UNIDROIT Centenary: Regional Conference for the Asia-Pacific cum Opening Ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Liaison Office

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Panel 3: Advancing Multilateralism Through Collaboration: Regional and International Synergies for the Development and Promotion of Transnational Law in the Asia Pacific

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Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured to be here today to celebrate UNIDROIT's Centenary as well as the momentous occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the UNIDROIT Asia-Pacific Liaison Office ("Liaison Office").

2. With the strong support of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, the HKSAR Government has been working closely with UNIDROIT on the possibility of establishing presence in the Asia Pacific Region for the past several years. We therefore welcome today's opening of the Liaison Office in Hong Kong, which is the first ever overseas office of UNIDROIT in its hundred year's history, signifying one of the most important highlights for its Centenary celebration.

APEC – UNIDROIT Collaborations

3. A number of distinguished speakers today have already highlighted the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific region on the global landscape.

4. I would just like to share a few more observations. As Chair of the Economic Committee at APEC, I have the privilege of witnessing the many advantages of multilateralism in pushing forward important initiatives that bear a positive impact on different economies and stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region.

5. APEC actively collaborates with multiple international and regional organisations, including those represented on this panel today. In particular, UNIDROIT, UNCITRAL and HCCH have been given accredited guest status under the APEC Economic Committee since 2017, which allows them to attend meetings and other work of the APEC Economic Committee, which oversees structural reform in the region.

6. By actively collaborating with such international organisations through organizing various capacity-building workshops and policy dialogues to promote their legal instruments, APEC provides UNIDROIT and other international organisations a useful platform to deepen member economies' understanding of their work through discussions, studies and open dialogue. A number of key UNIDROIT instruments, including the Cape Town Convention and its Protocols, the Model Law on Factoring, have been introduced and well received by APEC member economies.

7. In recognition of these multilateral efforts, at the APEC Structural Reform Ministerial Meeting held in October 2025, the Ministers particularly acknowledged the usefulness of international law instruments developed by various international organisations, including UNIDROIT, as "effective tools for structural reform".

8. The continued collaborative efforts between APEC and UNIDROIT and other international organizations will encourage the development of transnational law and the spread of legal coherence across national boundaries.

This helps to reduce friction caused by differing national legal systems and standards, and instead fosters more efficient trade flow and stronger international regulatory cooperation.

UNIDROIT Asia-Pacific Liaison Office

9. With the opening of the Liaison Office in Hong Kong, I believe that there will be even more opportunities to promote and develop transnational law in Asia Pacific and beyond, opening an exciting new chapter for us all.

(1) Wider adoption or implementation of UNIDROIT instruments

10. First of all, the establishment of the Liaison Office will greatly enhance the visibility of UNIDROIT in the Asia Pacific region, with the Office serving as a crucial coordination point. The geographical proximity will facilitate UNIDROIT's higher participation at regional events, and opens up the door for UNIDROIT to more closely plan, execute, collaborate and engage with States and other international institutions in this region. The enhanced international profile will also help UNIDROIT to promote adoption or implementation of their instruments more effectively and this would help facilitate the development and promotion of its instruments and transnational law in general.

(2) Synergy with other international organisation and bodies

11. In addition, the Liaison Office will also be able to create greater synergy with other international organisations and use Hong Kong as a springboard to further UNIDROIT's multilateral efforts in the region.

12. As our Chief Executive and Secretary for Justice have already highlighted earlier today, Hong Kong is a world-renowned international city and international legal, trade and financial hub. We possess a robust common law system, an independent judiciary that is well-respected globally, and

world-class legal infrastructure. Hong Kong is also well located in the region as a transport hub for UNIDROIT to reach different places easily. The high frequency in which international conferences are held in Hong Kong and in nearby locations (such as the APEC Finance Ministers Meeting in Hong Kong last month and the APEC Economic Leaders Meetings in Shenzhen next week) also facilitates UNIDROIT to reach out more easily to economies and other stakeholders in the region attending such conferences.

13. As part of the Hong Kong Legal Hub, the Liaison Office will also have easy and close access to the many other distinguished international organizations that have a presence in Hong Kong. With an unparalleled concentration of international legal expertise and dispute resolution bodies, establishing the Liaison Office at the Hong Kong Legal Hub offers UNIDROIT closer proximity to other international institutions, allowing for an unprecedented exchange of ideas and the building of opportunities for new capacity building programmes. Hong Kong is therefore strategically placed to help UNIDROIT in the promotion of its global reach of unified legal standards in private international law.

(3) Capacity Building in the Asia Pacific region

14. One of the important institutions that the Liaison Office may closely work with is the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy.

15. Since its launch in November 2024, the Academy has already partnered with over 30 international legal organizations, national ministries and local professional bodies, and has organized numerous capacity-building programmes (including in collaboration with UNIDROIT) in different parts of the world for over 5,000 participants.

16. The Liaison Office can further facilitate the organization of such training and capacity building events to help promote UNIDROIT instruments

and to stimulate the various conversations on international and transnational law in the region. For example, the Liaison Office and the Academy may explore the possibility of organising an APEC capacity building workshop on some key UNIDROIT instruments next year in Viet Nam. Such capacity building will also be conducive to promoting the development of transnational law in the APEC region.

Conclusion

17. In conclusion, the opening of the Liaison Office will bring about a fresh energy to the fabric of multilateralism in the region. Hong Kong is strategically positioned and uniquely equipped to facilitate and bring about an even more dynamic synergy in the development and promotion of transnational law, both regionally and internationally. We very much look forward to working with the Liaison Office in the coming years.

18. My heartfelt congratulations again to UNIDROIT for achieving this momentous milestone. Thank you.