

About 400 participants attend DoJ's first GBA Mediator Training Course of Hong Kong (with photos/video)

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To promote the interface of the non-litigation dispute resolution services in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the Department of Justice (DoJ) held the first GBA Mediator Training Course of Hong Kong today (August 16), which attracted about 400 participants. Mediation experts from Guangdong and Macao were invited to introduce the respective mediation systems and culture of Guangdong and Macao, as well as to share their experiences. They also explored with the participants the latest developments of cross-boundary disputes mediation in the GBA and the cultural difference and integration in mediation of the three places, and discussed topics including the means and skills in handling cross-boundary disputes.

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan; Deputy Director-General of the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province Mr Lin Chuming; and the Director of the Legal Affairs Bureau of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government, Ms Leong Weng-in, delivered opening remarks for the training course.

Delivering his remarks, Mr Cheung said that the GBA has the unique legal environment of "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions" and plays a key strategic role in the overall development of the country. It is also the best entry point for Hong Kong, as the only common law jurisdiction within the country, to proactively align with the national development strategies.

He said that mediation, as an efficient and flexible dispute resolution mechanism, plays an irreplaceable role in promoting the economic development and enhancing the rule of law in the GBA. The training course's participants who are willing to dedicate to the profession of cross-boundary disputes mediation will make important contribution to the rule of law in the GBA.

Mr Cheung said that the DoJ released the Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in April this year and will continue to proactively promote the connectivity of hardware and software in the construction of rule of law in the GBA by means of the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talent constituting the "Three Interfaces". In turning the "differences" among the systems into "benefits", the goal of "One GBA" will be achieved eventually through the collaboration of different legal systems in the area with respective strengths.

Mr Cheung highlighted that good progress has been made in the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talent in the GBA on mediation. The GBA Legal Departments Joint Conference endorsed the Proposal to set up the GBA Mediation Platform in 2020 as a co-operation platform for promoting mediation work. The three mediation standards applicable to the GBA, namely the GBA Mediator Accreditation Standards, the GBA Mediator Code of Conduct Best Practice and the GBA Cross-

Boundary Disputes Mediation Model Rules, were released afterwards. Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao promulgated and implemented their respective local accreditation rules for accreditation of GBA mediators in March this year, and are striving to conduct their respective local accreditations this year, with a view to forming a consolidated panel of GBA Mediators upon confirmation by the Joint Conference, so as to further strengthen the confidence of the public to use mediation in the GBA.

The first two sessions of the training course were conducted consecutively by the Secretary-General of the World Trade Center Macau Arbitration Center, Ms Rosita Vong, and the Executive Director and Director of the Zhuhai External Public Legal Service Center and Zhuhai-Hong Kong-Macao (External) Public Legal Service Center of Hengqin, Mr Wu Zhen, to introduce the mediation systems of Macao and Guangdong, aiming to enhance Hong Kong mediators' understanding of the mediation systems of the two places. A question-and-answer session was held at the end of each session to enhance the participants' understanding of the topics.

A symposium hosted by the Chairman of the Hong Kong Mediation Accreditation Association, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, Ms Vong and Mr Wu was then held to discuss topics including cross-boundary disputes, the cultural difference in mediation of the three places, technology and online mediation, so as to explore in-depth the unique dynamics of handling cross-boundary disputes in the GBA.

Since the number of registered participants far exceeded the maximum capacity of the event venue, an online platform for the event was added to accommodate more participants.

Upon completion of this training course, the participants will meet one of the accreditation requirements under the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Mediator Accreditation Rules (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region). They can apply for the inaugural GBA Mediator Accreditation of Hong Kong to be commenced this year after fulfilling other accreditation requirements.

Ends/Friday, August 16, 2024