

Speech by SJ at launch of Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy (English only) (with photo/video)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the launch of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy under Hong Kong Legal Week 2024 today (November 8):

Vice-Minister Mr Wang Zhenjiang (Vice-Minister of Justice), Commissioner Cui (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Cui Jianchun), the Secretary General of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, Mr Wang Songmiao, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. Today marks a milestone as we embark on a new journey to nurture legal talents in Hong Kong, China as a whole, and countries along the Belt and Road, as well as across the globe. The ceremony today has been graced by the presence of so many distinguished guests from home and abroad. I am deeply grateful to each and every one of you, witnessing together the launch of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy.

I have to confess that I am rather excited and also emotional today. This is because the establishment of the Academy is very much my brainchild. Its gestation, from conception to delivery, lasted for more than a year. I am thrilled to see the birth of a healthy and energetic baby full of potential today.

The initiative to establish the Academy was first mentioned in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address. To take forward this initiative, the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Office and the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Expert Committee were set up on October 8 this year. I am very pleased that Dr Yang Ling, a renowned scholar in international legal and dispute resolution with extensive management experience, has agreed to take up the post of Director of the Office. On the other hand, the Expert Committee consists of three advisory boards, namely the International Advisory Board, the Mainland Advisory Board and the Hong Kong Advisory Board. We are truly honoured that 17 distinguished legal experts specialising in a wide range of legal subjects from different jurisdictions have agreed to be the founding members of the Expert Committee.

The Expert Committee has just held its first Plenary Meeting yesterday, during which expert members shared their professional insights and experiences, and offered valuable advice, in different areas. Some of the eminent experts from overseas have graciously taken the time to come all the way from places as far as, for example, Europe to Hong Kong to join us at the Hong Kong Legal Week and today in the launching ceremony. I thank all of you

for your unwavering support.

As foreshadowed in the Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address announced a few weeks ago, the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy is officially launched today.

The Academy seeks to capitalise on Hong Kong's unique strengths and advantages made possible by the "one country, two systems" principle as the only bilingual common law system, using both English and Chinese, with international characteristics, which always enjoy a high reputation around the world. It will serve as a capacity building, as well as knowledge and experience sharing, platform for legal professionals in Hong Kong, the Mainland and other countries, in particular those along the Belt and Road.

Insofar as Hong Kong legal professionals are concerned, they are likely to be both teachers and students of the Academy. I am a strong believer in the saying, in Chinese "教者學也", which means when you teach someone, both the teacher and the student will benefit. Insofar as our country China is concerned, the establishment of the Academy is indeed extremely timely because, in the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization adopted on July 18, 2024, there is a specific section on strengthening the rule of law in foreign-related affairs by, among other things, the training of legal professionals for foreign-related affairs. Turning to friends from other countries, in particular those along the modern Belt and Road, as the Belt and Road Initiative has just entered into its second decade this year, it is clearly essential for us to strengthen our legal capabilities jointly to ensure that our future co-operation will be based on a solid foundation of the rule of law.

The child is born today. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to bring him up together. Although this child's genetic parent is Hong Kong, he is meant to be a child belonging not just to Hong Kong, but also China as a whole and friends around the world. It is in our common interest to see this child growing up wisely, strongly and happily.

Thank you very much.

