

LCQ12: Strengthening position as international legal and dispute resolution services centre

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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 (April 29):

Question:

The National 15th Five-Year Plan explicitly proposes strengthening Hong Kong's position as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre. There are views that Hong Kong could leverage the advantages of its common law system, its pool of bilingual legal professionals, and its well-established mechanisms for international commercial mediation, arbitration and litigation to accelerate the development of the system and capacity for the foreign-related rule of law, support the International Organization for Mediation in better fulfilling its role, and thereby meet the needs arising from the country's high-level opening up. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has formulated specific phased targets and an implementation timetable for strengthening Hong Kong's position as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre, and established quantifiable performance indicators together with a corresponding plan for allocating dedicated financial resources; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given the views that the Hong Kong legal profession possesses unique strengths in providing dispute resolution services related to the outbound investments of Mainland-funded enterprises, whether the Government has formulated specific promotional policies and complementary support measures to encourage such enterprises to utilise Hong Kong's arbitration and mediation services to resolve their cross-boundary investment disputes; whether it has compiled statistics on the respective numbers of arbitration and mediation cases involving cross-boundary investment disputes of Mainland-funded enterprises handled by the Hong Kong legal profession in the past three years;

(3) apart from the National Training Course for Talents Handling Foreign-related Arbitration organised by the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy, what regular and systematic mechanisms the Government has established to nurture foreign-related legal talent; of the amount of funding allocated by the Government for nurturing such talent in the past three years, and the number of professionals successfully nurtured with the capability to practise in cross-boundary investment arbitration and state-investor investment arbitration; and

(4) given the views that Hong Kong bears an important mission in developing the

foreign-related rule of law and should assist Mainland-funded enterprises in addressing compliance risks in outbound investments and safeguarding the country's overseas interests, whether the Government currently provides compliance guidelines and dispute resolution support services for the outbound investments of such enterprises; whether it has plans to set up a dedicated service platform for outbound investment compliance and rights protection for Mainland-funded enterprises; 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 National 15th Five-Year Plan

The National 15th Five-Year Plan states several key initiatives, including "giving full play to Hong Kong and Macao's unique advantages and important role of maintaining close connections with both the Chinese Mainland and the world", "support the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) in better fulfilling its role", "deepening the development of the international legal and dispute resolution services centre", and "supporting Hong Kong and Macao in building international hubs for high-calibre talent", "leveraging Hong Kong's professional service advantages to assist these enterprises in 'going global'" and to "accelerate the development of the system and capacity for the foreign-related rule of law", etc.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will actively align with the National 15th Five-Year Plan and formulate Hong Kong's own first five-year plan. The Department of Justice (DoJ) renders its full support to related efforts, capitalising on Hong Kong's advantage as the only common law jurisdiction in the country under the "one country, two systems" principle and through strengthening Hong Kong's role as a "super connector" and "super value-adder" to strengthening Hong Kong's position as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre, thereby utilising our common law system advantage and contributing the power of Hong Kong to the country's participation of global governance and foreign-related rule of law.

The following outlines relevant major policy measures and applicable performance indicators:

(A) Infrastructure development - preparing for the construction of the Hong Kong International Legal Service Building

Firstly, in relation to infrastructure, the DoJ is preparing for the construction of the

Hong Kong International Legal Service Building. Preparatory works, including site investigation and technical studies on utilities, quantity surveying, etc, will commence within this year in preparation for seeking funding approval for the construction project. Upon securing the funding, the target is to commence construction by the end of 2027. As the project is still in the planning and study stage, other specific details such as the project timetable are not yet available.

#### (B) Enhancing Hong Kong's dispute resolution legal framework

The DoJ will actively ensure that Hong Kong's legal framework is conducive to deepening the role as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre to ensure global competitiveness.

(i) In respect of Hong Kong's arbitration framework, the DoJ established the Working Group on Arbitration Law Reform in October 2025. The Working Group makes suggestions on amendments to the Arbitration Ordinance, reviews Hong Kong's arbitration legal framework, and provides advice on the enhancement measures. This ensures that Hong Kong's arbitration legal framework advances with the times, and fortifying Hong Kong's competitiveness in international arbitration.

(ii) In relation to Hong Kong's mediation framework, the Working Group on Mediation Regulatory System established by the DoJ completed a comprehensive review in late 2024 and made a series of recommendations after conducting stakeholder consultations in 2025, including a proposal to introduce legislative amendments. The DoJ plans to consult stakeholders, including mediation institutions, on the amendment bill in mid-2026. After considering the views of the stakeholders, the DoJ will seek to take forward the legislative amendment work in the second half of 2026, with the target date for introducing the bill into the Legislative Council expected to be in November 2026.

