

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

Some 120 members of the Judiciary, criminal law practitioners and academics today (May 20) participated in the 2017 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 future development of Hong Kong's criminal justice system.

Today's conference covered four major topics, namely active case management; protection to the vulnerable in court; joint enterprise law in Hong Kong; and development of sentencing practice.

Addressing at the opening ceremony of the conference, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsy Yuen, SC, said that the criminal justice system is one of the most important aspects of our legal system, underpinning the rule of law in Hong Kong.

He said, "On the part of the Department of Justice and as stressed in our Prosecution Code, we always endeavour to put in place a robust criminal justice system that is transparent and fair, as well as one that strikes the right balance between the protection of human rights and the need to protect the public from criminal activities."

Mr Yuen added, "To achieve this aim, substantial law as well as procedural measures to ensure a fair trial are of utmost importance. As the late Lord Bingham emphasis in his seminal book 'The Rule of Law', '[t]he right to a fair trial

is a cardinal requirement of the rule of law'."

"The concept of a fair procedure, which is constitutionally guaranteed in Article 87 of our Basic Law, is inherent in the concept of active case management."

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Keith Yeung, SC, in his closing remarks likewise quoted from Lord Bingham's book "The Rule of Law" that "fairness is a constantly evolving concept, not frozen at any moment of time" and that "[t]his is most obviously true of criminal trials". Mr Yeung said, "That underlines the value of our Criminal Law Conference, in that we can all take time out of our busy schedule, sit back and reflect on the ever evolving question of fairness."

Two overseas guest speakers, the Honourable Justice William Young of the Supreme Court of New Zealand and Professor David Ormerod, the Law Commissioner for Criminal Law and Evidence, England and Wales, shared their views on the topics. Representatives of the Bar Association, the Law Society and the Department of Justice were also invited to speak on the issues.

Ends/Saturday, May 20, 2017

