

HCCH Asia Pacific Week 2015 opens today (with photos)

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The Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) Asia Pacific Week 2015 kicked off today (November 9) with an international conference which drew the attendance of over 100 government officials, judges, legal practitioners, academics and representatives of non-governmental organisations from over 25 jurisdictions around the world.

Jointly organised by the Department of Justice and the HCCH Asia Pacific Regional Office, the six-day HCCH Asia Pacific Week will focus on the discussion of cross-border legal issues concerning children and families.

Addressing the opening of the Global Conference on Recovery of Child Support and Family Maintenance in Asia Pacific and Worldwide, the first programme of the HCCH Asia Pacific Week, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, said that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) places great importance on family law and the protection of children.

"We welcome opportunities to exchange views and to build up a network with other jurisdictions so as to ensure that our relevant legal regime can function effectively on the cross-border level," he said.

He paid tribute to the HCCH Asia Pacific Regional Office for its continuous efforts in building up a network of regional stakeholders in the area of international family law since its official opening in the HKSAR in 2012, and pledged support for its works in family law and other areas.

Mr Yuen noted that the cross-border recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance is important in at least two aspects.

"First, children deserve protection and it is important

to ensure that children's rights and interests are properly protected. Whilst other means of protection are not unimportant, legal regimes can often play the role of the ultimate protector. Accordingly, a robust international network to facilitate the effective and efficient recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance is undoubtedly an important means to protect children.

"Second, we always talk about the rule of law in the domestic context. Indeed, the United Nations' philosophy of 'Justice for Children' maintains that 'the way children are treated by national legal, social welfare, justice systems and security institutions is integral to the achievement of the rule of law and its related aims'. However, the universally cherished notion of the rule of law also has an international dimension, and this dimension is commanding growing importance as a result of globalisation and regional integration. A transnational network which can facilitate prompt recognition and enforcement of maintenance decisions definitely helps to uphold the rule of law on the international level," he said.

He added that the national and regional systems on international recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance vary significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The 2007 Hague Child Support Convention and Protocol seeks to ensure the effective international recovery of such maintenance by establishing an efficient system of co-operation between contracting states and making available a comprehensive range of applications.

Other major programmes of the HCCH Asia Pacific Week include the Meeting of the Hague International Network of Judges, a lecture by Chief Justice Diana Bryant of the Family Court of Australia on challenges in the development of international family law, as well as the Third Children's Issues Forum.

The HCCH Asia Pacific Week will conclude on Saturday (November 14). For more information on its events, please visit [www.hcchasiapacificweek2015.org](http://www.hcchasiapacificweek2015.org).

Ends/Monday, November 9, 2015

