

SPEECH OF MR RODEN TONG

PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF HONG KONG AT THE HONG KONG FEDERATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS AGM DINNER 31 JULY 2025

1. Good evening, Ms. Lora Yip, President of the Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers, Dr. the Honourable Elsie Leung, GBM, JP, Former Secretary for Justice and Honorary Member, The Honourable Miriam Lau, GBS, JP, Honorary Member, Mrs. Regina Leung, Honorary Member, Members of the Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.
2. Thank you, Lora, for your kind invitation and warm welcome. It is an honour to join you this evening for the Annual General Meeting Dinner of the Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers, or FIDA.
3. This is my second time attending as President of The Law Society of Hong Kong, and I must say that last year's dinner was memorable not least because I was the only man in the room! This year, I'm pleased to have Ambrose and Nick with me. Gentlemen, thank you for your support and for helping me restore a little balance to our group photo!
4. Tonight is especially meaningful as we celebrate FIDA's 50th anniversary. Half a century of dedication to advancing women's rights, promoting gender equity, and protecting the rights of women and children is truly inspiring. My heartfelt congratulations to everyone at FIDA for this remarkable milestone.

5. Over the past five decades, FIDA has been an unwavering advocate for justice, equality, and community outreach. From promoting access to legal education to championing family welfare, your contributions have strengthened the very fabric of our society and inspired generations of legal professionals.

A Unique and Dual Responsibility

6. Like FIDA, the Law Society of Hong Kong has a long and proud history. Established in 1907, we are one of the oldest legal professional bodies in the world. But what truly sets the Law Society apart is our unique role as a statutory self-regulatory body.
7. This dual responsibility means that we are not just here to serve and support the interests of our members, we are also accountable to the public. We are entrusted with upholding the highest standards of professional conduct and integrity within the legal profession while ensuring that these standards align with the public's expectations and the broader interests of society.
8. This responsibility defines everything we do at the Law Society. It is a delicate balance, but it is one that we embrace wholeheartedly because it reinforces the trust placed in us by both the profession and the public.

Planning for the Future

9. Over the years, the Law Society has grown significantly. In 1998, when we moved into our current office at Wing On House, we had just over 4,500 members, supported by a Secretariat of 65 staff, and 35 committees.
10. Today, our membership has grown to over 13,400 solicitor members, supported by a Secretariat of 140 staff and more than 130 committees and working parties addressing a wide range of complex issues. This growth is a testament to the resilience and dedication of Hong Kong's legal community, but it also brings new challenges particularly the need for modern, flexible facilities to meet our expanding operational needs.
11. To address these challenges and to prepare for the future, the Law Society has taken a bold and strategic step forward. After extensive deliberations and careful planning, we have acquired new office premises on the 26th floor of The Center at 99 Queen's Road Central.

A Forward-Looking Investment

12. This acquisition is not just a response to our current needs. It is a long-term investment that reflects our commitment to future-readiness. The new premises, spanning approximately 24,980 square feet, will provide much-needed space and flexibility.

13. Importantly, our new office will allow us to centralise our operations, foster greater collaboration, and create a dynamic environment that is accessible to both our members and the public. It is a tangible demonstration of our commitment to serving our members while upholding our responsibility to the community.
14. We are not alone in recognising the importance of investing in dedicated office infrastructure. Earlier this year, Association of China-Appointed Attesting Officers Limited (CAAO) acquired additional premises at BOA Tower, further reinforcing the profession's commitment to long-term growth and operational excellence.
15. Similarly, other prominent organisation, such as the Securities and Futures Commission, has made strategic investments in office spaces to support their evolving needs. These examples reflect a shared understanding that having the right facilities is essential for addressing the challenges of an ever-changing professional landscape.

Celebrating Shared Values

16. As we celebrate FIDA's 50th anniversary tonight, I am reminded of the values that unite us: justice, inclusion, and service. These ideals lie at the heart of both FIDA and the Law Society, and they continue to guide us as we work to strengthen the legal profession and serve the broader community.

17. I hope that our two organisations will continue to collaborate closely, advancing the interests of the legal profession and the wider public we serve.
18. Before I close, I want to express my deepest appreciation to FIDA and its members for your tireless contributions. Your work inspires us all to aim higher, think bigger, and create a brighter future for the next generation of lawyers in Hong Kong.
19. May FIDA's next 50 years be even more impactful than the last, and may our partnership grow ever stronger.
20. Once again, thank you for the honour of addressing you this evening. Please enjoy the rest of this wonderful evening.