

Welcome Address by Mr. Rimsky Yuen, SC
Secretary for Justice, Chairman of LRC
at the LRC Annual Dinner and Essay Competition Award
Ceremony on 9 June 2017 (Friday)

Chief Justice, Members of the Law Reform Commission, Members of sub-committees, Colleagues, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First of all, on behalf of the Law Reform Commission (“LRC”), may I extend our warmest welcome to all of you for attending this LRC Annual Dinner and Essay Competition Award Ceremony 2017. This is the first time the LRC Annual Dinner and the Essay Competition Award Ceremony are being held together as a joint event.

2. Before this audience, I do not think I need to go into the importance of law reform. Suffice it perhaps to make two points.

3. First, law reform plays an important role in maintaining the rule of law. The law and its enforcement are two of the key components of any legal system. Effective enforcement of the law would be meaningless (or even counter-productive) unless the contents of the law can meet the needs of the society and are just and fair. In this regard, effective law reform can ensure that the

contents of the law would achieve the very objectives that should be achieved.

4. Second, we are living in a fast-changing world. It is no exaggeration to say that the world and the community we are living in are changing at a pace much quicker than before. This world-wide trend makes law reform more important than ever, as law reform is the very means to ensure that the law can be kept up-to-date, and thereby continues to meet the evolving needs of the society.

5. Since its establishment in 1980, the LRC has published a total of 65 reports on a very diverse range of subjects. Members of the Commission and its sub-committees, who most generously contribute their time and expertise without remuneration, are the backbone of the LRC. As Chairman of the LRC as well as the Secretary for Justice, may I express our utmost gratitude to all the members of the Commission and its sub-committees. This annual dinner, although very modest, represents our most sincere thanks and appreciation for your dedication, hard work and immense contribution.

6. In terms of LRC milestones over the past 12 months, the Third Party Funding for Arbitration Sub-committee finished its final report last October. A bill to implement the report on third party

funding was introduced into the Legislative Council in January this year, and the bill hopefully can be passed within this month. On the other hand, the Review of Sexual Offences Sub-committee published last November its second consultation paper on substantive offences, this time on *Sexual Offences Involving Children and Persons with Mental Impairment*. May I take this opportunity to thank both sub-committees, especially their respective Chairmen, Ms. Kim Rooney and Mr. Peter Duncan SC. My thanks also go to Mr. Dennis Kwok, who is the chair of the Bills Committee in respect of the third party funding bill, for his assistance in the legislative process.

7. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Eleanor Ling for her invaluable contribution to the LRC over the past six years, during which she served two terms as a Commission member. There is no doubt that Mrs. Ling's advices and support throughout these six years have been most valuable. I would also like to welcome to the LRC Ms. Alexandra Lo, our newly appointed member. I am sure that her expertise and extensive experience in banking and financial services, as well as her experience of public service, will greatly benefit the Commission.

8. Apart from giving me a chance to thank all of you in person, the LRC Annual Dinner also facilitates exchanges among members of the LRC and its sub-committees, Government officials

as well as representatives of other relevant bodies. I hope this dinner can promote dialogue and enhance understanding, with the goal of furthering the objectives of law reform. For this reason we serve a casual buffet dinner so that everyone can mix and mingle. I will hop around during the course of the dinner so that I can have the chance to meet and talk to the guests of every table.

9. Turning now to the Law Reform Essay Competition. This is already the fourth competition and has undoubtedly become an important event of the LRC's calendar. The purpose of the Law Reform Essay Competition is not only to provide law students with an opportunity to consider an interesting area of the law, and to propose how that law should be reformed, but also to help foster among law students an awareness of law reform generally, and the complexity of the legal and social implications involved. The topic chosen this year - "*Should Hong Kong Introduce a Good Samaritan Food Donation Law? If so, why and how?*" – is an interesting one, involving issues of poverty alleviation, food waste and environmental impact. May be this explains why we attracted a record number of 55 essays this year, all of which are of very high quality.

10. The unenviable task of choosing among the 55 essays fell to our Adjudicating Panel, which comprised Commission members, Professor Lin Feng, Professor Christopher Gane,

Professor Michael Hor, Ms. Angela Lee, Mr. Allan Leung and Mr. Robert Pang, SC. Needless to say, I am most grateful to our Adjudicating Panel for their enormous contribution to the success of the competition.

11. To the five finalists, I would like to congratulate each of you for your impressive essays. I have no doubt that you must have spent considerable time and effort on researching and writing these essays. You and your family (and I am very pleased to see many of your family members here this evening) should feel justifiably proud of your achievement. May I wish you every success in your studies and a bright future in your future career.

12. The five finalists have been awarded a one-month or two-month internship opportunity with a leading law firm, a barristers' chambers, a commercial corporation or the Department of Justice. I must take this opportunity to thank our four private-sector sponsors for their support in offering internships to the finalists. In alphabetical order, they are CK Hutchison Holdings Ltd, Hogan Lovells, Temple Chambers and Woo Kwan Lee & Lo. Their support goes a long way towards making this competition a success. I am most delighted that representatives from our sponsors are here with us this evening.

13. Last but not least, I would also like to thank the four

participating universities, namely, the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the City University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Shue Yan University for their assistance in distributing information about the competition to their students and encouraging them to participate.

14. Without further ado, may I wish everyone a very enjoyable evening. Bon Appétit!