UNIDROIT Centenary: Regional Conference for Asia-Pacific and Opening Ceremony of Asia-Pacific Liaison Office opens Hong Kong Legal Week 2026 (with photos)
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The Hong Kong Legal Week 2026, an annual flagship event of the Department of Justice (DoJ), was launched today (November 2). As a landmark annual event in the legal community, the five-day event themed "Collaboration & Innovation: Legal Synergy for a Shared Future" brings together legal professionals, business leaders, policymakers, academics, and leading international legal organisations from Hong Kong and around the world to have in-depth discussions and exchanges on forward-looking issues such as regional legal co-operation, international dispute resolution, construction of foreign-related rule of law, lawtech and opportunities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Marking the centenary celebration of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) and the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), both leading international legal organisations will hold celebratory events during the Hong Kong Legal Week, making this year's programme particularly significant.

UNIDROIT Centenary: Regional Conference for Asia-Pacific and Opening Ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Liaison Office was held as the opening event of this year's Hong Kong Legal Week. The Opening Ceremony was officiated by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee; the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mr Cui Jianchun; the President of UNIDROIT, Professor Enzo Moavero-Milanesi; the Secretary-General of UNIDROIT, Professor Ignacio Tirado; and the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC. With the support of the Central Government, the DoJ has successfully secured the establishment of UNIDROIT's first office outside its seat in Rome in its 100 years of history, demonstrating Hong Kong's leading role as an international legal hub.

In his welcome remarks, Mr Lee said that today marks a double celebration, commemorating UNIDROIT's centenary and witnessing the opening of a new chapter for UNIDROIT – the establishment of its Asia-Pacific Liaison Office in Hong Kong. He noted that as a renowned international legal, trade and financial hub, Hong Kong strives to attract global organisations and talent, enable international legal co-operation and position Hong Kong as a "super connector" and "super value-adder" for East and West. By setting up a liaison office in Hong Kong, UNIDROIT not only enjoys benefits from

co-operation with other partner organisations in the city, but also benefits from the network established by the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy to promote capacity building in the region. The establishment of the office is a symbol of the collective ambition to build a more harmonious and prosperous future for the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

The Director-General of the Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Dr Yu Ning, said in her video speech that UNIDROIT setting up a liaison office in Hong Kong reflects the international community's high regard for Hong Kong and marks a significant achievement in the city's continuous effort in building itself as an international legal centre. She said that in recent years, the HKSAR has continued to strengthen its exchanges and co-operation with UNIDROIT under the framework of "one country, two systems", further showcasing to the world its strengths including its robust common law system, well-established judicial system and extensive pool of international legal talent.

Professor Enzo Moavero-Milanesi said that UNIDROIT was founded with the aim to allow different parties to work on an equal basis towards the harmonisation of private law. Noting that many countries of the Asia-Pacific region are UNIDROIT member states, he said that the decision to open a liaison office in Hong Kong, with its strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region, is intended to give stronger impetus to the development of UNIDROIT's work in the future.

Delivering his opening remarks, Mr Lam said that Hong Kong's relationship with UNIDROIT is longstanding. The establishment of the liaison office in Hong Kong will take the city's relationship with UNIDROIT to the next level, and will provide a stable and effective platform in the Asia-Pacific region to facilitate the development of international private law. He noted that the presence of the three major private international law organisations at the Hong Kong legal hub, namely the UNIDROIT Asia-Pacific Liaison Office, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, and the DoJ Project Office for Collaboration with UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law), together with the International Organization for Mediation, the AALCO (Asian African Legal Consultative Organization) Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre and other international institutions, will create synergy. It will showcase Hong Kong's unique advantage as a distinctive platform to facilitate closer collaboration among international

and regional institutions, serving as a strong testament to the theme of this year's Hong Kong Legal Week: "Legal Synergy for a Shared Future".

The Regional Conference for the Asia-Pacific in celebration of UNIDROIT's centenary came right after the Opening Ceremony. More than 700 registrations from more than 40 countries or regions were received to attend the conference. Most of the participants, including representatives of the member states, governments and organisations supporting UNIDROIT, as well as its long-standing partners in the Asia-Pacific region, gathered to review UNIDROIT's achievements of a century in modernising and harmonising private law, and to explore how it can continue to foster regional development in its next century. The conference featured three panel discussions, with speakers from Australia, Indonesia, Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, Vietnam, Uzbekistan and other jurisdictions. The discussions focused on the impact of UNIDROIT’s normative and institutional work in the region, while taking a prospective lens to examine opportunities and emerging challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, said in his closing remarks that UNIDROIT opening its first ever overseas office in Hong Kong fully reflects the international community's vote of confidence in Hong Kong's legal system. The Liaison Office will serve not only as a platform for dialogue with governments on the development and implementation of its instruments, but also as a hub for collaboration with academia, arbitral and mediation institutions, financial institutions and other key stakeholders. In an increasingly interconnected region with diverse legal systems, there is a clear need for UNIDROIT to work in partnership with other international organisations in the Asia-Pacific region to deliver legal infrastructure which is attuned to the needs of the region, Dr Cheung added.

The 3rd Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit will be held tomorrow (November 3). With the theme of "Advancing Future-Ready Legal Infrastructure to Foster Digital Innovation, Sustainable Growth, and Regional Connectivity in the Asia-Pacific" this year, the participants will focus on issues at the forefront of the future development of the Asia-Pacific region, examining the role of transnational commercial law in fostering digital innovation, sustainable growth and resilient markets in the region.

Other events during the Hong Kong Legal Week include the celebration event of UNCITRAL's 60th anniversary to be held on Wednesday (November 4); the Fourth Legal

Forum on Interconnectivity and Development and the Hong Kong Mediation Lecture 2026 on Thursday (November 5); as well as the Second Guangdong - Hong Kong - Macao Greater Bay Area Lawyers Forum on Friday (November 6).

In addition, the three-day Hong Kong LawTech Fest 2026 will kick-start on Wednesday, featuring dynamic exhibitions and live demonstrations to foster collaboration between legal and technology professionals. A highlight of the fest, the LawTech Forum, will take place on Thursday. Under the theme "Human in the Loop, Integrity at the Core - Redefining Legal Practice with LawTech", leading lawtech experts and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds will exchange views at the Forum.

For more details of Hong Kong Legal Week 2026, please visit the dedicated website at www.legalweek.hk. A live broadcast will be available on the dedicated website and at webcast.info.gov.hk.

Ends/Monday, November 2, 2026