

## Hong Kong hosts 18th Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific (with photo)

The Judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China is hosting the 18th Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific today and tomorrow (November 16 and 17).

Organised by the Judicial Section of the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific (LAWASIA), the Conference is being held in a virtual mode for the first time. It is attended by 24 Chief Justices and eight representatives of Chief Justices from jurisdictions throughout Asia and the Pacific region.

Addressing the conference today, the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Andrew Cheung Kui-nung, extended his warmest welcome to all participating judiciaries and heartfelt gratitude to LAWASIA for its efforts in organising it.

Chief Justice Cheung said that this year is a special one for Hong Kong. Apart from hosting this significant conference, the city has been celebrating the 25th anniversary of its return to the motherland and the establishment of the "one country, two systems" framework.

"It is under the 'one country, two systems' framework, which is embodied by the Basic Law, that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's common law tradition continues to thrive as part of the People's Republic of China, a civil law country. The independence of Hong Kong's Judiciary and maintenance of the common law have also been affirmed in President Xi Jinping's address marking the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland," he said.

"The conference showcases Hong Kong's close ties with other jurisdictions throughout Asia and the Pacific region. No matter whether the jurisdiction is civil law or common law, whether East or West, there is much to be learnt from one another, and much to be gained by having one another for support," Chief Justice Cheung added.

The Chief Justice of New South Wales, Australia, and the Chair of the Judicial Section, LAWASIA, the Hon Andrew Bell, said in his opening remarks that all countries, whether in the civil or common law traditions, face common issues and challenges, noting that a dynamic dialogue about these issues and challenges between judicial leaders in the Asia Pacific region is of great importance and value.

In 2022, as the world emerges from the shock of the global pandemic and the dislocation and disruption to stability that it has caused, the rule of law is more important than ever, he added.

During the two-day conference, participating Chief Justices and representatives of Chief Justices will examine and explore diverse challenges facing all judiciaries in different discussion sessions. Topics include facing criticisms from the outside and engaging with the public, case management in a contemporary context, greater prominence for family courts, and judicial education.

It is the second time Hong Kong is playing host to the conference, the first having been held in 2007. The conference is a biennial event which provides the Chief Justices from Asia and the Pacific region with a forum for discussing various issues that are of common interest to judiciaries. Top judges of the region will make use of the opportunity to exchange experiences and discuss mutual concerns, which will be conducive to the further development of the judicial system in their jurisdictions.

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