#### (C) Actively promoting Hong Kong's role as an international legal hub

Apart from the above, the DoJ is also actively promoting Hong Kong's role as an international legal hub in Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland, and overseas. The following outlines relevant major policy initiatives:

(i) The DoJ will organise the Mediation Week 2026 from May 4 to 7, and will support IOMed in hosting the Global Mediation Summit for the first time on May 8, 2026, bringing together mediators, policy-makers and leaders from around the world to discuss and exchange views on how to help the parties bridge gaps across various cultural backgrounds, and developing the global mediation ecosystem, thereby supporting Hong Kong's development and strengthening its unique position as a global mediation capital;

(ii) The DoJ actively co-organises activities such as summits or seminars with relevant

stakeholders to promote the connectivity of Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services to the world. For example, in the Hong Kong Trade Development Council's Belt and Road (B&R) Summit and the Business of Intellectual property Asia Forum, the DoJ co-organised thematic breakout sessions on dispute resolution to introduce to the business community in the B&R region recent developments and Hong Kong's unique advantages in resolving cross-border investment, commercial, and intellectual property disputes;

(iii) The DoJ organises its annual flagship event, the Hong Kong Legal Week, to bring together legal and dispute resolution experts, academics and policy-makers from around the world through a series of activities such as summits and seminars to explore important topics related to international and local dispute resolution, thereby promoting the development of the relevant sectors and consolidating Hong Kong's role as an international legal hub. Hong Kong Legal Week 2026 will be held from November 2 to 6;

(iv) From time to time, the Secretary for Justice and the Deputy Secretary for Justice led delegations of professionals from legal and other sectors to visit different cities on the Chinese Mainland, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, and other states along the B&R, such as in the Middle East, to enhance exchanges between Hong Kong professionals and counterparts from different areas, deepen international exchanges and co-operation, demonstrate Hong Kong's capacity in legal and dispute resolution services, and at the same time, explore opportunities along the B&R.

(D) Actively enhancing training of talent and advancing the facilitation of talent to Hong Kong

The DoJ actively advances the work of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy. Since its launch in November 2024, the Academy has collaborated with more than 20 international legal organisations, Chinese Mainland authorities and local professional bodies, etc. in organising capacity-building programmes within and outside Hong Kong for more than 2 000 legal professionals in Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and regions along the B&R.

Looking ahead, the Academy will strengthen its collaboration with the country's ministries and sectors to serve the country's major needs in its foreign-related rule of law development. In the meantime, the Academy aims to tell the good story of Hong Kong's legal system and professional services practices under the "one country, two systems" to the international community through the organisation of capacity building and research projects.

Apart from strengthening the training of legal talent, the DoJ is also actively advancing initiatives for the facilitation of legal talent to Hong Kong. From March 1, 2025 onwards, the HKSAR Government regularised and improved the Pilot Scheme on Facilitation for Persons Participating in Arbitral Proceedings in Hong Kong, which is

now named the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Persons Participating in Arbitral Proceedings in Hong Kong. Under the scheme, persons in possession of a letter of proof issued by a designated arbitral and dispute resolution institution or a venue provider proving that they are eligible persons seeking participation in arbitral proceedings seated in Hong Kong are permitted to do so as visitors without the need to obtain an employment visa. The Immigration Facilitation Scheme expands the categories of eligibility and covers all arbitrations physically taking place in Hong Kong, offering parties to the arbitration and legal practitioners great convenience and more choices of international and local legal experts and related professionals, thus further enhancing Hong Kong's attractiveness as a seat or destination of arbitration and advancing the development of the local legal sector. As of the end of March 2026, the Scheme has benefited 264 participants.

All the expenditures on the above initiatives are absorbed by the existing resources of the DoJ and cannot be separately identified.

(2) The DoJ has been actively promoting and strengthening the competitiveness of Hong Kong as an international legal hub, with the aim to attracting different investors (including Chinese Mainland enterprises) to use Hong Kong legal and dispute resolution services. Main initiatives in this respect include:

(A) Implementation of the measures of allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law and allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong

With effect from February 2025, the scope of application of the measure of "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law" had been extended from Qianhai, Shenzhen to the two municipalities of Shenzhen and Zhuhai, while the measure of "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong" had been extended from the Pilot Free Trade Zones in the Chinese Mainland to include the nine Mainland municipalities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Since implementation, the two measures have enjoyed positive support from both the legal and business sectors, particularly in relation to the effect of the measure in furthering the investment environment in the GBA, and in highlighting Hong Kong's unique role as a springboard for foreign investment into the GBA market.

