

**OPENING ADDRESS BY ATTORNEY-GENERAL V K RAJAH S.C.,
AT THE AG's LECTURE 2016 ON 5 OCT 2016**

Attorney-General of Switzerland, Michael Lauber;

Judges and Judicial Commissioners,

Prosecutor-General of Cambodia, Chea Lang;

Attorney-General of Indonesia, HM Prasetyo;

Attorney-General of Myanmar, U Tun Tun Ooo;

Solicitor-General of Malaysia, Datuk Nor Faizah Engku Atek;

Senior Counsel/Members of the Bar;

Ladies & gentlemen,

1. Good evening, and welcome to the inaugural AG's Lecture.
2. May I begin by thanking our distinguished guests from the ASEAN countries for making the time to join us for this special occasion. I do hope they have found the bilateral meetings we have had useful. Events such as this not only bring us together but also reinforce our common institutional ties and missions.
3. I am also delighted to see so many familiar faces with us tonight. I would like in particular to acknowledge the presence of former AGs Chan Sek Keong and Chao Hick Tin, as well as former SG Chan Seng Onn. Your presence is all the more meaningful and special to us, because tonight's lecture marks the start of a series of events that we have planned to celebrate the AGC's 150th anniversary on the 1st of April 2017. These

Chambers would not be what they are today, but for your dedication and foresight.

4. I also extend a warm welcome to the members of the Bench and Bar and academia who are joining us tonight. This evening is noteworthy for another reason: it is the first time in recorded history that AGC is hosting dinner for the legal community on such a large scale. It may be another 50 years before we do so again.

5. But, on a more serious note, the 150th birthday of the AGC is a milestone worth marking. We started out on 1 April 1867 with an Irishman, Thomas Braddell, as our first Attorney-General. By the time of independence in 1965, we had become a fully indigenous body, with 16 locally domiciled legal officers including AG Ahmad bin Mohamed Ibrahim. About a quarter of a century later, after AG Chan Sek Keong took office, AGC had grown to about 115 people in total, including administrative executives. Today, we have more than 550 officers and executives in AGC. Yet our individual workloads have not decreased. Rather, they have increased in volume and complexity, brought about by the maturing of our society and the more complex international terrain that Singapore has to navigate.

6. But one thing has not changed over the past 150 years, and that is our officers' unequivocal dedication to upholding the Rule of Law, and to protecting the interests of Singapore and our fellow Singaporeans. The AGC has played a key role in both safeguarding and advancing Singapore's interests at every critical juncture of its history and development.

7. However, we are keenly aware that in order to continually serve Singapore better, we have to remain a vital and constantly learning organisation that is ever mindful of developments taking place all around us. It was in this spirit that I decided to initiate the AG's Lecture Series. The AGC150 celebrations will be bookended by two AG's Lectures, of which this is the first. Even after AGC150, my hope is that this Series will be a useful platform for AGC and the wider legal community to engage with cutting-edge thought leaders in key areas relevant to our work.

8. It gives me particular pleasure to welcome the Attorney-General of Switzerland, Mr Michael Lauber, as the distinguished speaker for our inaugural Lecture. Mr Lauber's presence this evening is not a mere fortuitous event. We set out to invite an inaugural speaker from a jurisdiction with sufficient commonalities for us to identify with his experiences, but yet enough differences to provide fresh vantage points. It is therefore particularly apt that our first speaker hails from Switzerland, a country all of us in Singapore have great esteem for. Our two countries, while geographically distant, bear striking similarities to each other, not in terms of size but in other areas. We both have relatively small and diverse populations and few, if any, natural resources, and in consequence, have had to keep an unrelenting focus on efficiency, competitiveness and the Rule of Law. We have also maintained an open and global outlook. It is no wonder that Singapore desires to learn more from Switzerland in many areas, ranging from innovation to human capital development to sustainability.

9. In the area of legal productivity and specialisation, I have already been more than impressed by Mr Lauber's team of specialist legal officers, having recently interacted with them on some matters. The Swiss officers

produced top-notch work under time pressure – and notably, without having to work weekends! One of the key reasons for this, I duly ascertained, is their highly specialised work practices. We too are moving in this direction and I am confident that in good time our efforts will yield the benefits of even greater productivity and efficiency.

10. Today, AG Lauber will be sharing with us his jurisdiction's vast experience in probing and prosecuting complex financial crimes. As you can see from his CV, AG Lauber has a distinguished career in tackling white collar crime, money laundering, corruption and organised crime. I have got to know Mr Lauber better from my interactions with him over the last year and have been impressed by his boundless energy and deep commitment to advance Switzerland's interests. Many of you will know that he has played a key role in "red carding" FIFA. However, that is only one of the many sensitive and complex cases his office is handling. I have no doubt that we are in for a deeply insightful talk. I hope that it will spur within our legal community many engaging discussions over the dinner table later.

11. It remains for me to invite AG Lauber to the stage, and to bid all of you an enjoyable evening. Thank you once again for joining us as we begin our celebrations to mark the AGC's 150th year.

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