

SJ's speech at Opening of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2020 cum Opening of Hong Kong Legal Hub and Launch of "Vision 2030 for Rule of Law" (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, at the Opening of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2020 cum Opening of Hong Kong Legal Hub and Launch of "Vision 2030 for Rule of Law" today (November 2):

The Chief Executive, the Chief Justice, Deputy Director He Jing (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government (CPG) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Mr He Jing), Deputy Head Li Jiangzhou (Deputy Head of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the CPG in the HKSAR, Mr Li Jiangzhou), Deputy Commissioner Zhao Jiankai (Deputy Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, Mr Zhao Jiankai), Commissioner Peh (Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Mr Simon Peh), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Today we are here to celebrate three matters: the opening of the Hong Kong Legal Hub, the start of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2020 and the launch of the 10-year initiative "Vision 2030 for Rule of Law" ("Vision 2030"). Each of them is pursued with a view to consolidating the foundation of our rule of law and to provide opportunities for the betterment and advancement of the HKSAR.

The Hong Kong Legal Hub comprises of the former French Mission Building (FMB) where we gather today, the former Central Government Offices and part of Two Exchange Square. Each of these three locations have been planned and are destined to be used in a specific way so that their potential is fully exploited for the benefit of Hong Kong. The FMB is to be the centre for international law where local, regional and international bodies gather to set up offices, thereby facilitating easy and effective exchanges. Two Exchange Square is to be the centre for international dispute resolution, where dispute resolution bodies will be housed leveraging on the excellent transport links that we have in Hong Kong to our international airport. The Department of Justice (DoJ) occupies the Main Wing, East Wing and part of the West Wing of the former Central Government Offices, now known as the Justice Place. The other part of the West Wing serves as the centre for local and regional legal and dispute resolution bodies, a very important backbone of Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services.

The Hong Kong Legal Week is an annual flagship event for the legal sector and the DoJ acts as the facilitator. The theme of the Inaugural Rule of Law Congress, which will be held every other year as one of the "Vision 2030" projects, is entitled "Towards 2030: A Decade of Action for Rule of Law". Other events include sessions on sports dispute resolution, the pilot scheme on case settlement conference in the District Court, and the annual Hong Kong Mediation Lecture, another highlight of the Hong Kong Legal Week. Last but not the least, is the Mediation Conference, which was postponed from May due to the pandemic, and this year's theme is "Mediate First - more than you can imagine".

The pandemic has indeed changed our way of life and work, but with technology, I believe our events are able to reach out to more people than before. Indeed under the new normal, the pursuit of Hong Kong's policy on lawtech, such as the use of online dispute resolution, becomes pivotal to ensure "Rule of Law and Justice for All", the motto of the DoJ.

I wish to now share with you our thoughts on the 10-year project, the "Vision 2030 for Rule of Law". It was inspired by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address the needs of people in both developed and developing countries, aiming to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all in economic, social and environmental dimensions, emphasising that no one should be left behind.

In support of these common goals, China has taken a proactive role in integrating the implementation of SDGs with national development strategy, translating each target of the 17 Goals into action plans with the overarching approach of "innovative, co-ordinated, green, open and shared development". (Note)

"Vision 2030" has been formulated with the needs of the local community and the national development strategy in mind. Goal 16 is particularly relevant as it aims to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels". One of its targets, Target 16.5 is to "Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms". We seek to achieve our aims through research, stakeholders' collaboration and capacity building, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of inclusive and fair societies at both local and international levels. To take the initiative forward, the Task Force on Vision 2030 for Rule of Law was set up with membership of renowned local and international experts to share their experiences and to give advice on the initiative.

One of the important projects of "Vision 2030" is the collection of objective data with a view to setting up a database, starting with Hong Kong, on information pertinent to the development and practice of the rule of law. This will enable us to conduct research and better understand how these objective data, together with the culture of the region (both social and legal cultures) may influence on the subjective perception of citizens. This we believe will help solidify the proper understanding of how rule of law is practised and hence to improve on it as necessary. With the guidance of the Task Force, we have started to collect such objective data in Hong Kong and will be sharing our experience and engaging with neighbouring regions.

Locally, we have already started projects that will promote the proper understanding and recognition of the rule of law, the Constitution and the Basic Law at various levels in the society, from the general public and the schools to the professionals. We described these as our "3Es" projects.

The first is Engagement - by engaging and reaching out to the general public and local community, we hope to raise the awareness on the importance of a law-abiding society. Early this year, we have launched a series of animated short videos, namely "Studio DoJ". We are working with ICAC to reach out to local communities.

The second E is Empowerment. "Vision 2030" is an inclusive initiative. We need to empower our young generation and better equip them to contribute to the development of the rule of law and to bring about positive changes to our society. For the school year 2020/21, we have collaborated with stakeholders on education and planned a range of activities such as "Rule of Law through Drama", interactive workshops for secondary students, as well as setting up electronic resources and materials.

The third E - Enrichment. This is designed to provide the legal community with the opportunities to advance and broaden their knowledge through continued education and professional development, and importantly exposure to international development through attending conferences and working in international bodies. Through our enrichment programmes, we hope more will be able to take on an active role in promoting the objects of "Vision 2030".

Finally, may I once again express my heartfelt gratitude to you all for being here with us today and to my colleagues for the excellent and dedicated effort in putting this

together. I look forward to your support in sharing the vision of developing inclusive and fair societies, and ensuring "Rule of Law and Justice for All".

(Note) China's Position Paper on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, April 22, 2016

www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpdmgjxgsfwbcxlhgcl70znxlfh/t1357701.shtml

Ends/Monday, November 2, 2020