

**“2026 Hong Kong Summit on
Commercial Dispute Resolution in China”
20 October 2026, 10:00 am
Beijing International Arbitration Court Hong Kong Center**

Welcome Remarks by Mr. Clifford Tavares, Law Officer (Civil Law)

Ms Lili JIANG (Committee Member and Secretary General of Beijing Arbitration Commission / Beijing International Arbitration Court), **Ms Gina LEUNG** (Chair of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators East Asia Branch), **Mr Haoliang ZHANG** (Deputy Secretary General of Beijing Arbitration Commission / Beijing International Arbitration Court), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my pleasure to join you all today at the 2026 Hong Kong Summit on Commercial Dispute Resolution in China (“Summit”).

2. First of all, on behalf of the Department of Justice (“DoJ”), I would like to extend our congratulations to the co-organizers – the Beijing International Arbitration Court Hong Kong Center (“BIACHK”) and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (“CIArb”) East Asia Branch – for bringing this Summit to life.

3. This is the first Hong Kong Summit hosted by BIACHK since its establishment here in Hong Kong in November last year. I feel truly privileged to see such distinguished gathering of arbitrators, legal practitioners, scholars and representatives from dispute resolution institutions across Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and around the world convening in one room today.

Hong Kong: a “Super Connector” and “Super Value-adder”

4. The title of today’s Summit is “Commercial Dispute Resolution *in*

China” – Hong Kong’s legal system is not only well connected to the legal systems of other jurisdictions but also to that of the Chinese Mainland. Such unparalleled advantages allow us to play a crucial role in dispute resolution.

5. Indeed, I would venture to suggest that as enterprises expand their footprints globally, Hong Kong’s top-notch international legal and dispute resolution services have become indispensable. We are here to help businesses navigate cross-border complexities at every stage of their business cycles.

6. The National 15th Five-Year Plan supports Hong Kong to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative and leverage its professional services to empower Mainland enterprises in “going global”. It also calls for deepening the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development, specifically through the harmonization of rules and mechanisms. This strategic positioning is echoed in Hong Kong’s First Five-Year Plan and in the Chief Executive’s 2026 Policy Address, which reaffirm our steadfast commitment to consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong’s position as a premier centre for international legal and dispute resolution services.

7. Staunch national policy support, coupled with Hong Kong’s intrinsic strengths, has cemented our unique position as a “super connector” between the Chinese Mainland and the world, and a “super value-adder” for enterprises venturing into the global market. Under the framework of “One Country, Two Systems”, Hong Kong stands out as the only Chinese and English bilingual common law jurisdiction in China and in the world, underpinned by a strong rule of law tradition.

8. In terms of connectivity with the Chinese Mainland, we have so far concluded 10 mutual legal assistance arrangements in civil and commercial matters with the Chinese Mainland covering recognition and enforcement of civil and commercial judgments as well as arbitral awards, and the grant

of arbitration-related interim measures. These arrangements only exist between Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland because Hong Kong is a part of China.

9. Hong Kong boasts a world-class pool of international legal talents proficient in common law and international practice. We offer a full spectrum of dispute resolution options, including litigation, arbitration and mediation. Hong Kong housed many reputable alternative dispute resolution (“ADR”) institutions which contribute significantly to the dispute resolution practice, including BIACHK and CIArb East Asia Branch.

10. Our judiciary is renowned for its independence, competence and unwavering commitment to the rule of law. Eminent judges from other common law jurisdictions not only serve as non-permanent judges of our Court of Final Appeal, but are also invited to sit as deputy judges at our Court of First Instance in civil and commercial matters. Indeed, the Chief Executive has last Friday accepted the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission on the appointment of the Honourable Sir Terence Arnold, a retired Permanent Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand, as a non-permanent judge of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. The DoJ supports the exciting plan of the Judiciary announced in May this year to establish the Hong Kong International Commercial Court, which will focus on complex, high-value international and cross-boundary commercial disputes. This will complement Hong Kong’s existing dispute resolution framework and is expected to contribute significantly to the development of international commercial law through its jurisprudence.

