

SPEECH OF MR. RODEN TONG
PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF HONG KONG
AT THE NEW OFFICE GRAND OPENING CEREMONY
8 APRIL 2026

Secretary for Justice,

Government Officials,

The Honourable Mr Justice Jeremy Poon and Senior Representatives of the Judiciary,
Deputy Director Mr Yu Xiangjun of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the CPC
Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council,
Director-General Mr Liu Chunhua of the Legal Department of the Liaison Office of the
Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,
Director-General Ms Zhou Qian of the Treaty and Law Department of the Office of the
Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in
the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,

Members of the Executive Council and Legislative Council,

Consuls General,

Leaders from Law Schools, Legal and Professional Bodies, Chambers of Commerce,
Past Presidents, Honorary Members, Council Members, Committee Chairs and Vice
Chairs,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

1. It is my distinct honour, as President of The Law Society of Hong Kong, to welcome you to this historic occasion, the Grand Opening of our new office premises, which also coincides with the 119th anniversary of the incorporation of the Law Society on 8 April 1907.

2. Your presence today, from across the judiciary, government, the legal profession, academia, business, and the international community, is a powerful affirmation of the shared respect for the rule of law and for the role of the legal profession in Hong Kong. It also reflects confidence in Hong Kong's long-established system of independent self-regulation of the legal profession, which operates in accordance with the law, professional standards, and the public interest. For that, we are deeply grateful.

One Country, Two Systems – Entering a New Era

3. For more than a century, the history of Hong Kong and the history of The Law Society of Hong Kong have been closely intertwined. Both have evolved through times of opportunity, challenge, and transformation.
4. President Xi has observed that the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” has entered a new era. This is not merely a statement of continuity, but a call to responsibility. In this new era, the legal profession is expected not only to uphold the system, but to help it shine even brighter through integrity, professionalism, and confidence in the rule of law.
5. Hong Kong remains the only common law jurisdiction within China, and the world's only truly bilingual common law jurisdiction operating in both English and Chinese. This unique institutional strength is not historical coincidence. It is the product of trust, trust in the law, in the courts, and in an independent and responsible legal profession.

A Robust Legal System, Recognised Internationally

6. Hong Kong's legal system continues to be internationally recognised for its robustness, fairness, and judicial independence. The Basic Law provides firm constitutional safeguards for these core values, and our judiciary continues to adjudicate cases strictly in accordance with the law, evidence, and due process.
7. While annual indices may fluctuate, the long arc remains clear. International assessments, including the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index, consistently affirm Hong Kong's strengths in areas such as absence of corruption and regulatory enforcement. These are not achievements to be taken for granted. They are standards that must be preserved, strengthened, and surpassed.
8. Public confidence in the administration of justice does not rest on words alone. It rests on daily professionalism, in our courts, in our legal advice, and in the conscientious discharge of our professional responsibilities.

A New Era of Technology – Why Law Matters More Than Ever

9. We are also living in a time of extraordinary technological transformation. The rapid rise of artificial intelligence, particularly generative AI, is reshaping how knowledge-based professions operate, including our own.
10. I am often asked whether lawyers will be replaced by AI. My answer has been consistent. In this new era, law is not less important. It is more important than ever.

11. Technology can enhance efficiency, but it cannot replace judgment, ethics, accountability, or the human responsibility to ensure fairness and justice. As innovation accelerates, the rule of law must remain the guiding framework within which technology develops. It is the legal profession's responsibility to ensure that progress is anchored in principle, and that innovation serves society rather than undermines it.

The Role of the Young Generation

12. This responsibility does not rest on one generation alone. I have strong faith in our young members and in the next generation of legal professionals.
13. Under “One Country, Two Systems”, Hong Kong lawyers are uniquely positioned as bridges between systems, markets, and cultures. Our young professionals, equipped with global perspectives, technological fluency, and a deep understanding of our legal foundations, are well placed to unleash this potential.
14. They will not only inherit the profession. They will redefine it, connecting Hong Kong with the Mainland and with the world, and shaping the future of legal services in an increasingly interconnected global landscape.

The New Office – A Platform for Connection

15. The opening of our new office premises today is therefore far more than a change of address.

16. It is the result of careful, long-term planning by the Council and reflects the growth of our profession. When the Law Society moved into Wing On House in 1998, we had just over 4,500 members. Today, we represent close to 14,000 solicitors, supported by more than 130 committees and a dedicated Secretariat.
17. These new premises are designed as a platform for connection, connecting different sectors of the profession, connecting Hong Kong with our country, and connecting our legal community with the international legal and business world. They also provide a fitting venue to welcome international delegations and to demonstrate Hong Kong's enduring confidence in its common law system.
18. At the same time, our Wing On House premises will continue their legacy by being transformed into a multi-functional service centre for members, supporting dispute resolution, training, and professional exchange.

Gratitude and Leadership in Times of Adversity

19. Today is also an occasion for gratitude.
20. We are deeply thankful to our distinguished guests from all fields for joining us to witness this important milestone. Your presence signifies trust, partnership, and shared commitment to Hong Kong's future.
21. History teaches us that the true measure of a profession is revealed not in moments of ease, but in times of adversity. When society faces uncertainty or challenge, the legal profession must be prepared to step forward, to lead, to defend the rule of law, and to inspire confidence.

22. This sense of duty has defined our profession for over a century, and it will continue to define us in the years ahead.

One Profession, One Goal

23. As we step into these new premises, we do so carrying 119 years of history, the dedication of those who came before us, and the confidence of those who will follow.
24. We move forward with one shared goal, to contribute meaningfully to Hong Kong, to our country, and beyond. United by professionalism, connected by purpose, and guided by the rule of law, the legal profession will continue to play its part in shaping a stable, open, and confident future.
25. Before I conclude, may I express our sincere appreciation to the Chief Executive and the Chief Justice for their video messages of congratulations. Their warm encouragement is deeply meaningful to the legal profession and adds special significance to today's celebration. I would also like to thank the Secretary for Justice for honouring us as the Guest of Honour at the Plaque Unveiling Ceremony.
26. May I once again express my sincere gratitude to all of you for being part of this historic moment. I hope you will enjoy this occasion as much as I do.

Thank you very much.