

**Speech of Law Officer (Civil Law), Mr Benedict Lai, at the
Opening Ceremony of Hong Kong Mediation
Accreditation Association Limited on April 2, 2013**

Chairman, distinguished Members, Guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Today is a significant day in the development of mediation in Hong Kong. It marks the formal commencement of operation of HKMAAL as a result of the hard work of all those involved. On behalf of the Secretary for Justice, I would like to congratulate HKMAAL on its formal commencement of business.

The availability of duly accredited mediators is essential for the proper promotion and development of mediation in Hong Kong. One would recall that the recommendation for setting up a single accreditation body for mediators in Hong Kong goes back to February 2010 when the Working Group on Mediation published its Report for three months public consultation. One of the 48 recommendations was the

establishment of a single body for accrediting mediators to ensure quality and working standards of mediators in Hong Kong¹. Notwithstanding that the Working Group considered that it would take at least 5 years before that body could be set up, there was overwhelming support for the setting up of a single body for accrediting mediators as soon as possible.

With such general support, the Mediation Task Force, which was set up in December 2010 by the Secretary for Justice, took the matter forward and worked with major mediation stakeholders to facilitate the establishment of an independent, industry-led single body for accreditation.

With the full support of the Task Force, the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Law Society of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre and the Hong Kong Mediation Centre took the lead to set up the accreditation body, making use of their professional skills and managerial

¹ Recommendation 25, “The establishment of a single body for accrediting mediators is desirable and can assist to ensure the quality of mediators, consistency of standards, education of the public about mediators and mediation, build public confidence in mediation services and maintain the credibility of mediation”.

experience. They are the major stakeholders in the promotion and development of mediation in Hong Kong.

On 28 August last year, HKMAAL was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, and those 4 professional bodies have become the founder members.

The missions of HKMAAL are (i) to set standards for accredited mediators, supervisors, assessors, trainers, coaches and other professionals involved in mediation in Hong Kong, and to accredit them on satisfying the requisite standards; (ii) to set standards for relevant mediation training courses in Hong Kong, and to approve them on satisfying the requisite standards; and (iii) to promote a culture of best practice and professionalism in mediation in Hong Kong.

HKMAAL's core values are unity, consistency, professionalism, excellence and effectiveness, and strengthening Hong Kong's position as an international dispute resolution centre. Its vision is to create the premier mediation accreditation body in Hong Kong.

To accomplish the above missions requires continuous support from the mediation community. After the commencement of its operation today, HKMAAL will continue its work in determining and refining the accreditation requirements, in consultation with stakeholders, to prepare for the first assessment to be conducted later this year.

The Department of Justice will, through the Steering Committee on Mediation, continue to fully support HKMAAL and suggest ways to further develop the accreditation and training of mediators in Hong Kong.

We are fully confident that through the concerted efforts of all concerned, HKMAAL will accomplish its missions and provide an effective accreditation system which will ensure the quality of mediators and help to inspire public confidence in mediation. This in turn will strengthen the mediation services available in Hong Kong and enhance Hong Kong's position as a dispute resolution centre.

HKMAAL will have a lot more to do. As we understand, the establishment of mediation accreditation has only entered the first phase. The system has yet to be further considered and streamlined. May we all wish HKMAAL every success in the future.

Thank you.