LCQ5: Application of legal technology and artificial intelligence
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    Following is a question by the Hon Maggie Chan and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, in the Legislative Council today (July 9):

Question:

    It is learnt that the Department of Justice has been actively promoting the application of legal technology (lawtech) and artificial intelligence (AI) in the legal sector. There are views that the Government should actively develop AI tools (e.g. large language model developed by the Hong Kong Generative AI Research and Development Center) for application in areas of the common law, so as to enhance the operational efficiency and competitiveness of the legal sector. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has currently developed large language models for application in areas of the common law; if so, of the specific details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has plans to organise lawtech and AI summits or international exhibitions with the Mainland on a regular basis, so as to promote exchanges and co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong in lawtech; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it has plans to introduce lawtech from the Mainland and apply it in areas of Hong Kong common law, as well as promote the Mainland's AI legal service products to Hong Kong and overseas; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) of the measures in place to ensure that small and medium-sized law firms in Hong Kong can benefit from the development of lawtech and AI, such as providing technical support, introducing a tax allowance for "lawtech equipment" and subsidising their procurement of lawtech-related equipment?

Reply:

President,

(1) The Hong Kong Generative Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Center (HKGAI), an inter-school co-operative research centre led by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, has developed the first local large language model (LLM) based on DeepSeek technology with full parameter fine-tuning – "HKGAI V1". The HKGAI has developed multiple vertical applications for various public service sectors based on this local LLM, including the generative artificial intelligence (AI) document assistance application "HKPilot" and the legal-related "LexiHK". The Department of Justice (DoJ) is currently participating in the pilot use of "HKPilot" and is considering participating in the trial of "LexiHK" after reviewing its effectiveness. At the same time, the Faculty of Law of the Chinese University of Hong Kong has recently collaborated

with an AI software company to develop a legal information AI model based on the Cantonese LLM to facilitate the digital transformation of the legal system and industry. WiseLaw Digital Technology, a company incubated by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, has also recently announced its innovation achievement in legal AI products. The DoJ will collaborate with the HKGAI and other relevant government departments or institutions based on the trial results, market technology development, the needs of the legal sector and the community, and related resource considerations to examine and promote the further application of AI in the legal sector, especially LLMs related to Hong Kong law.

(2) The DoJ attaches great importance on the development of areas of lawtech and AI, and believes that forums and exhibitions provides an important platform for fostering exchange and co-operation. Currently, the DoJ is actively preparing related activities, aiming to hold the first large-scale activity open to global participants, creating a diverse and open exchange platform to promote the sharing of wisdom and experience from various regions.

We note that there are currently a number of well-developed lawtech enterprises in Mainland China. Since Mainland lawtech is now primarily designed for the Mainland legal system, it may not be directly applicable to Hong Kong's common law market. However, we strongly encourage Mainland lawtech enterprises to set up in Hong Kong to explore the local legal market, develop AI products suitable for the Hong Kong common law market, and use Hong Kong as a springboard to develop markets in other common law jurisdictions overseas.

(3) To promote the development of lawtech, the DoJ established the Consultation Group on Lawtech Development (Consultation Group) in January 2025, and invited the industry and various stakeholders to jointly study and formulate policy measures related to lawtech. The Consultation Group members include representatives from the legal and dispute resolution sectors, law schools, and the lawtech industry, including representatives from small and medium-sized law firms, ensuring that the policies will suit the needs of practitioners.

The Consultation Group notes in particular the challenges faced by small and medium-sized law firms in promoting the use of lawtech. In addition to economic factors, we understand that small and medium-sized law firms often have limited understanding of lawtech, and traditional practice models tend to rely less on technology, which affects their willingness to adopt new technologies.

In response to this situation, the DoJ has accepted the suggestion of the Consultation Group and plans to promote the use of technology in the legal industry progressively in three stages:

(1) Phase 1: Lawtech awareness and education

The aim of the first stage of the policy on promoting lawtech is to change certain

ingrained mindsets and practices within the legal profession by raising their awareness of lawtech, and helping them to understand the benefits of the use of lawtech that can bring to the profession and the risk management awareness that the profession should have. To this end, the DoJ is organising a series of lawtech-related roundtables and events to raise the profession's understanding of lawtech and to facilitate the exchange and sharing of information between the profession and lawtech experts to enable them to plan for viable adoption of lawtech.

The DoJ is also aware of the importance of educating law students about lawtech, and will work with stakeholders in legal education and training to strengthen training related to lawtech in legal education curricula through the Standing Committee on Legal Education and Training platform. The DoJ plans to draft and publish a roadmap to assist the legal profession in embarking on their path to technology applications. The DoJ also plans to issue ethical and security guidelines for the legal profession to follow when using lawtech.

(2) Phase 2: Promoting the profession's engagement with lawtech products

The DoJ intends to organise an exhibition of lawtech products to enable the legal profession to access and experience a variety of lawtech products available in the market and to identify lawtech solutions suitable for their business development.

In addition, we are considering conducting a market survey to consolidate a list of lawtech products available in the market in order to provide more comprehensive information to the legal sector for reference.

(3) Phase 3: Promoting the use of lawtech in the legal profession

The DoJ will encourage local and overseas lawtech enterprises to establish and grow in the local market, thereby fostering Hong Kong's lawtech ecosystem. The DoJ will review the effectiveness of the above strategies and take policy measures to promote the use of lawtech in the legal profession as appropriate. The DoJ will also review the existing legal framework from time to time in order to better support and regulate the development of innovative and emerging legal technologies.

Through these strategies, we hope to effectively enhance the awareness and use of lawtech by the legal profession, thereby enhancing the efficiency and quality of professional services and strengthening Hong Kong's position as an international legal services and dispute resolution centre in the Asia-Pacific region.

Thank you, President.

Ends/Wednesday, July 9, 2025