

DSJ concludes visit to Switzerland (with photos)

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, today (March 21, Geneva time) concluded his visit to Geneva, Switzerland.

He attended the 55th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and delivered a speech on March 20 (Geneva time).

He said that legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law has been passed by Hong Kong's legislature to discharge Hong Kong's long overdue constitutional duty to enact laws on its own to safeguard national security, stressing that the legislation will bring about a stable and prosperous future for Hong Kong with the rights and freedoms enjoyed in accordance with the law fully protected, as always.

He pointed out that the legislation fully aligns with the principles of international laws and practices. The legislation clearly specifies that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong, are to be protected in accordance with the law. This important principle forms a cornerstone of the legislation, and is literally written in the new law.

He reiterated that each and every sovereign state has an inherent right to enact laws to safeguard its national security, including China, and many countries have enacted a host of national security laws based on their own national security risks and needs.

"The Basic Law Article 23 legislation will better protect our country from genuine threats to national security in the increasingly intricate geopolitics of our time," he said.

"The comments by some countries and organisations on this are made in complete disregard of basic jurisprudence and facts, and demonstrate nothing more than double standards and sophistry," he continued.

He highlighted that the legislative exercise has gained very wide support from the Hong Kong community.

Joining him for the meeting were representatives of the Department of Justice, the Security Bureau, and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government officials attended the meeting as members of China's delegation.

During his stay in Geneva, Mr Cheung also called on the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland, Mr Chen Xu. Mr Cheung expressed his deepest gratitude to Mr Chen for his support to Hong Kong in enhancing international understanding of the concerned legislative work.

Mr Cheung said he hoped that this trip will help the world to understand the necessity, legitimacy and urgency of the legislation.

Mr Cheung will leave Geneva for Hong Kong today.

Ends/Thursday, March 21, 2024