

National Security Legal Forum brings together legal experts and leaders from different sectors (with photos)

Today (April 15) marks the National Security Education Day. The Department of Justice (DoJ) held the National Security Legal Forum on the theme of White Paper titled "Hong Kong: Safeguarding China's National Security Under the Framework of One Country, Two Systems", inviting renowned legal experts, academics, and representatives from different sectors to discuss Hong Kong's endeavours in safeguarding national security as well as the experience and insights gained in the process. The goal is to deepen the awareness and correct understanding of all sectors of the community on the city's role in safeguarding national security, actively fulfil the practical requirements of the white paper and to achieve high-quality development of the "one country, two systems" policy under the auspices of high-standard security.

Delivering his opening remarks, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, said that the white paper not only reviews Hong Kong's endeavours in safeguarding national security and the experiences and insights gained in the process, it also sets out six fundamental principles in building high-standard security in order to support the high-quality development of Hong Kong.

In this regard, Mr Lam said that Hong Kong does not pursue "absolute security" or "generalised security" in safeguarding national security, but rather "relative security," which is also the definition of national security in the country's national security laws. The white paper states that Hong Kong should follow a holistic approach to development and security, and achieve a dynamic balance between the two; safeguard security with greater openness; respect and ensure human rights; safeguard security under the rule of law, especially with the judicial authorities exercising adjudicative power independently and free from any interference in trying cases pertaining to national security in accordance with the law.

Mr Lam stated that national security, like air and sunshine, is something without which one cannot survive, yet too often, mistakenly, is taken for granted. To arouse the awareness and vigilance of people in this respect and provide them with a proper and sufficient understanding of the fundamental principles that Hong Kong follows in

safeguarding national security, he urged various sectors of the community to study the white paper carefully.

This year's forum invited Vice President of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies and Professor of the School of Law of Tsinghua University Professor Wang Zhenmin to deliver a keynote speech to share his insights on the main content and principles of the white paper.

Following were two panel discussions, beginning with the first titled "Clearing up confusion and misunderstandings - Hong Kong's endeavours in safeguarding national security". Speakers from the legal sector reviewed the development of Hong Kong's laws for safeguarding national security, discussed relevant judicial cases, and conducted a comparative study and analysis of the relevant national security cases and laws in other countries, demonstrating Hong Kong's consistent adherence to the rule of law and respect for and protection of human rights in implementing national security laws.

The second panel discussion - featuring a member of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, an esteemed leader of the local business sector, and a Rule of Law Education (ROLE) ambassador under the ROLE Stars Train-the-Leaders Programme of the DoJ - explored how Hong Kong can achieve a dynamic balance between development and security, and how promoting national security education can build social consensus to safeguard the steady and long-term implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle with high-standard security.

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, in his closing remarks said that the white paper has significant guiding value to Hong Kong. The white paper reminded people once again that Hong Kong has the constitutional responsibility of effectively safeguarding national security, and that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and all sectors of the community should proactively implement the practical requirements of the white paper.

He noted that speakers of the two panel discussions conducted in-depth discussions from various perspectives on issues such as the development of Hong Kong's laws for safeguarding national security, and how to achieve a dynamic balance between development and safeguarding national security. The discussions provided an excellent

starting point for the participants to understand the essential requirements of the white paper, Dr Cheung added.

Citing the white paper, Dr Cheung said that safeguarding national security is a responsibility shared by all members of society. Everyone is a stakeholder and beneficiary, and no one can be a mere spectator. He expressed the hope that the forum today would further enhance public awareness of safeguarding national security and enrich public understanding of the importance of the white paper, and encouraged the community to cherish today's safe and stable environment.

Ends/Wednesday, April 15, 2026