

Legal experts gather to discuss criminal justice system development (with photos)

Some 120 members of the judiciary, criminal law practitioners and academics today (October 24) participated in the 2015 Criminal Law Conference to discuss a number of issues related to the latest development in criminal law and day-to-day administration of criminal justice in Hong Kong.

Jointly organised by the Prosecutions Division of the Department of Justice, the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Law Society of Hong Kong, the conference provides a platform for various stakeholders in the criminal justice system to exchange views on the possible future development of Hong Kong's criminal justice system.

Addressing at the opening ceremony of the conference, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, said that fairness, justice and transparency are key attributes of a criminal justice system which people would expect, embrace and trust.

"Our criminal justice system goes well beyond a system simply setting out rules on how criminal proceedings are to be conducted.

"It provides for the essential framework which ensures that defendants facing criminal charges will have a fair trial, and also a framework which ultimately governs how people may exercise their rights and enjoy their freedom to the fullest extent permitted by the law whilst at the same time ensures that the rights of others are duly respected," he said.

Mr Yuen pointed out that to ensure that the criminal justice system served these important purposes, apart from guarding against any possible erosion of time-honoured legal principles on which the system is built, it is equally important to remain vigilant of the need for changes and

reform.

"We need to ensure that the system moves forward to meet the changing needs and expectation of the community," he said.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Keith Yeung, SC, said that the conference has provided an invaluable opportunity for prosecutors to stay attuned to the latest development and different views on the various issues discussed at the conference.

"We need to do that in order to perform better our role as ministers of justice," he said.

Today's conference covered four major topics, namely human rights consideration in the operation and reform of the hearsay rule in criminal proceedings; enhancing the rehabilitative nature of the criminal justice system; test of "reasonable prospect of conviction" for the purpose of making prosecutorial decisions; and money laundering.

The Honourable Mrs Justice Maura McGowan of the High Court of Justice of England and Wales delivered a speech on the topic concerning hearsay rule in criminal proceedings. In addition, Her Ladyship together and the Honourable Justice Mark Weinberg of the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of Victoria, Australia also acted as moderators for the debates and discussions.

Ends/Saturday, October 24, 2015

