

Consultation on reform of the law of arbitration starts

The Department of Justice today (December 31) published a Consultation Paper on Reform of the Law of Arbitration in Hong Kong and Draft Arbitration Bill to seek views on reform of the law of arbitration in Hong Kong.

The consultation paper proposes that the distinction between domestic and international arbitrations created in the current Arbitration Ordinance (Cap 341) be abolished.

In addition, the paper proposes that the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) be adopted as the basis for the unified arbitration regime.

A Department of Justice spokesman said the purpose of the reform was to make the law on arbitration more user-friendly.

The reform of the law of arbitration would also promote Hong Kong as a regional centre for legal services and dispute resolution, he said.

The consultation paper is published with the assistance of the Departmental Working Group established to implement the 2003 Report of the Committee on Hong Kong Arbitration Law.

The Departmental Working Group is chaired by the Solicitor-General and its members include government officials as well as arbitration experts from private practice.

The draft Arbitration Bill seeks to implement the proposal to reform the law of arbitration.

Views are being sought on the issues highlighted in the consultation paper and on the draft Arbitration Bill. The consultation paper is now available on the website of the Department of Justice (www.doj.gov.hk)

The consultation period will end on April 30, 2008.

Ends/Monday, December 31, 2007