

Chief Executive respects Chief Justice of Court of Final Appeal's decision to retire

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, said today (October 31) that she fully respects the decision of the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Geoffrey Ma Tao-li, to retire on January 11, 2021, upon reaching the statutory retirement age of 65.

Chief Justice Ma became the second Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) on September 1, 2010. By January 11, 2021, when he leaves office, he will have served in this key constitutional position for more than 10 years.

Mrs Lam highlighted the importance of the rule of law and an independent judiciary to Hong Kong's success under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems". These core values have been protected under the Basic Law since the establishment of the HKSAR. Throughout the years, the HKSAR Government has rendered all necessary support to the Judiciary in discharging its functions relating to the administration of justice in Hong Kong. Mrs Lam pledged that the same support would be given to Chief Justice Ma's successor and members of the Judiciary.

Mrs Lam paid tribute to Chief Justice Ma for his sterling contribution to upholding the rule of law and safeguarding the independence of the judiciary as prescribed under the Basic Law and efforts made in ensuring effective judicial administration. The relocation of the Court of Final Appeal to its present historic building was a significant milestone in the Judiciary's development.

"I should like to thank Chief Justice Ma profusely for his exemplary leadership in maintaining the highest professional standards, in spearheading reforms and in enhancing the efficiency and transparency of the Judiciary during his tenure. These are conducive to maintaining the continued international acclaim of Hong Kong's judicial system," Mrs Lam said. She also wished Chief Justice Ma a fulfilling and happy retirement.

According to the Basic Law and relevant legal requirements, the appointment of the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal is made by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission, and the Chief Executive shall obtain the endorsement of the Legislative Council and report the appointment to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the record.

"I have requested the Judiciary to activate the procedures for appointment of a new Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal in accordance with the Basic Law and the other relevant statutory requirements," Mrs Lam said.