

**The 3rd Hunan Fair for Trade & Investment &
International Chambers of Commerce Hunan Tour**

Changsha, Hunan

22 October 2026

**Opening Speech by Dr. James Ding, JP,
The Law Officer (International Law)/
Chair of APEC Economic Committee**

Vice Governor Yu, Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen,

1. I am honoured to join you all today at this important conference. As we are having our Conference here in Changsha, the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting was held in Hong Kong, China this week. Next month, the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting will be held in Shenzhen, directly connected to Hong Kong.
2. As I am also currently serving as the Chair of APEC Economic Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of legal and dispute resolution services for economic growth as well as trade and investment. In particular, I would like to share the role of Hong Kong as a “super connector” and “super value-adder” for Hunan and its global partners, from the legal perspective.

3. First, Hong Kong, with its unique advantage under the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, is the only common law jurisdiction with both Chinese and English as the official languages. Our unique legal arrangements with the Chinese Mainland further strengthen our position. So far, we have concluded 10 mutual legal assistance arrangements in civil and commercial matters with the Chinese Mainland covering service process, taking of evidence, insolvency, recognition and enforcement of civil and commercial judgments as well as arbitral awards. Such well-established legal framework provides a very favorable environment for international trade and investment. These unparalleled advantages make Hong Kong an ideal business partner for Hunan, as well as a perfect springboard for Chinese Mainland enterprises expanding overseas, and for overseas businesses seeking to enter into the Chinese Mainland, including Hunan.
4. Furthermore, Hong Kong’s legal expertise stands as a solid foundation for global businesses, which empowers Chinese Mainland enterprises to go global or overseas enterprises to enter the Chinese market, facilitating international trade and investment. Hong Kong has a diverse and robust

legal sector, with more than 1,700 barristers, 12,000 solicitors across more than 900 law firms, many having a strong presence in the Chinese Mainland and worldwide. We also have more than 1,700 foreign registered lawyers from over 30 jurisdictions. Our legal talent pool has consistently been ranked among the world's best in practice areas like capital markets, corporate law and dispute resolution.

5. In addition to providing comprehensive legal services, Hong Kong is also proud to provide a full spectrum of top-quality dispute resolution services, ranging from litigation, arbitration and mediation. Hong Kong's judiciary is renowned for its quality, independence and respect for the rule of law and has recently announced the plan to establish the Hong Kong International Commercial Court. Hong Kong courts are also highly supportive of arbitration, respecting parties' choice of arbitration and the arbitration procedures, maintaining a pro-enforcement approach for arbitral awards. As a result, Hong Kong has been ranked the most preferred seat in Asia-Pacific last year by the survey of Queen Mary University of London. At the same time, Hong Kong recognizes the importance of mediation and is establishing itself as the "Global Capital of

Mediation”. We have launched a number of initiatives to encourage wider use of mediation, including adopting a general policy of incorporating a mediation clause in all government contracts. Last year, the International Organization for Mediation established its headquarter in Hong Kong, which is the first international intergovernmental organisation devoted to the use of mediation in resolving international disputes.

6. Apart from legal and dispute resolution services, related capacity building and professional exchanges is also critical to facilitating trade and investment. In this regard, the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy (“the Academy”) launched by the Department of Justice in 2024 has already provided capacity building on a diverse range of topics for over 5,000 participants worldwide. The Academy is also pleased to be a supporting organization for this Conference to co-organise the International Dispute Resolution Symposium (Hunan) this afternoon.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by inviting you to join the Hong Kong Legal Week 2026 from November 2 to 6. The Hong Kong Legal Week is an annual flagship event organized by the Department of Justice in collaboration with international organizations and other bodies. This year,

the Hong Kong Legal Week will host a number of international conferences including the centenary celebration of the UNIDORIT, the celebration of 60th anniversary of the UNCITRAL, Legal Forum on Interconnectivity and Development, the Greater Bay Area Lawyers Forum, and the Hong Kong LawTech Fest. You may simply register on our website and join us in person or online so that we can continue our exchanges and discussion on various legal issues touching upon trade and investment after the Conference today.

7. On this note, I wish the Conference every success. Thank you.

(about 778 words, about 5 minutes)

#405916v2