

Speech by DSJ at UNHRC meeting (with photo)

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The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, today (March 20, Geneva time) attended the 55th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, and delivered a speech on the Basic Law Article 23 legislation.

Joining him for the meeting were representatives of the Department of Justice, the Security Bureau, and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government officials attended the meeting as members of China's delegation.

Following is the speech by Mr Cheung at the meeting today:

Mr President,

Legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law has just been passed by Hong Kong's legislature, to discharge Hong Kong's long overdue constitutional duty to enact laws on its own to safeguard national security.

First and foremost, each and every sovereign state has an inherent right to enact laws to safeguard its national security, including China. Many countries have enacted a host of national security laws based on their own national security risks and needs. The United States has at least 21 pieces of legislation; the United Kingdom has at least 14 pieces; Canada has at least 9 pieces; and Singapore has at least 6 pieces.

The Basic Law Article 23 legislation will better protect our country from genuine threats to national security in the increasingly intricate geopolitics of our time. The legislation fully aligns with the principles of international laws and practices. The comments by some countries and organisations on this are made in complete disregard of basic jurisprudence and facts, and demonstrate nothing more than double standards and sophistry.

Second, the legislation clearly specifies that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights as

applied to Hong Kong, are to be protected in accordance with the law. This important principle forms a cornerstone of the legislation, and is literally written in the new law.

Our new legislation also strictly adheres to the principles of rule of law. The laws are certain and clear, and they come with appropriate exceptions and defences. There is no question of the general public inadvertently violating the law.

Last but not least, the legislative exercise has gained very wide support from the Hong Kong community.

Mr President, any attempt to discredit or undermine the legislation on Article 23 is misguided at best. We are confident that the legislation will bring about a stable and prosperous future for Hong Kong with the rights and freedoms enjoyed in accordance with the law fully protected, as always. Thank you.

Ends/Thursday, March 21, 2024