

Over 1,200 forensic experts attend IAFS Meeting

Over 1,200 professional forensic practitioners from 57 countries attended the 17th Meeting of International Association of Forensic Science (IAFS) at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from August 21 to 26. The event was jointly hosted by the Force and the Government Laboratory (GL).

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Elsie Leung, accompanied by Secretary for Security, Mr Ambrose S K Lee; Commissioner Lee Ming-kwai; Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, Prof Tsui Lap-chee; Director of Health, Dr P Y Lam, and President of IAFS, Mr Leung Sze-chung, who is also the GL's Assistant Government Chemist, declared the meeting officially open on August 22. Immediately following this were five plenary speeches delivered by prominent speakers in the field.

The IAFS was established in 1957 as an international professional organization dedicated to the advancement of forensic science and medicine by organizing triennial meetings that encompass virtually all specialist areas.

Justice Through Science

This was the first time the IAFS Meeting was held in China and the second time in Asia. Its main theme was "Justice Through Science", which projects the increasing contribution of forensic science in the criminal justice system and the achievement of Hong Kong in the field of forensic science, and also serves to enhance knowledge exchange among experts of relevant fields.

The Organizing Committee (OC) of the IAFS Meeting was chaired by Mr Leung, with members drawn mainly from the GL, HKPF, the HKU and the Forensic Pathology Service from the Department of Health.

The OC had put together a comprehensive and balanced scientific programme, which was accompanied by social and cultural events. The programme had been enriched with a wide variety of forensic science topics through seminars and workshops conducted in a well-presented and structured manner.

Besides other forensic disciplines such as DNA, Pathology and Toxicology, the scientific sessions organized by the Force also covered fingerprint identification, firearms examination and computer forensics.

Many top-notch experts from different countries attended and lectured in sessions of the IAFS Meeting. Over 1,200 delegates from 57 countries, including scholars and practitioners from many fields, enrolled for a total of 419 oral presentations and 15 workshops.

All oral presentations and workshops were professional and well executed, meeting the needs of the delegates. The topics were interesting and sometimes both controversial and informative.

Apart from officers of Identification Bureau, Technology Crime Division of Commercial Crime Bureau and Forensic Firearms Examination Bureau, who attended relevant seminars and workshops for their respective disciplines, officers from Traffic Branch, Technical Services Division, Narcotics Bureau and Child Protection Policy Unit also participated in other sessions such as traffic medicine, drug profiling, and sexual assault examination, etc.

Unprecedented feature

An unprecedented feature of the IAFS Meeting was two special sessions entitled respectively "The International Forensic Summit" and "Forensic Science in China".

The former was a management forum for leaders of the forensic profession to identify and discuss issues in the various Continental Plates and to produce a plan for international collaboration and a quality future.

The "Forensic Science in China" programme comprised two parallel sessions held at separate venues. Dedicated to introducing the current situation, as well as the latest developments of forensic sciences and medicines, on the Mainland, presenters of papers in these sessions lectured in Putonghua, with simultaneous interpretation in English for overseas delegates.

During the meeting period, the delegates took time out to join a social programme to see Hong Kong at a closer range, including a half-day day tour to some popular tourist sites. They also joined technical tours to visit the School of Chinese Medicine of the Baptist University, GL and Tactical Training Complex of the Police Training School.

Undoubtedly the IAFS Meeting had provided professional forensic practitioners with an excellent opportunity to refresh and enhance their professional knowledge, and to share experience with their peers from other jurisdictions. Most importantly, they would establish networking for future exchange of expertise and best practices. This would be a useful tool for consolidating the efforts of forensic practitioners of different countries to realise their common vision in fighting crime.

The meeting also received wide applause from the delegates, particularly those from overseas, who regarded the event as a huge success.



Hong Kong hosts the IAFS Meeting for the first time



17th Meeting of International Association of Forensic Science (IAFS) Certificate of Attendance



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