

**Speech by the Hon Rimsky Yuen, SC, JP
Secretary for Justice
at the HKMAAL 1st Anniversary Celebration
on Friday, 11 October 2013**

Mr Budge, Mr Justice Lam VP, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Happy Birthday to the Hong Kong Mediation Accreditation Association Limited (“HKMAAL”)! I believe many of us here will regard this birthday party a special one, because many of us here witnessed the whole process from the initial conception, then the birth, and now the first birthday of the HKMAAL.

2. The setting up an accreditation body was one of the issues considered by the Working Group on Mediation established in February 2008. The Working Group recommended in its Report in February 2010 the establishment of a single body for accrediting mediators. During the subsequent public consultation, the responses overwhelmingly supported the idea.

3. With the hard work by members of the Accreditation Sub-Group of the Mediation Task Force, and contributions from the relevant stakeholders, the HKMAAL was incorporated in August last year with four founding members.

4. Judging from the experience of other jurisdictions, as well as looking back at the events and works leading to the establishment of the HKMAAL, the setting up of a single accreditation body for mediators is definitely not an easy task. Mediation is a very flexible process, and one also has to take into account the numerous different approaches that one may adopt when conducting mediation. Hence, the successful establishment of the HKMAAL was truly a milestone in the development of mediation in Hong Kong. Without the efforts and active participation of the four founding members and the support of the relevant stakeholders, the whole enterprise would not have been possible.

5. Quality assurance of mediators is certainly an important key to maintaining and enhancing public confidence in the use of mediation as a means

of dispute resolution. As an industry-led body, the HKMAAL is tasked to establish a common accreditation system for our mediators with a view to ensuring the standards of mediators as well as looking after matters concerning the discipline and professionalism of mediators in Hong Kong.

6. Although it has only been set up for one year, much important progress has been achieved by the HKMAAL. Indeed, the Association has begun to conduct its accreditation assessment (namely, the "Stage 2" assessment) since July. The growth in the membership of the HKMAAL, from the original four founding members to the present eight¹, as just mentioned by Mr Budge, shows that the work of the HKMAAL and its important role are increasingly recognised by the ADR community, as well as other professional sectors.

7. There are now already over 1100 accredited mediators registered under the HKMAAL panel. Mr Budge will present in a moment the mediator certificate to the 1000th mediator so registered. It is also pertinent to note that the list of HKMAAL accredited mediators includes the names of many well-known and very experienced practitioners.

8. Since it is one of the Department of Justice's key initiatives to promote the wider use of mediation in Hong Kong, we will continue to work closely with HKMAAL to keep in view the development of the accreditation system, as well as other matters concerning the promotion of mediation.

9. On this happy occasion of the first birthday of the HKMAAL, may I once again thank all who have contributed to its establishment and for those who have supported its operation since its incorporation. Special credits should naturally go to Mr John Budge and all the HKMAAL Council Members, for what they have done to make HKMAAL a success.

10. Before I conclude, may I wish the HKMAAL every success in the years to come! Thank you!

¹ The four additional members are the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators, the Centre for Effective Disputes Resolution (Asia Pacific), the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, and the Hong Kong Institute of Architects.