

Statement of Chief Justice of Court of Final Appeal

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

Chief Justice Andrew Cheung of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal notes with regret the resignations of Lord Collins of Mapesbury and Lord Sumption as Non-Permanent Judges (NPJs) of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal (CFA).

Under the Basic Law, the power of final adjudication of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is vested in the CFA, which may as required invite judges from other common law jurisdictions to sit on the Court. Since the CFA's establishment in 1997, overseas NPJs have played a significant role in the work of the Court and sat on most of the substantive appeals that it has heard. Over the years, overseas NPJs, including Lords Collins and Sumption, have made valuable contributions to the work of the Court for which we in Hong Kong are very grateful.

The Chief Justice reiterates the Judiciary's commitment to upholding the rule of law and judicial independence in Hong Kong guaranteed under the Basic Law. All judges and judicial officers will continue to abide by the Judicial Oath and administer justice in full accordance with the law, without fear or favour, self-interest or deceit.

There are currently four local NPJs and eight NPJs from other common law jurisdictions in the CFA. Two of the overseas NPJs were appointed last year and in May this year respectively. Suitable candidates from overseas common law jurisdictions will continue to be appointed to the Court as NPJs.

The Chief Justice has complete confidence that the CFA will continue to fully perform its constitutional role as the final appellate court in Hong Kong. Its operation will not be affected by any change in membership of the Court.

This is a statement issued by the Chief Justice on behalf of himself and of the Permanent Judges of the CFA.