

SJ continues to brief legal sector on initiatives in Policy Address (with photos)

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The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, briefed members of the Election Committee Legal Subsector and representatives of the corporate electors in the Subsector on the major initiatives related to the Department of Justice (DoJ) in the Policy Address in a meeting today (October 8). She called on the legal sector to join hands to bring Hong Kong's unique strengths into full play to better integrate into the overall national development.

Ms Cheng first highlighted that the DoJ will strive to develop Hong Kong as the centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region to fully complement national development. She stressed that the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development and the Qianhai Plan have created abundant opportunities for Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution sector. The DoJ's initiatives will be conducive to the industry's further development. Following the implementation of a number of arrangements between Hong Kong and the Mainland on judicial assistance on civil and commercial matters, the DoJ will introduce a bill into the Legislative Council to implement the Arrangement on Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters between the Courts of the Mainland and of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and continue to explore ways to improve the mechanism for wholly owned Hong Kong enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law and choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong and other measures to assist the legal sector in developing the Mainland market. Meanwhile, the DoJ will actively pursue the setting up of international dispute resolution centres in Hong Kong and hosting of decision-making meetings in Hong Kong for promoting international legal co-operation and exchanges, as well as promote Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services by leveraging the unique strength of "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions" through the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area Legal Departments Joint Conference.

Ms Cheng then pointed out that the DoJ will continue to roll out Vision 2030 for Rule of Law programmes to promote proper understanding and recognition of the rule of law. During Hong Kong Legal Week, to be held from November 1 to 5, seminars relating to the rule of law, the launch of the rule of law database with objective data and discussions on lawtech matters will be conducted by the department. Various activities under the "3Es" projects with the themes of "engagement", "empowerment"

and "enrichment", including Studio DoJ, drama performances, a law quiz competition, a video competition, the Rule of Law Journey and legal exchanges among different jurisdictions, will also be organised by the DoJ for promoting rule of law education.

Ms Cheng emphasised that the measures for strengthening education on the Constitution, the Basic Law and national security in the Policy Address will enhance the sense of belonging to the country. She said that the DoJ will hold the Basic Law conference and the legal summit on the National Security Law again next year, and publish Basic Law: Selected Drafting Materials and Significant Cases to make clear to different sectors in the community the relationship between the Constitution and the Basic Law and the importance of safeguarding national security. The department will also assist teachers in preparing teaching materials on the Constitution and the Basic Law, enabling them to impart correct knowledge to the students, and has launched the Rule of Law Enlightenment programme in the new academic year to promote the Constitution, the Basic Law, national security and the rule of law to students through activities such as school talks and visits.

On attracting and retaining top legal talents, Ms Cheng pointed out that the Policy Address has introduced a range of measures, such as refining the scope of the existing industry segment and occupation of Dispute Resolution Professionals and Transactional Lawyers in the Talent List, relaxing the qualification requirements for arbitrators and mediators, and regularising the Pilot Scheme on Facilitation for Persons Participating in Arbitral Proceedings in Hong Kong to enhance Hong Kong's strength.

Lastly, Ms Cheng thanked the attendees for their support for the DoJ's initiatives, allowing smooth implementation of the department's work. She stressed that the department is committed to following up on and implementing the measures in the Policy Address as early as possible with a view to consolidating the foundation of the rule of law, and further enhancing Hong Kong's role as an international legal, deal making and dispute resolution hub.

Ends/Friday, October 8, 2021