

DSJ strengthens HK-UNCITRAL co-operation and promotes Hong Kong as talent hub in practice of international law in Vienna (with photos)

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, continued his visit to Europe. On March 7 (Vienna time), he arrived at Vienna, Austria, to strengthen co-operation with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), in particular the promotion of online dispute resolution (ODR) under the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the nurturing of Hong Kong's talents in the practice of foreign-related legal affairs, with a view to contributing to the country's relevant work and consolidating Hong Kong's status as the centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Cheung met with the Secretary of the UNCITRAL, Ms Anna Joubin-Bret, to discuss further collaboration between the two sides. The meeting agreed to hold in Hong Kong the 5th Asia Pacific Judicial Summit on November 6 and 7 this year, enabling judges and legal practitioners of different regions to gather to exchange views on various topics, such as dispute resolution on investment. The event will also be one of the highlights of this year's Hong Kong Legal Week, which will garner attention from the Asia-Pacific region's judiciaries and legal communities.

The UNCITRAL, the core legal body of the United Nations system in the area of international trade law, has been working in commercial law reform worldwide for over 50 years with a view to harmonising and modernising various international commercial rules. It has been working closely with the Department of Justice (DoJ) in recent years, including the set up of the Inclusive Global Legal Innovation Platform on ODR (iGLIP on ODR) to facilitate studies on ODR-related issues.

Mr Cheung stressed that the DoJ attached the utmost importance to the co-operation with the three renowned international organisations on private international law, among which is the UNCITRAL. Hence, the DoJ decided to visit these organisations in its first overseas visit after Hong Kong has resumed normalcy, with a view to deepening mutual co-operation.

He expressed his gratitude to the UNCITRAL for its support in its secondment programme with the DoJ, which enables DoJ officers to take part in the UNCITRAL's work and enhance their knowledge of international legal matters, strengthening Hong Kong's capacity in foreign-related legal affairs.

He was also pleased to learn that the seconded DoJ officers with expertise in the common law have played a positive role in the work of the UNCITRAL, highlighting that this was a vivid example of Hong Kong's unique strengths under "one country, two systems".

Mr Cheung also called on the Permanent Representative and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Vienna and Other International Organizations in Vienna, Mr Li Song, and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Austria, Ms Qi Mei. He updated them of the latest legal developments in Hong Kong, and took the opportunity to learn about the recent situation in various aspects of the United Nations and Austria.

After a day's stay in Vienna, Mr Cheung has departed for Geneva, Switzerland, today (March 8, Vienna time) to continue his visit.

Ends/Wednesday, March 8, 2023