

**Speech by the Hon Rimsky Yuen, SC, JP Secretary for Justice
at the Opening Ceremony of the Prosecution Week 2015
on 23 June 2015 (Tuesday)**

The Honourable Mr Dennis Kwok; Chairlady of the Bar Association; President of the Law Society; Colleagues from other government departments and law enforcement agencies; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen :

1. First of all, thank you for joining us this afternoon so that we can together witness the official opening of this year's Prosecution Week. On behalf of the Department of Justice, may I extend to all of you our warmest welcome.
2. As the Director of Public Prosecutions ("DPP"), Mr. Keith Yeung SC, just highlighted, the theme we choose this year is "***Upholding Justice with Professionalism and Independence***". Bearing in mind the prevailing challenges facing the Prosecutions Division, I find this theme particularly apposite and well chosen.
3. In his opening address, the DPP has helpfully explained the two fundamental principles embedded in this theme, namely, *professionalism* and *independence*. I very much echo the DPP's observations. I was inclined to say "I concur, and have nothing to add." However, may I just add a few observations.
4. The environment of Hong Kong as a whole is undergoing significant changes, and so is the legal landscape of Hong Kong as well as the environment within which our public prosecutors have to perform their duties. These changes are caused by a combination of various factors, including: (1) the advance of technology, such as the impact of internet and social media; (2) the upsurge of cross-border issues, whether in the form of cross-border crimes or multi-jurisdictional criminal activities; (3) an increase of cases that are inherently politically sensitive, or have somehow become politically sensitive.

5. These changes bring about huge challenges to our law enforcement agencies as well as our public prosecutors, if not the entire Department of Justice.
6. For instance, the advance of technology has brought about challenges to our substantive criminal law as well as generated complex and difficult issues in the context of criminal evidence and criminal procedure. The upsurge of cross-border or multi-jurisdictional criminal activities, on the other hand, calls for better co-operation amongst different jurisdictions in the joint effort to combat criminal activities as well as to address incidental issues such as money laundry and confiscation of crime proceeds. When the world gets smaller as a result of technological advances and globalization or regional integration, criminal activities know no boundaries. Jointly with the relevant stakeholders, the Department of Justice would tackle these matters in ways which would serve the best interest of Hong Kong.
7. Another challenge is how to engage the general public, so as to provide them with the appropriate explanations within the limit permitted by the law and which would best serve public interests.
8. Such communications and explanations, we believe, are of vital importance.
9. First, given the upsurge of public order events and politically sensitive cases, it is perfectly understandable that the general public would like to know why certain cases are handled in the way they are. Indeed, from our angle, it is important that the public understand that all cases, irrespective of their nature and the persons involved, are and will continue to be handled independently and without taking into account any political consideration whatsoever.
10. Second, we believe communications and explanations can avoid unnecessary misunderstanding and maintain public confidence

in the prosecution system, and indeed the entire administration of criminal justice.

11. We believe that, by reaching out to society in explaining the role that we play in the criminal justice system, the public would have a better understanding of the fundamental principles to which prosecutors subscribe when doing their jobs. When the public identify themselves with the same fundamental principles as being important in maintaining the rule of law in Hong Kong, they will nurture a favourable environment which will permit the prosecution service to be delivered professionally and independently even in more turbulent of times.
12. It is for these reasons that the Prosecutions Division has continued to take forward the Prosecution Week after it was launched for the first time in 2012, with the objective of enhancing the public's understanding of its work. With this aim, my colleagues have made special efforts in planning the programme of this year's Prosecution Week to make it informative, interesting and stimulating.
13. Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Bar Association and the Law Society, as well as our colleagues in the other Government bureaux and departments and also law enforcement agencies, for their unflinching support through the years and also for this programme. I am confident that with all key players of the criminal justice system working together, this event will help enhance the openness, transparency and accountability of the criminal justice system to the community.
14. Last but certainly not the least, I would also like to extend to the DPP, and indeed the entire Prosecutions Division, my heartfelt gratitude for the hard work that they have done, not only in relation to the Prosecution Week but also in respect of their diligent discharge of their prosecutorial duties. Notwithstanding an upsurge in workload in the handling of public order event cases as well as a good number of other mega cases, the

Prosecutions Division continues to take forward its work with extreme dedication and with the sole aim of serving the public interests.

15. Further, notwithstanding the increasingly greater challenges we face day after day, I have every confidence that our DPP and his team will remain unshaken in discharging their duty independently and professionally, even if sometimes thanklessly, in the way as highlighted in the theme of this year's Prosecution Week.
16. On this note, may I now formally declare the commencement of the Prosecution Week 2015.

Thank you.