

DoJ establishes Advisory Group of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Lawyers and holds exchange session on legal practice in GBA (with photos/video)

The Department of Justice (DoJ) today (March 1) announced the establishment of the Advisory Group of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Lawyers, chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, and held an exchange session on legal practice in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Mr Cheung thanked the members of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Task Force of the DoJ (GBA Task Force), members of the Advisory Group, representatives of the Law Society of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Global Chinese-speaking Lawyers' Association and the International Probono Legal Services Association, and other stakeholders for their participation in the exchange session.

At the session, members of the Advisory Group actively shared their practical experience and views on business development in the GBA, and joined other participants in expressing views on the direction and content of the DoJ's work plan on promoting the development of the rule of law in the GBA.

Mr Cheung said: "Our country has always been supporting Hong Kong's integration into the national development. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the promulgation of the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It is especially meaningful to establish the Advisory Group and hold the exchange session at this time, through which the Hong Kong legal sector can consolidate experiences and plan for future work with the DoJ.

"The Advisory Group will advise on the further development of legal business and enhancement of collaboration in legal services in the GBA. Being set up under the GBA Task Force, the Advisory Group consists of 12 members, including GBA lawyers who have obtained the Lawyer's License (GBA) and have been practicing in different areas of the GBA such as Shenzhen, Nansha and Hengqin; Hong Kong and Mainland lawyers with extensive experience in handling GBA or foreign-related matters; seasoned solicitors and barristers with over 10 years' professional experience; as well as the relatively less experienced solicitors and barristers. The composition of the Advisory Group is broadly representative and will be of great help to the DoJ in promoting the development of the rule of law in the GBA."

Mr Cheung mentioned that GBA lawyers are talents with capabilities and competitive strengths. The three jurisdictions in the GBA each have their own characteristics and complementary advantages. With more exchanges, cross-fertilisation and integration of rules within the region, there will be more room to give full play to the unique strengths of GBA lawyers.

He said that with the strong support from the Central Government, the duration of the pilot scheme of the GBA Legal Professional Examination (GBA Examination) has been approved to be extended to 2026, and the practice experience threshold for enrolment in the GBA Examination has been lowered from five years to three years. He hoped that the Advisory Group can foster professional exchanges and sharing of practical experience among GBA lawyers, thereby building up the "brand name" of GBA lawyers.

Mr Cheung emphasised that the DoJ attaches great importance to contributing to the development of the rule of law in the GBA. In his introduction of the DoJ's work in three major areas, namely facilitating the interface of the legal systems and rules, as well as the connection of talents, he mentioned that the characteristics of the GBA, namely "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions", present both advantages and challenges. There is a need to establish in the GBA mechanisms to efficiently and conveniently coordinate and bridge the different legal systems and rules, and to promote the interflow and nurturing of talents, so as to provide a stable, fair, transparent and predictable rule of law environment for the development of the GBA, unleashing its tremendous development momentum.

He said that as Hong Kong is the only common law jurisdiction within the country, the Hong Kong legal sector has great potential in the GBA. He encouraged the legal sector to join hands with the DoJ in contributing to the development of the GBA.

Ends/Friday, March 1, 2024