

15th China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference held in Hong Kong (with photos/video)

The 15th China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference, hosted by the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China and organised by the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), was held in Hong Kong today (September 23). The Conference was attended by around 80 participants including prosecutors general, attorneys general, and representatives from prosecution authorities from China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states.

Initiated by the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China in 2004, the China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference is a regular multilateral platform for high-level exchanges between prosecution authorities of China and ASEAN member states on issues of common interest, with a view to enhancing capacities in combatting transnational crimes, protecting people's livelihoods and maintaining regional stability. The Conference is part of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and ASEAN.

The year's Conference theme, "Combating Money Laundering and Corruption, and Recovering Assets in the Technological Age", highlights the transnational nature, fluidity and complexity of crimes relating to money laundering and corruption in the technological age and the challenges posed by technological advancements to effective law enforcement and prosecutions against money laundering and corruption, and calls for unity as China and ASEAN member states join hands to rise to such challenges in the digital era.

The Chief Grand Prosecutor and Prosecutor General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China, Mr Ying Yong; the Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mr John Lee; the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, officiated and delivered their welcoming speeches at the opening ceremony.

In his speech at the ceremony, Mr Ying said that with the robust development of the China-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership, the strategic mutual trust between the two sides has continued to strengthen. The China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference is an important conference under the China-ASEAN framework, and plays a vital role in promoting peace, security, prosperity, and sustainable development between China and ASEAN member states. The theme of this conference reflects the shared understanding among participants regarding the harms of money laundering, corruption, and cross-border transfer of illicit funds. It also embodies the common aspiration of prosecutorial authorities across jurisdictions to strengthen international anti-money laundering and anti-corruption co-operation, and to deepen collaboration in recovering criminal assets for better safeguarding regional security and stability while promoting common development.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr Lee thanked the Central Government for organising and supporting Hong Kong in hosting the conference. He said that China and ASEAN are good neighbours, good friends and good partners with a long history of co-operation. As the only bilingual common law jurisdiction under the "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong has full capability to uphold the rule of law and act as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution in the Asia-Pacific region. He said that countries should work together in the technological age to make use of innovative technology to combat the so-called innovators of crime, and build a future where technology serves safety. This conference is a good opportunity to strengthen co-operation between China and ASEAN countries in combatting cross-border criminal activities.

Mr Lam said in his speech that the HKSAR, under the "one country, two systems" principle, has close legal co-operation with ASEAN member states, including the signing of bilateral mutual legal assistance agreements, taking forward co-operation based on reciprocity undertakings and implementing key international conventions relating to combatting transnational crime. Hong Kong will continue to strengthen its collaboration with ASEAN member states in combatting transnational crime in response to the new developments in the region's economic and social landscape.

Following the opening ceremony, representatives from China and ASEAN member states proceeded to the plenary sessions. Addressing the plenary session of the Conference, Mr Lam proposed a multipronged approach to combatting money laundering and corruption in a technological age, including the strengthening of public education and imposing heavier penalties to deter members of the general public from laundering money for others; strict enforcement of legal duties to require financial institutions to detect and report suspicious transactions; using legal means to stop dissipation of funds in money laundering; and enhancing the prosecution's capability to handle technological crimes. Mr Lam briefed the participants on the latest legislative initiatives taken to improve Hong Kong's legal frameworks in combatting money laundering and corruption related offences, as well as Hong Kong's active role in deepening collaboration with ASEAN member states in this respect.

During the conference, the Heads of Delegations of China and ASEAN member states will sign the Joint Declaration of the 15th China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference, declaring and reaffirming the commitment of China and ASEAN member states to fight against transnational crimes, including money laundering and corruption; to strengthen co-operation and sharing of knowledge and best practices; to enhance anti-money laundering and anti-corruption regulatory frameworks and legal tools, and step up promotional works to enhance public understanding and awareness of money laundering and corruption.

During the conference held in Hong Kong, Mr Lam, as a member of the Delegation of China, attended bilateral meetings between the delegation and ASEAN member states to exchange views of common interest.

Ends/Tuesday, September 23, 2025