

**MINISTER FOR LAW, MR K SHANMUGAM'S RESPONSE TO MPS MICHAEL PALMER
AND ELLEN LEE ABOUT THE LEGAL PROFESSION (AMENDMENT) BILL IN
PARLIAMENT ON 14 FEBRUARY 2011**

1. Sir, I thank Ms Lee and Mr Palmer for their support for mandatory Continuing Professional Development or CPD requirements.
2. It is envisaged that lawyers who hold practising certificates and the new foreign practitioner certificate holders will be subject to these mandatory CPD requirements. Non-Practising Certificate (PC) holders such as in-house counsel and academics, will not be subject to the requirements, but will be strongly encouraged to participate in CPD activities.
3. SILE is also looking at the details of the scheme, taking into account best practices in other jurisdictions, feedback from law firms as well as practitioners. No doubt, they will also find Ms Lee's and Mr Palmer's comments useful. Mr Palmer's suggestion of a mandatory minimum of pro bono hours as part of CPD is an interesting one. We have many avenues for lawyers to contribute pro bono, now, and their work in this area is important to the community.
4. The SILE will have the task of calibrating the various aspects of the CPD scheme to take into consideration the practical realities faced by the profession. And in that context, as I said, I am sure they will take into account the comments that have been made.

Regulatory Framework for FPC Holders

5. I now turn to Mr Palmer's comments on the regulatory framework for foreign practitioner certificate holders. As mentioned earlier, FPC holders are foreign lawyers. Traditionally, the Attorney-General has been their regulator.
6. However, as FPC holders will be granted the privilege to practise Singapore law in permitted areas, there is a need to extend the disciplinary regime applicable to Singapore PC holders to them, to the extent that is required to regulate their practice of these areas of Singapore law.
7. The framework therefore envisages that while the Attorney-General will have primary oversight of FPC holders, he will refer matters where relevant and which relate to their practice of Singapore law, to the discipline of the Law Society.
8. This framework is not new. It is modelled after the existing disciplinary and regulatory framework we have in place for PC holders working in foreign entities, which we introduced in 2009 together with the Qualifying Foreign Law Practice scheme. We recognise that the liberalisation has brought many changes into the legal services sector as we know it. I have asked the Attorney-General to chair a Committee to look into the regulatory framework in place for the legal services sector in a comprehensive way. These disciplinary mechanisms will be within the purview of the Attorney-General's committee. Thank you, Sir.