

Singapore Academy of Law Annual Lecture 2018

11 October 2018

Opening Remarks by Attorney-General Lucien Wong

1) Good evening ladies and gentlemen, a very warm welcome to the Singapore Academy of Law Annual Lecture. As the name suggests, this prestigious event takes place every year. However, this 2018 lecture is itself special, as it also marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Singapore Academy of Law. First and foremost, I would like to offer my congratulations to the Academy for reaching this important milestone.

2) As all of us lawyers here know, the Academy has for the past three decades, played a key role in promoting and developing Singapore's legal profession, and they do it in a number of ways.

3) First, by serving as a knowledge hub for our community. Besides LawNet, which all of us would know and needs no introduction, the Academy also offers a suite of legal knowledge services under its publishing arm, and also maintains Singapore Law Watch as a free daily legal news service, and this benefits many in our community and it also benefits those beyond our shores.

4) Secondly, by being at the frontline of the capacity-building and future- proofing for our legal profession. And the Academy has done this through various programmes, such as the ambitious LIFTED Programme¹, and also the recent FLIP Programme², which promotes technology adoption in the legal profession.

5) Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the Academy is the platform on which we have built our community, through smaller gatherings, networking sessions and training events, but also through formal events such as this.

6) Given the central role of the Academy and the important milestone that is being celebrated today, I can think of no one more suitable to deliver today's lecture than the Academy's President and the Academy's strongest supporter, the Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon,

¹ The Legal Industry Framework for Training and Education Programme, which is designed to help members identify and develop core and specialist competencies in their areas of practice.

² The Future Law Innovation Programme, which is an industry-wide programme to incubate the model for the delivery of legal services in the future economy along four dimensions – Technology, Business Model, Knowledge and Regulation.

who is also the first Singaporean and the first Chief Justice from Singapore to deliver the Academy's Lecture.

7) Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon was appointed as Chief Justice on 6 November 2012, and I understand that he is the first Singapore-born Chief Justice. Chief Justice Menon graduated with a Bachelor of Laws (First Class Honours) no less, from the National University of Singapore in 1986. He also obtained a Master of Laws from Harvard Law School in 1991. He was admitted as an advocate and solicitor in Singapore in 1987, and as an attorney and counsellor-at-law in New York in 1992.

8) After he was called to the Singapore Bar, Chief Justice Menon practised with major local and international law firms, primarily as an advocate, specialising in the fields of commercial litigation and arbitration, as well as construction law and insolvency law. From 2006 to 2007, he served as a Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court, before being appointed as Senior Counsel in 2008. In 2010, he was appointed as Attorney-General of Singapore, a post he held till 2012, before being appointed as Judge of Appeal and subsequently as Chief Justice. He was appointed to the Presidential Council for Minority Rights in 2010 and was

later appointed as its Chairman in 2012. Chief Justice Menon is also the president of the ASEAN Law Association.

9) But we know that Chief Justice Menon is a highly established and highly respected figure in the international legal community. As Chief Justice, he has leveraged on this to help develop Singapore as an international legal hub, not least by starting the Singapore International Commercial Court and promoting Singapore law as the law of choice in international dispute resolution. He has done so through numerous travels throughout the world, tirelessly giving speeches and I think he mentioned to me just now that he has given more than 100 speeches since he took office. He also participated in international events in order to champion our cause, more recently in New York, where he spoke on insolvency laws.

10) Today, in a talk entitled “The Singapore Academy of Law: An Essential Dedication to Honour and Service”, Chief Justice Menon will be taking us on a brief journey through the history of the Academy’s development, placed within the context of the growth of the legal profession as a whole. Chief Justice Menon will also look ahead at our future, and the transformative mindset that we as a profession must undergo in order to remain relevant.

11) Even as we consider and discuss these future trends, it is also important to also remind ourselves to continue serving as models in the community. This is a role we have played since time immemorial, and the values of ethics and honour are key cornerstones that contribute to both ground us, as well as guide us.

12) Ladies and gentlemen, Chief Justice Menon is a personification of these values and there is none more qualified to share his thoughts with us on this special occasion. It gives me now great pleasure to invite Chief Justice Menon on stage to deliver his lecture.
