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The Government of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region

Progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in North-East Asia with impact of the COVID-19 pandemic - experience of Hong Kong, China

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Overview of the 17 SDGs

- ▶ The 17 goals under the Agenda are interconnected, with the rule of law being a pillar for its successful implementation.
- ▶ Goal 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



Some key facts of the COVID-19 impact

- ▶ As at 22/10/2020:
 - ▶ More than 41 million people being infected with COVID-19 worldwide
 - ▶ More than 1.1 million deaths worldwide
- ▶ Hong Kong is also severely impacted:
 - ▶ As at 22/10/2020, more than 5000 people being infected and causing more than 100 deaths
- ▶ Impact to HK's economy
 - ▶ Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (in the period between July 2020 - September 2020) - 6.4% (16 years' high), with youths' unemployment rate (Age 20-24) at 20.1%
 - ▶ The unemployment rate of the consumption and tourism-related sectors, including the retail, accommodation and food services sectors combined surged by 0.8 percentage points to 11.7%

Approach of HK to deal with COVID-19

- ▶ Approach:
 - ▶ Recognize, Strategize, Legalize and Revitalize
 - ▶ Recognize - Identify the risks of COVID-19 at the early stage
 - ▶ Strategize - Prevention and containment of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic
 - ▶ Legalize - Public Health Emergency Regulations made under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance
 - ▶ Revitalize - Government support measures

The use of Lawtech in light of social distancing

- ▶ Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot
 - ▶ 71 teams from 21 jurisdictions participated
 - ▶ About 250 arbitrators from 52 jurisdictions
 - ▶ ODR platform supported by the non-governmental eBRAM Centre
- ▶ HK's Judiciary - Remote hearings
 - ▶ Suitable civil cases in High Court
 - ▶ Use of video-conferencing facilities

Lawtech Fund

- ▶ Supports small and medium size law firms/ barristers' chambers (with 5 or less lawyers) to:
 - ▶ procure and upgrade information technology systems; and
 - ▶ for LawTech training
- ▶ Joint administration by the Law Society of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Bar Association
- ▶ Maximum reimbursement: up to HK\$50,000 per firm/chamber

COVID-19 ODR Scheme

- ▶ Operated by eBRAM Centre, an independent body founded by representatives from the legal and IT sectors
- ▶ Aim: To provide a speedy and cost-effective mean to resolve COVID-19 related disputes, through a mutli-tiered mechanism of negotiation, mediation and arbitration.
- ▶ Eligibility:
 - ▶ Dispute amount: not exceeding HK\$500,000
 - ▶ Either one of the parties is a Hong Kong resident or company
 - ▶ Mutual agreement to use the Scheme
- ▶ Affordable: Each party only pays a registration fee of HK\$200!

"Vision 2030 for Rule of Law"

- ▶ To promote the proper understanding and recognition of the rule of law by studying its various elements through research, stakeholders' collaboration and capacity building, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of inclusive and fair societies at both the local and international levels.
- ▶ "Rule of law and justice for all"
 - ▶ Setting up the Inclusive Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Office and its Rule of Law Unit
- ▶ Vision 2030 Task Force
 - ▶ Memberships of local and international renowned experts
(e.g. ICJ judge, UN judge, former Chair of the WTO Appellate Body, former Secretary General of HCCH, former top government officials, renowned international arbitrators, legal practitioners and professors around the globe)

Vision 2030 Rule of Law - Upcoming Initiatives

- ▶ Inaugural Rule of Law Congress (Happening right now!)
 - ▶ Theme: *“Towards 2030: A Decade of Action for Rule of Law”*
 - ▶ Two main areas for discussion:
 - ▶ Enhancing legal aid services in ensuring access to justice for all
 - ▶ Capacity building for Judicial Officers
- ▶ Various activities focusing on Youth
 - ▶ Engagement (e.g. Studio DoJ for the general public including youth)
 - ▶ Empowerment (e.g. Drama for Primary Schools, *“Meet the Community Programme”*)
 - ▶ Enrichment (e.g. Young Professional Overseas Enrichment Program)
- ▶ Seminar or other activities focusing on Women
 - ▶ President Xi Jinping: *“Protection of women's rights must become the will of the state”*
 - ▶ Women empowerment and gender equality

Thank you!

感谢！

Спасибо!

Баярлалаа!

감사합니다!

ありがとうございました!