

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As usual we have had a full year of lunchtime seminars and other events. This month alone, in addition to the AGM, there will be a talk by Sir Richard Field, who is currently sitting a Deputy Judge of the Hong Kong High Court.

But perhaps the highlight of the year is the HKMLA's new logo, an undertaking that (as these things usually do) probably took up more time than any other matter on HKMLA's agenda this year!

I thank everyone who has contributed to the work of the HKMLA in the last year. I would like in particular to thank Mr. Edward Alder, our Hon. Secretary, for the time and effort that he has put into HKMLA's business.

I have been conscious this year that my other commitments have prevented me from spending as much time on HKMLA business as I have in the past. I therefore wonder whether it might be the moment to consider whether someone else should be taking over in due course, perhaps next year, as chairperson.

Previously, the practice was for the Admiralty Judge to be chairperson of the HKMLA. I was accordingly chairperson when I was Admiralty Judge and Mr. Justice Aarif Barma succeeded me when he became Admiralty Judge. The current Admiralty Judge, Mr. Justice Peter Ng, however, declined HKMLA's invitation to be chairperson. Consequently, more or less by default, I resumed the position of chairperson, although no longer even a Hong Kong judge.

Given that we cannot be certain whether future Admiralty Judges will be willing to serve as chairperson, I suggest that HKMLA give some thought to having a system whereby its chairperson is appointed by election from among members for a fixed term. If anything, my current tenure indicates that there is no real need to have the Admiralty Judge or former Admiralty Judge as chairperson. The HKMLA instead operates on the goodwill and dedication of its members. I hope that it will long continue to do so.

The chairperson can instead change at a stipulated interval to ensure that the person holding the position remains as fresh and dynamic as ever. Thus, there might be a period of nominations upon the expiry of the relevant interval, followed by an election in the course of an AGM. Re-election of a chairperson may or may not be possible, subject to members' views.

The foregoing is only my proposal. It is something that we can all mull over and discuss over the coming year.

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