

DSJ officiates at international promotional campaign "Resolve2Win - Legal Services of Hong Kong, Opportunities for All" in Bangkok (with photos)

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The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, leading a delegation of 30 Hong Kong legal professionals, attended the "Resolve2Win - Legal Services of Hong Kong, Opportunities for All", in Bangkok, Thailand, today (March 16). It was an international promotional campaign co-organised by the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to promote Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services. The signing ceremony of the "Mediate First" Pledge was also held during the event, marking the first time Hong Kong's "Mediate First" Pledge campaign was promoted overseas.

The event attracted more than 200 participants from different sectors such as the financial, legal and professional services. In his opening remarks, Mr Cheung said that as an important economy in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand has a mature alternative dispute resolution (ADR) culture, a pool of experienced dispute resolution professionals, and a strong legal infrastructure in line with international standards. He said he hoped to foster exchanges and create opportunities for businesses and legal and ADR services providers in both places through this campaign.

Under the themes "Hong Kong as a Dealmaking and Dispute Resolution Hub" and "Online Dispute Resolution on the Rising Trend", lawyers and experts on international arbitration and mediation from Hong Kong introduced the city's full-fledged legal services and the latest developments in mediation and arbitration, as well as outlined the city's latest lawtech services at different discussion sessions of the event.

To further strengthen co-operation in mediation between Hong Kong and Thailand and bring about a change to the litigation culture in society, the DoJ and the Thailand Arbitration Center (THAC) collaborated to promote the "Mediate First" Pledge in Thailand for the first time. A special session to promote the "Mediate First" Pledge was held during the event, followed by the signing ceremony of the "Mediate First" Pledge by new pledgees. The Pledge campaign received an enthusiastic response with 35 legal and business organisations, enterprises and individuals in Thailand agreeing to sign the Pledge to support first exploring the use of mediation to resolve disputes, signifying a closer relationship between Thailand and Hong Kong on promoting

mediation.

Mr Cheung then delivered his keynote speech to an audience comprising representatives from different sectors including chambers of commerce and local legal and dispute resolutions services at the event's luncheon. Highlighting the unique opportunities offered by Hong Kong as the only common law jurisdiction within China under "one country, two systems", Mr Cheung pointed out that national strategies including the 14th Five-Year Plan, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) Development and the Belt and Road Initiative not only have injected continuous impetus to the growth of Hong Kong, but also brought opportunities to ASEAN member states.

He further said that as the leading legal and dispute resolution services centre in the Asia-Pacific region, Hong Kong has a strong pool of legal talents particularly in the area of dispute resolution services. With the strong support from the Central People's Government, the International Organization for Mediation Preparatory Office has also been established in Hong Kong. To boost cross-border legal services, the DoJ established the GBA Task Force in January this year to strengthen mutual legal assistance and facilitate convergence of legal practices within the GBA. He encouraged enterprises and talents to capitalise on Hong Kong's unique advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems" to tap into the development opportunities of the GBA and beyond.

Mr Cheung reiterated that the National Security Law has provided stability and a secure environment to enterprises and investors, which is conducive for both local and international businesses in Hong Kong to flourish.

Mr Cheung said that this trip to Bangkok was only a start to building stronger and closer ties with the legal services sector in Thailand. He invited the participants to come to Hong Kong to join the "Mediate First" Pledge event in May and the DoJ's annual flagship event Hong Kong Legal Week in November.

After the event concluded, Mr Cheung led the delegation to visit the THAC in the afternoon to strengthen the collaboration with the THAC and to exchange views on the development and promotion of alternate dispute resolution.

They then went on to meet with the Lawyers Council of Thailand to discuss the

development of the legal profession and explore potential future collaborations with the Lawyers Council and to facilitate the Thai-Hong Kong legal profession in building stronger and closer ties.

Mr Cheung also took the opportunity to meet the Secretary-General of the Office of the Judiciary of Thailand, Mr Teerasak Ngeeywijit. The DoJ and Office of the Judiciary signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in 2019 to strengthen collaboration on issues relating to dispute avoidance and resolution, and to facilitate development of related services. Mr Cheung said that he looked forward to further exploring the enhancement of the existing collaboration with the Office of the Judiciary.

He also called on the Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Thailand, Mr Yang Xin, and updated him on the latest legal developments in Hong Kong.

Tomorrow morning (March 17), the delegation will meet with the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce to exchange views on issues of mutual interests and foster closer connections.

Mr Cheung and the delegation will conclude the visit tomorrow and return to Hong Kong from Bangkok in the evening.

Ends/Thursday, March 16, 2023