

National Security Legal Forum brings together leaders from government, business and legal sectors (with photos)

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The Department of Justice (DoJ) today (June 8) held the National Security Legal Forum with the theme of "Looking Back and Ahead, New Dawn for Development", inviting a number of senior government officials, internationally renowned legal experts and academics to share their insights on national security issues, such as the implementation and development of jurisprudence of the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL), as well as the "dual legislation and dual enforcement mechanism" institutional safeguard constituted along with the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO). Panel discussions among representatives from the financial and business sectors, and the interactive session between the Secretary for Justice and young people enabled members from different sectors to have a better understanding of national security, thereby dispelling misconceptions on the laws on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong and encouraging the public to be more proactive and conscious in safeguarding national security. The event attracted about 1000 guests and participants attending.

Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Nong Rong; and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) and Deputy Director of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPCSC, Mr Zhang Yong, were invited to deliver keynote speeches at the forum.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee; the Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, Mr Zheng Yanxiong; the Head of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, Mr Dong Jingwei; the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR, Mr Cui Jianchun; and the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, delivered their opening remarks at forum.

Speaking at the forum, Mr Lee said that safeguarding national security is the Government's responsibility, as well as the obligation of the whole community of Hong Kong. He pointed out that Hong Kong had finally completed the local legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law in March this year, marking an important milestone in Hong Kong's new journey from stability to prosperity. The NSL and the SNSO will be compatible and complementary, giving full play to the institutional advantages of "dual legislation and dual enforcement mechanism", ensuring that Hong Kong can focus on creating a more prosperous and better home without worries.

Mr Lam said that it is of crucial importance to build and reinforce the confidence of all sectors in the laws on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong, which was enacted and implemented strictly in accordance with the rule of law principle, and will

have positive interaction with Hong Kong's future development. The DoJ will, in collaboration with relevant bureaux and departments, continue to promote and enhance education on the laws on safeguarding national security and other topics related to Hong Kong's legal system and the rule of law through various means, so as to strengthen the trust of members of the public, and enhance their willingness to respect and obey the law as a matter of course.

There were four panel sessions at the forum. In the first session, legal experts and academics reviewed the practical experience, development of jurisprudence and theoretical achievements of the NSL in light of previous case laws, with a view to demonstrating that the implementation of the NSL is fully compatible with the rule of law values, such as independent judicial power and fair trials, in which Hong Kong takes pride. The second session illustrated how the SNSO, following its implementation, works in tandem with the NSL in a compatible and complementary manner with mutual reinforcement in their enforcement and interpretation, fully leveraging on the strengths of the "dual legislation and dual enforcement mechanism", so as to effectively respond to national security risks.

In the third session, representatives from the financial and business sectors shared their views on how the HKSAR's legal infrastructure for safeguarding national security creates a more stable environment for different sectors, and creates favourable conditions for high-quality development of the HKSAR. In the final session "Chat with SJ", Mr Lam discussed with the audience and student representatives how national security is relevant to daily life, and the important role of youth in safeguarding national security.

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, concluded the forum by thanking all guest speakers for sharing their insights and all the supporting organisations for their strong support. He pointed out that Hong Kong now has a comprehensive legal mechanism, in line with international standards, for safeguarding national security, fully protecting the legal rights and interests of investors and providing a more stable environment to help the HKSAR focus its efforts on developing a vibrant economy.

Ends/Saturday, June 8, 2024