

## **Address by the Chief Justice at the Ceremony for the Admission of New Senior Counsel**

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On behalf of all my colleagues, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you to this annual ceremony for the appointment of Senior Counsel.

We would like to extend to you, Mr Barma, Mr Luk, Mr Wong and Mr Jat, our sincere and heartiest congratulations on your achieving the rank of Senior Counsel. Your appointments are hard earned and well deserved. This marks the end of a stage in your professional life's journey and the beginning of a new and exciting stage. A stage where the responsibilities will be onerous and challenging. I am confident that you will continue to strive for improvement and to develop so as to realize your full professional potential.

We must also extend our warmest congratulations to your families. It is fully appreciated and recognized that their sustained encouragement as well as their loyal and strong support played a crucial part in your success. Today, they must be very happy and they have every reason to be very proud of you.

The four appointments this year will add lustre and strength to the senior bar. As with appointments in previous years, the appointments this year demonstrate once again that the Bar is truly a meritocratic profession. There is no question of wealth, influence or connections playing any part at all. Young men and women achieve success and rise to the top at the Bar because they have, and are recognised by their professional peers to have, the integrity, the ability and the dedication. And it is fundamental in the public interest that this must always remain to be so.

The rank of Senior Counsel is a stamp of quality and carries a status not only in the legal profession and before the courts, but also in our community. That status carries important responsibilities. You must discharge these responsibilities to the fullest. You have to lead by example by setting the highest professional standards of integrity and competence. You have to carry on the fine tradition of the Bar to uphold the rule of law, a tradition which is a most valuable community asset. You must play your full part in the Bar's affairs and do all you can to assist pupils and young practitioners. And you must make time available for community service.

Today, the Bar as an institution faces many challenges and in my view, is at a critical stage of its development. With increasing globalisation and rapid advances in information technology, there will be profound changes in all spheres of society. And the pace of change is likely to accelerate. In this fast changing world, our well educated and well informed citizens will have rising expectations of the institutions that serve them. This is so not only for public institutions including the Judiciary but also of the professions including the Bar.

If the Bar is to meet community expectations and to continue to command public respect and confidence, like all institutions, it must, whilst holding steadfast to its core values and fundamental ideals, continue to adapt and to re-engineer itself. This would require extensive collegiate debate and soul-searching as to the vision of the Bar's role in the 21st century. In the context of such a vision, the Bar would need to address many difficult and challenging issues relating to its future direction. The Bar's position and action on these issues will be judged critically not only by those involved in the law but also by the community. They will pose and ask the ultimate question. Whom does the Bar serve? I trust and expect that the Bar's position and action on these issues will unequivocally demonstrate that the Bar serves the public and the public interest. The Bar, and in particular the leaders of the Bar, owe it to themselves, to the Bar and to posterity to ensure that this is so.

With these remarks, on behalf of the Bench, I wish the four of you every happiness and success in your careers as Senior Counsel.

11 May 2002 (Saturday)