

## DoJ's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Task Force holds first meeting (with photos)

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The Department of Justice's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) Task Force, as announced by the Chief Executive in his Policy Address, was established earlier this month, and held its first meeting this morning (January 18). The directions for the work on further enhancing the convenience and benefit for the people in the GBA and facilitating the development and construction of the GBA were discussed at the meeting.

Before the meeting commenced, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, briefly met with the Task Force members to thank them for agreeing to serve as members of the Task Force and tender their invaluable advice.

Mr Lam highlighted that the establishment of the Task Force was one of the initiatives in the 2022 Policy Address to dovetail with the national strategies to create strong impetus for growth. He hoped that the work of the Task Force can enhance interactions among the people and businesses in the GBA, and facilitate their better access to legal and dispute resolution services, which in turn will create more room for development for the sectors in Hong Kong, and contribute to the enhancement of the rule of law in the GBA.

As the Chairperson of the Task Force, the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, then gave a brief introduction on the initial work directions, including:

- (1) Enhancing the convergence of legal practices;
- (2) Advancing the practice of mutual legal assistance, such as the implementation of the arrangements on mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters; and
- (3) Promoting the development of online dispute resolution and the application of lawtech.

He pointed out that the three work directions are aiming to provide further convenience and benefits to people, enabling the GBA to fully capitalise on its unique advantages of "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions". The Task Force will strengthen its communication with stakeholders, including legal professional bodies and relevant sectors, and is planning to visit other GBA cities to proactively promote

the high value-added development of the GBA.

Mr Cheung also expressed his gratitude to the members of the Task Force, who are leaders from various areas including the legal and business sectors and academia, as well as representatives of Hong Kong residents in the Mainland. He said he firmly believes that they would provide wise counsel to the work of the Task Force and assist in the development of the GBA.

Ends/Wednesday, January 18, 2023