

LCQ16: Cultivating local young legal talent

\*\*\*\*\*

Following is a question by the Hon Wu Ying-peng and a written reply by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, in the Legislative Council today (March 18):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the international law organisation secondment programmes and Belt and Road Visit for young international legal talent, launched jointly by the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Department of Justice, can provide a platform and build a ladder for local young legal talent to go global and broaden their international horizons. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of young legal talent from Hong Kong who have been seconded to international organisations (including the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) through the secondment programmes to date;

(2) given that the Government has previously indicated that with the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) establishing its headquarters in Hong Kong, this year's secondment programmes will be extended to IOMed, whether the Government has formulated a specific roadmap and timetable in this regard; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the Government will consider establishing a permanent mechanism whereby young legal professionals who have participated in the secondment programmes and Belt and Road Visit will regularly visit local legal service and legal education organisations upon their return to Hong Kong to share their experiences, thereby stimulating the interest of more young legal professionals in overseas secondment programmes and studying overseas law; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In response to the enquiry raised by the Hon Wu Ying-peng, the reply is as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has, with the support of the Central Government, made standing secondment arrangements with relevant international organisations. By participating in the work of these international organisations, local legal professionals (including young legal talent) could deepen their understanding of the operation of international organisations and international law. Since the establishment of the relevant arrangements, as of March 2026, a total of 27 local legal professionals from

both the public and private sectors have participated in the secondment programmes to the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

(2) The 2026 recruitment exercise for the secondment programmes has commenced in January, with the addition of the secondment programme to the Secretariat of the International Organization for Mediation in Hong Kong. With the support of the Central Government, the Government of the HKSAR will continue to carry forward the secondment programmes steadily, taking into account the prevailing circumstances, in accordance with established procedures and the arrangements reached with the respective international organisations. The Department of Justice (DoJ) will also annually promote the secondment programmes to the legal sector, including putting the latest relevant information on its website for those interested in applying.

(3) The Belt and Road Visit for Hong Kong Young International Legal Talents is co-organised by the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR (OCMFA) and the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy of the DoJ. The First Edition of the Visit held last year brought together 16 young international legal talent from the law faculties of three local universities, legal professional bodies and institutions, and the DoJ, during which they visited Beijing and Kashgar in Xinjiang. The Second Edition of the Visit will take place in July this year. The tentative itinerary includes a visit to Yunnan Province in China, followed by a visit to Laos. Participants will engage in exchanges with relevant government departments, legal institutions and organisations, enterprises, and chambers of commerce, and will gain first-hand understanding of the Belt and Road landmark co-operation projects such as the China-Laos Railway.

The DoJ will, based on the existing framework, explore with the OCMFA to regularise the relevant arrangements and arrange young legal talent who have participated in the Belt and Road Visit to share their experiences in local legal services institutions and legal education institutions on a regular basis after returning to Hong Kong. Subject to the available resources and operational feasibility, priority will be given to use the existing platforms and activity frameworks to strengthen the outreach and publicity, for example, by organising exchange activities such as sharing sessions and briefing sessions to motivate young legal professionals to take part in the Belt and Road Visit, deepen their understanding of the country's overall development, broaden their international perspectives, so that they can better appreciate the significance of the Belt and Road Initiative for China and the countries along the Belt and Road. As mentioned above, the DoJ will also annually promote the secondment programmes to the legal sector to encourage more qualified legal professionals to apply.

Ends/Wednesday, March 18, 2026