

Speech by SJ at opening ceremony of 15th China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General  
Conference (English only) (with photo/video)

\*\*\*\*\*

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the opening ceremony of the 15th China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference today (September 23):

The Honourable Prosecutor General Mr Ying Yong (Secretary of the Party Leadership Group and Prosecutor General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate), The Honourable Chief Executive Mr John Lee, attorneys general, prosecutors general, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning. I wish to extend a warm welcome again to each and every one of you for joining us today at the opening ceremony of the 15th China-ASEAN Prosecutor-General Conference. We are indeed extremely honoured that the state parties to the China-ASEAN Prosecutor-General Conference agreed to hold this year's conference in Hong Kong. More importantly, I would like to thank the Central People's Government and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, in particular, Prosecutor General Mr Ying Yong, for the trust and confidence in the Department of Justice of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) by giving us the chance to organise this importance Conference for the very first time.

The China-ASEAN Prosecutor-General Conference is one of the highlights of multilateral procuratorial co-operation between the PRC and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Its establishment was initiated by the Supreme People's Procuratorate back in 2004. The Conference has now been firmly incorporated into the overall framework of the China-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. It has become a regular multilateral platform for high-level co-operation between China and ASEAN to enhance capacities of procuratorial organs in combatting transnational crimes, protecting people's livelihoods and maintaining regional stability.

Hong Kong, being a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China, together with Macao enjoying the same status, have been given the opportunity to take part in this international procuratorial co-operation mechanism. As the Secretary of Justice of Hong Kong, I attend the Conference in dual capacity: first, as a member of the Chinese delegation; and second, as the head of delegation of the HKSAR. This serves as a vivid example of Hong Kong's special status under the fundamental principle of "one country, two systems".

Under this fundamental principle, Hong Kong applies the common law system with a judiciary having the independent power of adjudication including that of final adjudication. Hong Kong has also been authorised to take part in international affairs in different areas either as a member of the PRC or in the name of Hong Kong, China. Let me focus on legal co-operation between the HKSAR and ASEAN countries.

At present, the HKSAR has operative bilateral mutual legal assistance agreements with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. For other ASEAN jurisdictions, the HKSAR may co-operate with them based on reciprocity undertakings and key international conventions relating to combatting transnational crimes such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime. In the past year, the HKSAR has processed 85 mutual legal assistance requests received from ASEAN member jurisdictions and we have issued eight requests to our ASEAN counterparts. Those cases cover asset recovery requests relating to various offences including corruption and money laundering. In addition, the HKSAR has also signed a memorandum of understanding with Brunei, Cambodia and Thailand on general legal co-operation.

Hong Kong's success as an international financial, trading and shipping centre depends very much on its strong rule of law, being one of the least corrupt places in the world and providing a secure environment whilst allowing free flow of capital and property. Hong Kong will spare no effort in strengthening our collaborations with ASEAN member states on addressing and combatting transnational crimes in response to the new developments in the region's economic and social landscape.

At the plenary session which will begin soon, I will share with you relevant developments and experiences in Hong Kong concerning the theme of this year's Conference, namely, "Combatting Money Laundering and Corruption, and Recovering Assets in the Technological Age". I also look forward to hearing from Prosecutor-General Mr Ying Yong and the heads of delegation from ASEAN member states.

As proven by the success which has been achieved in the past conferences, I am confident that by sharing knowledge and experiences in our respective jurisdictions, we will all be in a better position to address issues and overcome challenges relating to the theme of this Conference. More importantly, this Conference provides an excellent opportunity for leaders and representatives of the prosecutorial organs of all participating jurisdictions to establish and strengthen our friendship, and to consolidate our solidarity and determination to combat transnational crimes together.

On this note, I wish you all a very pleasant stay in Hong Kong, and a very constructive and successful Conference. Thank you very much.

Ends/Tuesday, September 23, 2025