

SPEECH OF MR RODEN TONG
PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF HONG KONG
AT THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY
OF THE LAW ASSOCIATION, HKUSU (SESSION 2026–2027)
20 MARCH 2026

Distinguished Guests, Teachers, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good evening. It is a great honour and pleasure to join you at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Law Association of the Hong Kong University Students' Union.
2. Over the past few weeks, I have had the privilege of attending the inauguration ceremonies of all three law schools in Hong Kong. When I first received these invitations, I confess that I thought I could simply prepare one speech and deliver it three times. I soon realised, however, that law students are far more diligent than that. Students from each law school attend and support the ceremonies of the others. This meant that if I were to repeat myself, I would be found out very quickly. Tonight, therefore, is perhaps the most challenging speech of the series, as it is my third and final one, and I must still try to say something meaningful, sincere and, hopefully, memorable.
3. The Faculty of Law at the University of Hong Kong has a distinguished tradition of scholarship, service and leadership. Its graduates have played, and continue to play, a vital role in shaping Hong Kong's legal development and public life. This evening marks not only the formal commencement of a new term of office through the passing of the mandate to the new Executive

Committee, but also a moment of continuity, where experience meets aspiration, and responsibility is entrusted to the next generation.

“Veritas” and “Lumen”

4. First and foremost, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the members of the new Executive Committee, “*Veritas*”. Truth is not merely a concept to be admired, but a discipline to be practised. In the study and practice of law, truth demands intellectual honesty, moral courage and respect for facts, even when they are inconvenient.
5. The theme of the Cabinet this year, “*Lumen*”, meaning to light up and to enlighten, is equally powerful. It symbolises justice, hope and clarity. I wish the new Executive Committee every success in embodying this spirit, showing courage in the face of challenges, fostering meaningful relationships, and inspiring fellow students in advancing the legal profession and upholding the rule of law in our society.

The Law Society and Professionalism

6. Founded in 1907, the Law Society of Hong Kong now brings together nearly 14,000 solicitors across diverse areas of practice. For more than a century, we have remained steadfast in serving the community, upholding professional standards and promoting legal education.
7. Professionalism begins with fidelity to our constitutional order and the rule of law, which includes judicial independence, due process, equality before the

law and reasoned adjudication. Under the principle of one country, two systems, Hong Kong remains the only common law jurisdiction in China and the world's only truly bilingual common law jurisdiction operating in both Chinese and English. This is not merely a matter of heritage. It is a genuine strength that underpins our capabilities in litigation, arbitration and mediation on both regional and international stages.

8. As President of the Law Society, I am proud that, through admission, regulation and discipline, we have safeguarded professional standards while nurturing talent and advancing access to justice. In doing so, we sustain public trust in our courts and in the administration of justice.
9. The practice of law is not merely a business. It is a public service rooted in the community's confidence that justice will prevail. Integrity, objectivity, diligence and respect are not optional virtues. They are the foundations upon which public confidence rests.

Professionalism at Challenging Times

10. In times of uncertainty, when institutions are tested and the rule of law is challenged, the public looks to the legal profession to step forward, to lead and to inspire confidence.
11. Following the Tai Po fire incident, the Law Society mobilised resources to support affected owners and residents. Through our free legal helpline and service counters, we have handled hundreds of cases and provided preliminary legal advice. A calligraphy inscription received from residents was a deeply

moving reminder of the trust the community places in our profession. This work was made possible only through the compassion and dedication of our volunteer members and student helpers. It exemplifies professionalism under pressure.

12. Moments like these remind us that law is not only argued in courtrooms. At its best, it brings clarity, support and hope to those in need. In this sense, the spirit of “*Lumen*” is not merely symbolic. It is lived.

Reflections for Future Members of the Profession

13. Allow me to share a few reflections with you as future members of the profession.
14. First, aim high while remaining grounded. I look forward to seeing some of you become leaders of the profession, partners in leading firms, or members of the judiciary.
15. Second, always uphold integrity. Trust, once lost, is difficult to regain. In the long run, your ethical compass will define your professional reputation far more than any short-term achievement.
16. Third, understand and cherish Hong Kong’s unique strengths under one country, two systems. Hong Kong’s strategic role is clear. It is to consolidate our status as an international centre and to develop as a high-end hub for legal and professional talent. The legal profession has an important role to play in enabling this vision.

17. In time, the responsibility of safeguarding these values will pass to you. From my experience working closely with young people, I have every confidence that your generation has both the ability and the commitment to carry this responsibility forward with wisdom and dedication.
18. Do not forget to be passionate about making a difference. The law is not only about cases and transactions. It is about shaping a fairer, more just and more compassionate society.

A New Chapter and Closing

19. The Law Society is also entering a new chapter. On 8 April this year, we will move into our new office premises at The Center in Central, which also marks our founding in 1907. At the same time, our existing premises at Wing On House will be transformed into a multi-function centre to better serve the profession.
20. If you have not yet joined the Law Society as a student member, I warmly encourage you to do so. Student membership is free and offers an early connection to the profession you are preparing to enter. Through this, you will gain exposure to a wide professional network, ranging from trainee solicitors to experienced practitioners, and perhaps even your future employers.
21. As student members, you will also have access to the Law Society App, which serves as an important channel of engagement with the profession. Through the App, you can receive President's letters, circulars, and timely information

on activities, training opportunities and initiatives relevant to your professional development. It is a simple yet effective way to stay informed, connected and engaged as you begin your journey in the legal profession.

22. More importantly, student membership allows you to start seeing yourselves not merely as law students, but as part of a professional community committed to justice, service and excellence.
23. Before I conclude, let me commend the Law Association for setting an agenda that seeks to light the way for its members. Let “*Lumen*” be more than a theme. Let it be your method, enlightening others through dialogue and guiding by example.
24. I wish you every success in the year ahead, clarity of purpose and confidence in the path you have chosen. Congratulations, and thank you.