

Opening Speech at the launch of the Criminal Procedure Code of Singapore :
Annotations and Commentary

The Honourable the Chief Justice
Judges of Appeal
Justices of the Supreme Court
Members of the Bar
Friends and colleagues

I am delighted to join all of you here today to mark the launch of the book, “The Criminal Procedure Code of Singapore: Annotations and Commentary”. This book has been published under the auspices of the Singapore Academy of Law’s Law Practice Series which is intended to serve as a collection of leading works in important facets of legal practice. I think it is fair to say that matters relating to criminal law and procedure, involving as they inevitably do, issues of life and liberty, would comfortably fit the bill as a particularly significant area of legal practice.

2. Over the years, there has been a steady stream of works on various facets of criminal law and criminal practice. This has mainly emanated from academics rather than from practitioners in the field. The dearth of criminal law scholarship coming from those who practice the subject on a daily basis is not ideal: without downplaying the considerable contributions that legal academia has made to criminal law discourse in Singapore, the academic writings of practitioners, whether from my Chambers or from the Criminal Bar, is of immense value to the development of jurisprudence since they are informed by experience and the realities and practicalities of practice.

3. For this reason, I am delighted by the book we are about to launch and I see this contribution from officers of my Chambers both past and present as the beginning of what I hope will be a trend that is made real through more such efforts by practitioners. Officers from my Chambers are already involved in a number of initiatives intended to achieve this end. By way of example, we are in the midst of discussions with the Singapore Academy of Law to undertake a similar publication that analyzes the provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act. Separately, several of my

officers have also been intimately involved in conceptualising and running a course on advanced criminal law at the NUS Faculty of Law. The course is designed to provide students a practical perspective on issues of criminal procedure in Singapore and their application in real-life settings. The Criminal Law Conference, a bi-annual conference initiated last year, serves as yet another platform that we have developed together with other stakeholders with a view to bring together the Bench, academics, practitioners and students in order to find real-world solutions to real-world problems. With such initiatives already underway, and without doubt more to come in the coming years, I am confident we will all do our best to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the field of criminal law and procedure.

4. The book being launched today is not only important as a vital example of the commitment of my colleagues to contribute to the legal scholarship in this area, it is especially important because of its subject-matter. As I had mentioned in the foreword that I wrote for this book, the Criminal Procedure Code 2010, or CPC 2010, represents a watershed for Singapore's criminal justice system and features a myriad of new ideas, initiatives and provisions. In the same vein, many of the more antiquated provisions in the old CPC have also been re-cast or abandoned altogether. Such major changes clearly carry the potential to trip even the most experienced of criminal law practitioners and prosecutors, a fact reflected by the attendance of 140 practitioners at a CPC 2010 training seminar we organised in November 2010. In my opening remarks at that seminar, I had alluded to the fact that my colleagues were working on this book. That was almost 18 months ago and they had already spent quite some time working on the first draft of the book. That the book has taken as long as it has to come to fruition is an indication of the effort and care that has been put into it. It captures and discusses the various new mechanisms that are found in CPC 2010, and, where appropriate, the contributors and editors also discuss the continued relevance of case law prior to its advent. Given the comprehensive manner in which the contributors and editors have handled the subject, I have the fullest confidence that all those with an interest in this field, criminal practitioners, prosecutors, academics

and students will find this book an essential, and I might add, very affordable, reference guide to criminal procedure in Singapore.

5. It is my pleasure to extend my heartiest congratulations to the editor-in-chief, the general editor and to the many contributors to this publication. They have worked tirelessly and without complaint on this labour of love for the past few years, and I am sure you will wholeheartedly agree with me that the final product that you see before you today reflects the considerable hard work, dedication and care that they have all no doubt put in throughout the course of that time. It fills me with pride and gratitude that they have done this while working extremely hard as my prosecutors. Congratulations to each of you and thank you.