, contemporary significance and practical importance.

The theme for this year's conference is "Challenges to a modern prosecution service: moving with the times", with a focus on current trends and issues as well as the challenges faced by a modern prosecution service in both an international and domestic context.

Delivering the welcome address at the conference today, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Kevin P Zervos, SC, said, "From our perspective, we have to make sure we get it right all the time - we need to maintain independence and control over prosecutions, and we need to ensure the people who make up the prosecution service act fairly and properly and maintain the highest standards of integrity and honesty."

"It is a difficult job and the demands on us are great," Mr Zervos said.

"Internationalism has brought about a greater degree of universality of the law. It is imperative that we engage each other more than we do. We need to discuss our problems and share our experiences with each other. We should be there to not only co-operate with one another but to help each other as well."

The HOPAC is held biennially, providing a platform for the heads of prosecuting agencies of selected common law and

related jurisdictions to share views on various aspects of prosecution matters. At the conference's last meeting, Hong Kong was identified to host the meeting for this year.

Issues covered by the two-day conference include prosecution guidelines and review of the prosecutorial decisions, the independence and control of prosecutions, the role of the courts and prosecutorial responsibility, public confidence and accountability, training and legal education, etc.

Apart from the Director of Public Prosecutions who was representing Hong Kong at the conference, other prosecutions heads were from various places, including Australia, Bermuda, Brunei, Canada, England and Wales, Fiji, Ireland, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore and the Solomon Islands.

Ends/Thursday, May 30, 2013

