

Inauguration ceremony for International Organization for Mediation Preparatory Office held in HKSAR today (with photos)

With staunch support from the Central People's Government (CPG), the inauguration ceremony for the International Organization for Mediation Preparatory Office was held today (February 16) at the Hong Kong Legal Hub.

The Preparatory Office was established in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to carry out the preparatory work for the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation pursuant to the Joint Statement on the Future Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation, which was signed last year by China and the relevant states.

The establishment of the Preparatory Office is a significant international initiative on promoting the use of mediation for resolving international conflicts in a friendly and amicable manner. It is envisaged that the International Organization for Mediation will be a permanent multilateral international organisation established through consultations among all Contracting Parties, and will provide friendly, flexible, economical and efficient mediation services for settling international disputes, contributing to harmonious and peaceful international relations. The Preparatory Office is headed by the Director-General, Dr Sun Jin, and will organise international negotiations on the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation and promote the application of international mediation.

The inauguration ceremony was well attended by a number of distinguished government officials of the Signatory States to the Joint Statement and local dignitaries including representatives from the legal profession and major dispute resolution bodies. Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and State Councilor, Mr Wang Yi, issued a letter to mark the opening of the Preparatory Office. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Qin Gang; distinguished representatives of the Signatory States to the Joint Statement; the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee; the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR, Mr Liu Guangyuan; and the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, all delivered congratulatory remarks at the inauguration ceremony.

The Secretary for Justice said the establishment of the Preparatory Office in the HKSAR shows the great support from the motherland for maintaining the city's

unique status under "one country, two systems". The establishment of the International Organization for Mediation is of great importance to the long-term development of Hong Kong as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre, and the HKSAR Government will do its utmost to assist in the work of the Preparatory Office. The Secretary for Justice expressed his gratitude to the CPG, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Signatory States to the Joint Statement for their staunch support and trust, which signify a vote of confidence in Hong Kong as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Department of Justice looks forward to and will support the eventual establishment of the International Organization for Mediation in promoting and applying mediation for resolving various international disputes.

Ends/Thursday, February 16, 2023