

Secretary for Justice and Director of Public Prosecutions on constitutional reform and prosecution matters

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, and the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Keith Yeung, SC, after attending the opening ceremony of the Prosecution Week 2015 today (June 23):

Reporter: I would like to ask you about Alan Woo's comments. He said the Government did not come up with an alternative plan when faced with opposition. He also talked about that the election committee system can be improved The second question is about the Donald Tsang case. Why did it take so long to make a decision?

Secretary for Justice: If I may deal with the first part of your question and leave the second part of the question to the Director of Public Prosecutions. As I was saying in Cantonese just now, first of all, I don't think it is now the time to do, whether you call it finger-pointing or blame attribution. I don't think it is constructive to do that. Now that the voting has been done, and although it is disappointing that the proposal put forward by the Government has been vetoed, and therefore we cannot have universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive in 2017. Yes, that is disappointing. But I think at the end of the day we would have to accept the result because it was the decision made by the Legislative Council members. As the Chief Executive has said on some other occasions, and the Chief Secretary for Administration has also mentioned, for the rest of the term of this Government, we would be focusing primarily on livelihood issues, as well as issues such as economic development, because we believe that we have spent quite a fair bit of time, 20 months if not more, discussing political development, focusing on constitutional development and particular universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive. Now that the proposal has been vetoed, it's high time that we return to livelihood issues, to economic development as well as other issues which we believe can improve the community of Hong Kong as a whole, and indeed I think the vast majority of people in Hong Kong will not disagree that we need to do something to improve our livelihood issues. There are so many things that we need to do, property issues, housing issues, transport issues. So I'm quite sure that there will be more than enough for the rest of these two years that we have to tackle. The last point perhaps if I may make is that, yes, in Article 45 of the Basic Law, it is stated quite clearly that we need to have progress towards the ultimate aim of selecting the Chief Executive by way of universal suffrage. It also mentions about

gradual development. But it doesn't mean that we have to deal with constitutional development on a daily basis. The fact that we have just done it, and the fact that we think it's appropriate and desirable to rest a fair bit of time, so that people can sit back, reflect on it, and concentrate on livelihood issues so that the next term of the Government, and in particular, the next Chief Executive can decide whether by that time, it will be the right time to re-start the whole five-step process. No one will disagree that before we can actually re-start the whole five-step process, we need a certain basis, in particular we need a certain consensus, a certain degree or extent of consensus, in the community. Otherwise it will just be yet another fruitless exercise. It will simply cause further controversy, which will not be in anyone's interest. Perhaps I will pass the ball to the DPP to deal with the other part of the question.

Director of Public Prosecutions: In respect of the case against Mr Donald Tsang, as we have said on a number of occasions previously, we understand that the public is legitimately concerned about this case. This is obviously an important case. But there are more than one factor and aspect to this case. There are certain evidence and compilation and aspects of investigation involve investigation outside Hong Kong. As we have said, outside independent counsel's view has been sought and also the Prosecutions Division has been keeping close contact with the ICAC. We have been considering various other matters and the matters are towards the conclusion. I am hopeful and I am optimistic that the case has entered a final conclusion, and conclusion will be reached within the very near future.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript).

Ends/Tuesday, June 23, 2015