

## SJ welcomes International Chamber of Commerce decision

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The Secretary for Justice, Mr Wong Yan Lung, SC, today (March 12) welcomed the announcement by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) of its decision to open a branch of the Secretariat of its International Court of Arbitration in Hong Kong.

The branch secretariat, the first in Asia, will have a case management team to administer cases in the region under the ICC Rules of Arbitration. It is expected to be fully operational by the end of the year.

"It is our policy objective to strengthen Hong Kong as a centre for arbitration. Apart from forging closer ties with international arbitral bodies, the Department of Justice has recently published a Consultation Paper on reform of the law of arbitration in Hong Kong and draft Arbitration Bill. The reforms proposed in the Consultation Paper and reflected in the draft bill, will improve our legal infrastructure for arbitration services," Mr Wong said.

"The International Chamber of Commerce's decision to set up a branch of the Secretariat of the Court in Hong Kong is an endorsement of our position as a premier centre for international arbitration services. Its presence will enhance the provision of arbitration services in Hong Kong." Mr Wong said.

The ICC International Court of Arbitration is one of the world's top international dispute resolution institutions. It is assisted by a secretariat located at the ICC headquarters in Paris. In 2007, it handled 599 domestic and international arbitrations.

The Court oversees the ICC arbitration process and, among other things, is responsible for appointing arbitrators and scrutinising and approving all arbitral awards.

Ends/Wednesday, March 12, 2008