Through active promotion from multiple dimensions, the "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong" measure has gained practical implementation. In June of 2025, the South China International Arbitration Center (HK) handled a case involving a Shenzhen Hong Kong-invested enterprise, with the amount in dispute exceeding 60 million Renminbi. The relevant

arbitral award has since been recognised and enforced by the Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court.

The DoJ will continue to monitor the implementation of these measures, and will keep in close communication with relevant stakeholders with the continuous aim of considering opportunities to create advantageous conditions to timely expand the scope of application.

(B) Taking forward the establishment of the GBA diversified dispute resolution mechanism

Through the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Legal Departments Joint Conference, the DoJ has consistently taken forward the interface of regulatory frameworks and the establishment of a diversified dispute resolution mechanism in the GBA with the aim of providing investors (including Chinese Mainland enterprises) with a more convenient and confident cross-border dispute resolution route. Specific measures include:

(i) Promulgating the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Arbitrator Panel and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Mediator Panel 2025. The two Panels contain 143 arbitrators and 233 mediators respectively from Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao, and will enhance the interface of dispute resolution talent in the GBA.

(ii) Formulating "GBA Standards" such as The Greater Bay Area Cross-Boundary Disputes Mediation Model Rules and "The Greater Bay Area Mediator Code of Conduct Best Practice" to enhance public confidence in using mediation in the GBA.

(iii) Explore the establishment of GBA arbitration model rules in order to promote collaboration in arbitration practices in the three places, allowing for a more stable, predictable legal environment for GBA commercial activities and better serving dispute resolution needs within the GBA.

(iv) Continue to support and facilitate Hong Kong mediation organisations to become "specially invited mediation organisations" of the GBA mainland courts and to handle mediation cases (including commercial mediation) in the GBA. Currently, the Hong Kong International Mediation Centre has been engaged by the Guangzhou Intellectual Property Court to provide mediation services for intellectual property disputes, while three other mediation organisations (namely Hong Kong Mediation Council, Hong Kong Mediation Centre and the Mainland-Hong Kong Joint Mediation Center) have been engaged by the Shenzhen Qianhai Cooperation Zone People's Court for a pilot trial. According to information provided by the Shenzhen Qianhai Cooperation Zone People's Court, as at June 30, 2025, the three mediation organisations have concluded around 300

mediation cases with a success rate of around 44 per cent, an around 18 per cent increase in the success rate for Hong Kong mediators as compared to before the pilot trial.

(v) In relation to next steps, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Legal Department Joint Conference will promote the adoption and use of the relevant "GBA Standards" by arbitration and mediation organisation in the GBA, allowing the "GBA Standards" to take full effect in increasing the global competitiveness of commercial arbitration and mediation services in the GBA and providing Chinese Mainland enterprises and other investors a more complete and diversified dispute resolution service.

#### (C) Promotion and professional exchanges for Chinese Mainland enterprises

The DoJ has actively promoted and facilitated exchanges between Chinese Mainland enterprises and Hong Kong legal and dispute resolution sector in order to gain a deeper understanding on the specific requirements of Hong Kong legal services for Chinese Mainland enterprises in areas such as outbound investment. Major initiatives are below:

(i) With the strong support of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the Academy organised the Legal Practice Training Course for Chinese Enterprises Going Overseas in Hong Kong in October 2025, with participation from more than 30 legal counsel and other relevant professionals from Chinese Mainland enterprises. Through sharing from senior representatives from the Hong Kong legal profession and in-house legal counsel, participants gained a deeper understanding on risk management and compliance strategy faced by Chinese Mainland enterprises that are "going global", and Hong Kong's common law advantages.

(ii) DoJ has actively enhanced professional exchanges with State-owned enterprises in the Mainland and overseas, including promoting Hong Kong's advantages as an international legal hub through high level visits. For example:

- In February 2026, during the China Conference: Southeast Asia 2026, the Deputy Secretary for Justice exchanged views and discussed with representatives from the China Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia to learn about the specific professional services needs of Chinese Mainland enterprises in different sectors, such as the chemical, energy and financial industries, in their course of "going global" and their experiences in leveraging the professional services platform of Hong Kong.
- In March 2026, the Secretary for Justice led around 30 representatives of the Hong Kong legal sector (including representatives of local and international firms and registered foreign lawyers) to visit Shanghai and Hangzhou, holding a number of profession exchange sessions with local representatives from Chinese

Mainland enterprises and other enterprises on topics such as strategy for cross boundary investment compliance and dispute resolution, and promoting Hong Kong's role in legal professional services.

