

Senior Judicial Appointment: Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, has accepted the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission (JORC) on the appointment of the Honourable Mr Justice Andrew Cheung Kui-nung (Mr Justice Cheung), Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal, as the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal with effect from January 11, 2021. Subject to the endorsement of the Legislative Council, the Chief Executive will make the appointment under Article 88 of the Basic Law.

Mrs Lam said, "It gives me great pleasure to accept the JORC's recommendation to appoint Mr Justice Cheung as the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal. I sincerely congratulate Mr Justice Cheung on this impending appointment. Mr Justice Cheung is a highly competent judge with exceptional qualities and leadership. He is a person of high integrity and commands strong respect both within the Judiciary and from the legal profession. As Chief Judge of the High Court for over seven years, he possesses strong administrative experience in the operation of the Judiciary.

"The rule of law is the cornerstone of Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. An independent Judiciary plays a pivotal and indispensable role in upholding the rule of law and in ensuring the fair administration of justice; these are well recognized strengths of Hong Kong's judicial system. Throughout the years, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has been rendering all necessary support to the Judiciary in sustaining effective judicial administration. We have been meeting in full the resource requirements of the Judiciary, implementing the Judiciary's proposals on the remuneration and statutory retirement ages for judges and judicial officers, and taking forward the new High Court and new District Court projects. The Government will continue to provide the same support to Mr Justice Cheung and members of the Judiciary."

Mrs Lam took the opportunity to thank the Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma Tao-li who will be retiring in January 2021 for his staunch commitment and relentless efforts in safeguarding the rule of law and promoting the international status of the Judiciary, particularly amongst the common law jurisdictions. She also commended his sterling contribution in enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of judicial administration.

"The achievements of Chief Justice Ma have left behind a world acclaimed Judiciary that will maintain its stature in the hands of his successor. With his solid judicial experience, I am confident that Mr Justice Cheung will discharge his duties as the head of the Judiciary with distinction," Mrs Lam said.

Article 88 of the Basic Law provides that the Chief Executive shall appoint judges of the courts of the HKSAR on the recommendation of an independent

commission composed of local judges, persons from the legal profession and eminent persons from other sectors. The commission, JORC, consists of the incumbent Chief Justice, the Honourable Mr Justice Geoffrey Ma Tao-li, as Chairman, the Secretary for Justice and seven other members (two judges, one barrister appointed after consultation with the Bar Council of the Hong Kong Bar Association, one solicitor appointed after consultation with the Council of the Law Society of Hong Kong and three persons not connected with the practice of law).

Article 90 of the Basic Law provides that the Chief Executive shall obtain the endorsement of the Legislative Council on the appointment of the judges of the Court of Final Appeal, including the Chief Justice. The Government will now proceed to seek the endorsement of the Legislative Council of the recommended appointment.

The curriculum vitae of Mr Justice Cheung is at the Annex.