

China Maritime Arbitration Commission sets up arbitration centre in HK (with photos)

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The Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, said today (November 19) that following the establishment of the China Maritime Arbitration Commission (CMAC) Hong Kong Arbitration Center, coupled with Hong Kong's established international legal and arbitration institutions, Hong Kong would be even more equipped and qualified to meet the need for dispute resolution services by Mainland and overseas enterprises.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the CMAC Hong Kong Arbitration Center today, Mr Yuen said that the CMAC was another major Mainland arbitration institution setting up its branch office in Hong Kong, after the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission established its arbitration centre in Hong Kong in 2012. It is also the CMAC's first arbitration centre outside the Mainland.

"The Government of the HKSAR is committed to creating a favourable environment for the development of dispute resolution services in order to enhance Hong Kong's status as an international legal and dispute resolution centre in the Asia-Pacific region. We have also been enhancing the legal system, strengthening our considerably internationalised legal regulatory framework, as well as the efficiency of the dispute resolution mechanism.

"We hope that the legal and arbitration sectors and institutions will step up publicity and encourage maritime and related enterprises to choose Hong Kong as a place for arbitration in their standard or other forms of contracts, and to use Hong Kong law as the governing law of their contractual disputes, so as to promote maritime law and arbitration services in Hong Kong and to enhance the standard of maritime arbitration services in the region. The goal of a win-win situation can then be achieved," Mr Yuen said.

The CMAC, being a permanent arbitration institution specialising in the resolution of foreign and domestic maritime disputes, was set up in 1959 under the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT). It focuses on resolving maritime, admiralty and logistics disputes as well as other contractual and non-contractual disputes through arbitration. Apart from its headquarters in Beijing, CMAC has so far established three sub-offices in Shanghai, Chongqing and Tianjin.

Also attending today's inauguration ceremony were the Vice Chairman of the CCPIT, Mr Lu Pengqi, and the Vice Chairman of the CMAC, Mr Yu Jianlong.

To promote the greater use of maritime arbitration services in Hong Kong, the Department of Justice, together with the CMAC, the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, organised an international maritime arbitration seminar before the inauguration ceremony to allow the participants to gain a better understanding of the latest trends in international maritime arbitration.

More than 200 professionals from the legal and arbitration sectors and the business sector from Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas participated in the seminar today.

Delivering an opening speech at the seminar, Mr Yuen said that as an international maritime centre as well as a regional hub for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, Hong Kong could undoubtedly provide a wide range of legal and dispute resolution services to maritime service providers and users.

He outlined Hong Kong's advantages in this area including an effective legal system, world-class legal and arbitration institutions, first-class legal and dispute resolution professionals, an extensive network of enforcing

arbitral awards made in Hong Kong and user-friendly arbitration legislation.

"Hong Kong will continue to capitalise on its geographical and institutional advantages and develop high value-added maritime services, including maritime legal and dispute resolution services, to better serve our users," Mr Yuen said.

Ends/Wednesday, November 19, 2014

