

Speech by Secretary for Justice

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Following is a speech by Ms Elsie Leung, the Secretary for Justice, at the Opening Ceremony of the 2nd Asia and Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Prosecutors today (November 26):

Conference Host and Conference Organisers,  
Officials of the International Association of Prosecutors,  
Distinguished prosecutors, delegates and guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to have been invited to officiate at the opening ceremony of the 2nd Asia and Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Prosecutors. Some 16 jurisdictions are represented here today, and I welcome all of those attending the conference on behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. I have no doubt that all of you will benefit enormously from the sessions and the exchanges.

Since the reunification of Hong Kong with China in 1997, Hong Kong has actively promoted its position at the international level in accordance with the Basic Law. Within the Department of Justice, the Director of Public Prosecutions has pursued close links with prosecutors elsewhere and contributed to initiatives to counter crime and to ensure the effective prosecution of offenders. I was delighted when the Prosecutions Division was elected to organisational membership of the International Association of Prosecutors in 2001, as this has enabled our prosecutors to contribute directly to prosecutorial thought and action at the global level. It has also affirmed our commitment to working with others in all areas to bring offenders to justice, to combat crime, to co-operate in the gathering of evidence, and to assist in the recovery of criminal assets.

Transnational organised crime is more dangerous and more sophisticated than it has ever been. It is therefore vital for the prosecutors of the world to work closely together to develop strategies and techniques which will contribute not only to safer societies but also to a more secure world. Let me take this opportunity to emphasise that we in Hong Kong stand ready to do all we can to facilitate that process at local, regional and international levels.

The focus of this conference will be upon narcotics, and all of those participating stand to benefit from the free flow of ideas and experiences with their counterparts from other jurisdictions. I have no doubt that this exercise will yield positive results in terms of the future practice and direction of prosecutorial effort and policy. I compliment the IAP upon having taken the initiative to organise a conference of this type both in Asia and, earlier this year, in Europe. Hong Kong itself is intolerant of the trade in narcotics, and the effective prosecution of those who manufacture, distribute or possess dangerous drugs is a priority of our prosecutors. This is an area in which strong laws and effective penalties must be complemented by trained and dedicated prosecutors equipped with the resources and the vision necessary to see the task through to its conclusion.

I wish you all a successful conference and a happy stay with us. Hong Kong is a city with an amazing history and a great future. It is also a place of diversity, beauty and colour, with marvellous cuisine to suit the tastes of all. So please enjoy your visit to the full and be assured that we ourselves will do all we can to ensure that your stay with us is both rewarding and memorable.

It gives me great pleasure now to declare this conference open.

Ends/Friday, November 26, 2004

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