Shaping the Future of ADR

11. Hong Kong is also well recognized as an arbitration-friendly jurisdiction, with our courts upholding party autonomy and taking a pro-enforcement approach towards arbitral awards. For more than a

decade, Hong Kong has been among the world's top five preferred arbitral seats since 2015, and is tied as the second most preferred arbitral seat worldwide and is the most preferred seat in Asia-Pacific according to the latest Queen Mary University of London International Arbitration Survey.

12. While we take pride in what Hong Kong can offer, we consistently strive to keep pace with the evolving needs of the market. In October 2025, we established the Working Group on Arbitration Law Reform to conduct a comprehensive review of Hong Kong Arbitration Ordinance. Chaired by the Secretary for Justice and vice-chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, the Working Group comprises expert members from the legal and dispute resolution sector. In less than a year, the Working Group has examined 25 issues across four areas: speed and convenience; confidentiality; scope; and fairness and justice.

13. Those are the core principles which we will adhere to while aiming to bolster Hong Kong's competitiveness as a leading international arbitration centre through the reform. On 28 September, we launched a one-month stakeholders consultation on the Working Group's recommendations and the draft bill to amend our Arbitration Ordinance. Stakeholders consultation will come to an end on 27 October, we value stakeholders' views and feedback. We will strive to complete the legislative amendment exercise within 2027, aiming to further enhance our arbitration legislative framework that gives users complete confidence when choosing Hong Kong as the arbitral seat.

14. Mediation is becoming an important means to resolve international disputes. We are also developing Hong Kong into a "Global Capital of Mediation". With the Country's staunch support, we proudly host the headquarters of the International Organization for Mediation ("IOMed"), the first international intergovernmental organisation dedicated to resolving disputes through mediation, whether between States, between a State and a foreign investor, or between private parties in international commercial matters.

The Summit's Programme

15. Today's Summit features six interconnected sessions on topical issues in commercial dispute resolution.

16. The morning sessions examine international arbitration in the era of new arbitration law, and the making of a world-class mediation hub. These themes resonate with recent arbitration law reforms in key jurisdictions worldwide, including the newly amended PRC Arbitration Law that came into effect in March this year, the UK Arbitration Act 2025 that came into operation in August last year, the consultation by the Dubai International Financial Centre on proposed changes to its arbitration law that closed in July this year, as well as Hong Kong's ongoing review of our Arbitration Ordinance as mentioned. The discussion on world-class mediation hub is especially timely. With the parties' consent, the IOMed has announced that it has already successfully assisted in resolving a maritime dispute between a Chinese entity and a Singapore entity since its commencement of operation. Indeed, today, the 20th of October, the IOMed celebrates its first anniversary of commencing operation here in Hong Kong.

17. The afternoon sessions pivot to the frontier of the digital economy and investment in China – tackling IP protection for AI-generated content, data rights, investor protection and corporate governance. These fast-evolving areas represent the modern bedrock of commercial growth, where legal frameworks should adapt strategically to emerging technologies and market structures. In this regard, the HKSAR Government has set up the Inter-departmental Working Group to Review Legislation to Support Wider Application of AI, led by the DoJ, to review our laws to ensure that they will keep pace with the rapid technological change. The review will cover numerous areas of common concern such as data privacy, IP rights in AI-generated works, and cybersecurity risks caused by AI-enabled fraud.

18. The final sessions will address energy transition, as well as the impact of economic sanctions, export controls and supply chain disruptions in international trade. As geopolitical uncertainty reshapes global commerce, Hong Kong's position as a stable international legal and dispute resolution services centre becomes all the more vital.

19. Ladies and gentlemen, today's program addresses the real-world legal challenges faced by enterprises in an increasingly complex international market. I have no doubt that the insights shared by the distinguished speakers will be thought-provoking and practically invaluable.

Closing

20. Today's Summit falls at the vibrant season of Hong Kong's legal calendar. The Hong Kong Arbitration Week 2026 is currently underway. From the 2nd to the 6th of November, the DoJ will host our annual flagship event, Hong Kong Legal Week. I would like to conclude by inviting all of you to also join these major events to celebrate the success and latest developments of our legal and dispute resolution industry.

21. My appreciation once again to BIACHK and CIArb East Asia Branch for organizing this meaningful Summit. I wish all participants a stimulating, constructive and successful Summit. Thank you.