(iii) In formulating and implementing policy to promote Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services the DoJ actively communicates with Chinese Mainland enterprises, and appropriately seeks their comments and recommendations through inviting their representatives to join relevant DoJ consultation groups (such as the Expert Committee on Professional Services for Going Global) in order to better understand the needs of Chinese Mainland enterprises, to strengthen co-operation, and to ensure the appropriate implementation of relevant policy initiatives.

(D) Mediation Mechanism for Investment Disputes in the Investment Agreement under the CEPA

According to the Mediation Mechanism for Investment Disputes in the Investment Agreement under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland respectively designated their own mediation institutions and mediators for the resolution of investment disputes and published the list of mediation institutions and mediators mutually agreed by both sides. At present, Hong Kong has two mutually agreed designated mediation institutions, namely the Hong Kong Mediation Council Limited under the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC) and the Mainland-Hong Kong Joint Mediation Center, and 19 mutually agreed designated mediators, who have received training in investor-state mediation for resolving international disputes involving a state party.

The above Mediation Mechanism for Investment Disputes in the Investment Agreement is Hong Kong's unique advantage which sets it apart from other jurisdictions, and assists in encouraging Chinese Mainland enterprises in investment disputes involving Hong Kong to choose dispute resolution services in Hong Kong.

Case numbers of arbitration and mediation cases involving cross-boundary investment disputes of Chinese Mainland enterprises

Since both arbitration and mediation are conducted on a confidential basis, the DoJ does not have relevant actual statistics pertaining to cases of arbitration and mediation involving Chinese Mainland Enterprises.

Taking reference to statistics published by the HKIAC over the past three years, in the ranking of the geographic origin or nationality of parties participating in HKIAC arbitration proceedings, parties from the Chinese Mainland have consistently ranked second each year, only after Hong Kong local parties. However, the statistics published by the HKIAC does not indicate the number of cases involving Chinese Mainland parties,

or whether the nature of those cases is related to cross-boundary investment between enterprises.

(3) The DoJ has all along attached great importance to the training of local legal talent, and will consistently, through platforms such as the Academy, actively collaborate with local, Chinese Mainland and international professional organisations to provide the profession with more practical training. These training projects will enhance the development and exchange of legal talent, enhancing their professional knowledge and practical experience, and resulting in further strengthening Hong Kong as a leading international legal hub, particularly in the development of legal professional talent and being key to enhancing international legal talent exchange.

In relation to foreign-related legal talent, the DoJ supports and organises a multi-faceted program consisting of training, exchanges, and promotion, with the main points as below:

(A) Training on Fundamental Principles of Chinese Law

Since 2020, the DoJ has co-organised with Tsinghua University the Fundamental Principles of Chinese Law course in order to deepen government counsel's understanding of the country's latest development, including its legal and judicial systems, socio-economic conditions and development direction. Since 2021, private practice lawyers have been invited to participate in order to strengthen the legal sector's understanding of the national legal framework.

(B) Professional training for GBA lawyers and mediators

The DoJ actively supports different forms of professional training for GBA lawyers and mediators, such as:

(i) In July 2024, the first Practical Legal Training for GBA Lawyers was organised by the Supreme People's Court and the Ministry of Justice, and hosted by the High People's Court of Guangdong Province as well as the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province. Around 100 GBA lawyers attended, and experts and lawyers from the people's courts, arbitral institutions, and commercial mediation institutions, etc in the Chinese Mainland gave lectures on topics including civil and commercial litigation, arbitration and mediation.

(ii) In August 2024 and May 2025, the China Legal Service (H.K.) Ltd organised intensive trainings on Mainland law and practice, supported by the DoJ and other organisations. Around 100 GBA lawyers attended. The courses focused on the latest developments in Mainland law, covering practical areas such as Mainland litigation procedures, evidence rules, inheritance laws, etc. Roundtable discussions were also

arranged, bringing together cross-sector representatives from the GBA to jointly explore the opportunities and challenges for GBA lawyers.

(iii) In August 2024, the DoJ organised the first GBA Mediator Training Course of Hong Kong, with around 400 participants. Mediation experts from Guangdong and Macao provided an overview of their respective mediation systems and practices, shared practical insights drawn from their professional experience, examined cultural differences and integration in mediation of the three places, and discussed topics including the means and skills in handling cross-boundary disputes.

#### (C) Secondment programmes to relevant international organisations

The HKSAR has, with the support of the Central Government, made secondment arrangements with the Hague Conference on Private International Law and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, which are open to application by all qualified local legal professionals from the public and private sectors. Participating in secondment programmes not only allow local legal professionals to enhance their understanding on the operation of international organisations, exchange views with international legal experts and expand their horizons, but also allows Hong Kong to participate in developing international law. Since the secondment arrangements have been put in place, a total of seven local barristers and solicitors from the private sector have participated.

