

Sports Dispute Resolution Workshop concludes today (with photos/video)

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The Efficient Resolution for All: Sports Dispute Resolution Workshop, co-organised by the Department of Justice (DoJ), along with the administering body and the technology provider of the Pilot Scheme on Sports Dispute Resolution, respectively AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre (AALCO-HKRAC) and eBRAM International Online Dispute Resolution Centre, as well as the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC), concluded today (July 4).

The Workshop attracted over 120 representatives from the local sports and legal sectors, including representatives from 30 sports organisations.

The Deputy Secretary for Justice and the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Sports Dispute Resolution, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan; the Under Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau; and Vice President of the SF&OC Mr Kenneth Fok attended and gave welcome remarks at the event.

Addressing the event, Dr Cheung said that with the rapid development of sports and related industries, differences in opinions or disputes are inevitable. However, to settle them by traditional ways, such as internal rulings or adjudication within national sports associations, or litigation in courts, often leads to more complex problems and imposes a burden onto the parties in terms of time, mental energy, and finance. Therefore, establishing an efficient, professional, and credible sports dispute resolution system that handles sports disputes through a "mediation first, arbitration next" approach can resolve disputes for the parties involved more flexibly and effectively. Besides, resolving disputes through arbitration can help parties avoid the lengthy legal procedures and substantial legal fees resulting from litigation.

Dr Cheung also stated that since the launch of the Pilot Scheme's online platform in February this year, it has received a number of inquiries and has begun processing cases, with the first case recently successfully resolved. The successful implementation of the Pilot Scheme confirms that Hong Kong is on the right track in promoting a sports dispute resolution system. He encouraged everyone to make full use of the Pilot Scheme to maximise its benefits and jointly promote the long-term development of sports in Hong Kong.

Organised with the support from the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, the China Hong Kong Paralympic Committee, the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Law Society of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Sports Institute, the Workshop introduced, through a rich variety of activities, how sports disputes could be efficiently resolved by way of mediation and arbitration under the framework of the Pilot Scheme.

At the Workshop, a Hong Kong arbitrator and mediator, who also serves as a mediator for the Court of Arbitration for Sport, teamed up with a retired Hong Kong athlete and a coach for role-playing in a lively case drama to simulate the sports mediation procedures, which are typically held in confidence under regulations. They also explained arbitration procedures, allowing the participants to gain a direct understanding of how the Pilot Scheme operates.

Subsequently, the Director of the AALCO-HKRAC, Professor Nick Chan, and the Vice Chairman of eBRAM and Panel Arbitrator of the China Commission of Arbitration for Sport, Mr Ronald Sum, outlined the fundamental principles of mediation and arbitration at the Workshop. They also introduced the workflow under the Pilot Scheme, the operational procedures of its online dispute resolution platform, and the case studies on sports disputes successfully resolved under the Pilot Scheme.

In the sharing session that followed, a representative from a national sports association and an athlete, speaking from the professional and practical perspective of users, discussed the possible challenges in resolving sports disputes, and elaborated in details the specific benefits of adopting the Pilot Scheme's model clauses.

Set to operate for two years, the Pilot Scheme has started to accept applications since February 13 this year. It adopts a "mediation first, arbitration next" approach to resolve both commercial and non-commercial sports disputes. Its online mediation and arbitration platform also provides for expedited procedures to enhance the efficiency of dispute resolution for handling urgent disputes that may arise during sporting events.

Ends/Saturday, July 4, 2026