

International Organizations (Privileges and Immunities) (AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre) Order gazetted

The International Organizations (Privileges and Immunities) (AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre) Order was gazetted today (June 17).

The Order seeks to recognise the legal status of the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and implement the privileges and immunities as provided under the Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) on the Establishment of a Regional Centre for Arbitration in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, done at New York on November 10, 2021.

The Order was made by the Chief Executive in Council under the International Organizations (Privileges and Immunities) Ordinance (Cap 558).

A spokesperson for the Department of Justice said, "In order to implement the Agreement, we need to, among other things, declare that certain provisions of the Agreement relating to the status of the Centre and to the privileges and immunities of the Centre and its personnel have the force of law in Hong Kong."

Regional arbitration centres under the auspices of AALCO function as international institutions with the objective of promoting international commercial arbitration in the Asian and African regions and providing for the conducting of international arbitration. Adding to the five existing regional arbitration centres of AALCO, the Centre will seek to integrate itself in the AALCO dispute settlement system and perform a variety of tasks, including providing facilities for alternative dispute resolution services, assisting in the enforcement of arbitral awards, and promoting the growth and effective functioning of arbitration and other dispute resolution services, including online dispute resolution services.

"The establishment of the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre constitutes a significant vote of confidence in the HKSAR's position as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region. Implementation of the Agreement will further enhance our status in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond," the spokesperson said.

The Order will be tabled before the Legislative Council on June 22, 2022, for negative vetting, and will come into operation on November 17, 2022.

Ends/Friday, June 17, 2022