#### (D) The Belt and Road Visit for Hong Kong Young International Legal Talents

In 2025, the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR first co-organised with the Academy of the DoJ the Belt and Road Visit for Hong Kong Young International Legal Talents, bringing together 16 young Hong Kong international legal talent to visit Beijing and Kashgar, exchanging views with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mainland people's courts, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, visited a technology industry company, and experienced personally the importance of Kashgar's role in opening up to the West under the B&R initiative.

This year, participants of the Second Edition of the Visit will not only visit and study the implementation of the rule of law, cross-border judicial co-operation and border governance of an important window of the B&R, which is the Yunnan Province, but also visit Laos so as to gain understanding of B&R landmark co-operation projects such as the China-Laos Railway and first-hand experience in regional legal practice, multilateral co-operation, and the abundant results of Chinese-Laotian co-operation.

#### (E) Investment Law and Investor-State Mediator Training

In relation to international investment mediation training, the DoJ has collaborated with the Asian Academy of International Law since 2018 to co-organise four editions of the Investment Law and Investor-State Mediator Training. Since its inception, the course has provided training to over 300 participants from more than 40 jurisdictions.

All the expenditures on the above activities and measures are absorbed by the existing resources of the DoJ and cannot be separately identified.

(4) Hong Kong has a well-established legal and dispute resolution system that aligns with international standards. Depending on their needs, enterprises may make use of Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services by, for example, setting up a Hong Kong company in their investment structure and choosing Hong Kong common law as the governing law of their investment agreements and other contracts, thereby leveraging Hong Kong's institutional and professional service advantages to address the potential risks that may arise in overseas investment.

The HKSAR Government has long been actively promoting Hong Kong's role as a "super connector" to help Chinese Mainland enterprises and other enterprises expand their business overseas.

In the Chief Executive's 2025 Policy Address, the Deputy Secretary for Justice is tasked to promote Hong Kong's legal services in collaboration with other professional services such as accounting and finance to support Chinese Mainland enterprises' "going global".

Accordingly, in late 2025, the DoJ launched the Hong Kong Professional Services GoGlobal Platform to provide useful references to Chinese Mainland enterprises by co-ordinating and integrating information related to Hong Kong's professional services, facilitating precise connections between Chinese Mainland enterprises and Hong Kong's professional services.

Against this background, on April 14, 2026, the DoJ has published the Panel List of Hong Kong Legal Services Providers Supporting "Go Global". The Panel List covers more than 70 legal services providers, including international arbitration institutions, practicing barristers, and 60 local, international, and registered foreign law firms. In addition, the Panel List classifies legal services providers into 12 categories according to their practice areas, including compliance and regulatory affairs (12 services providers) and dispute resolution (50 services providers), which is of professional reference for enterprises with compliance and cross border dispute resolution service needs. The Panel List has been uploaded to the website of the DoJ: [www.doj.gov.hk/en/legal\\_dispute/hkpsgp.html#panel\\_list](http://www.doj.gov.hk/en/legal_dispute/hkpsgp.html#panel_list)

In relation to the suggestion on establishing a dedicated platform, the GoGlobal Cross-

sectoral Professional Services Platform operated by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council ([goglobal.hktdc.com/en/s/landing](http://goglobal.hktdc.com/en/s/landing)) has been launched since March 2026. The platform brings together service providers from Hong Kong in eight major sectors - "finance", "legal", "accounting, tax and business consulting", "design, marketing and brand management", "logistics and transportation", "telecommunication and information technology", "infrastructure and real estate", and "testing and certification", etc. It will match Chinese Mainland enterprises with suitable Hong Kong service providers, offering one-stop professional support for their global expansion. To make the best use of existing government resources and to facilitate enterprises' access to the information related to going global through a single platform, the DoJ and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council have jointly invited the legal service providers on the Panel List to submit detailed information for inclusion on the GoGlobal Cross-sectoral Professional Services Platform.

Looking ahead, the DoJ will continue to closely monitor the foreign-related legal needs of enterprises (including Chinese Mainland and other enterprises) in areas such as overseas investment, update the Panel List in a timely manner, and support a variety of exchange activities, and strive to enhance the understanding of Hong Kong's professional services on the specific needs of enterprises expanding overseas, so that comprehensive professional support across the full business cycle will be rendered to enterprises from the Mainland and beyond.

Ends/Wednesday, April 29, 2026