

Opening remarks of Ms Teresa Cheng, SC
Secretary for Justice
Signing Ceremony of the
Memorandum of Cooperation
between the Department of Justice of the HKSAR and
the Ministry of Justice of Japan
9 January 2019 (Wednesday)

The Honourable Mr Yamashita, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I first express my gratitude to the delegation of the Ministry of Justice (“**MoJ**”), Japan and the Consulate-General of Japan, as well as representatives from the various reputable legal and dispute resolution institutions in Hong Kong for witnessing this important moment of signing the Memorandum of Cooperation (“**MoC**”) between the MoJ and the Department of Justice (“**DoJ**”).

2. I had a meeting with the Minister last November amid his busy schedule. The discussion was fruitful, resulting in signing of the MoC today. It is one of the key policy objectives of DoJ to position Hong Kong as an ideal hub for deal making, dispute resolution and capacity building in the Asia-Pacific Region.

3. Taking into account the need for Hong Kong to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area Plan, the “Inclusive Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Office” (“**IDAR Office**”) was set up

this January to enhance overall coordination of mediation and arbitration works.

4. The Commissioner of the IDAR Office will work directly under my steer. The use of the term “inclusive” in the name can better stress the importance of inclusive growth and sustainable development, as well as the concept of “inclusive economy” or “inclusive society”.

5. In In this connection, Goal 16 of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals is 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”. The objectives of the IDAR Office fit in very well with Goal 16.

6. Thus, the adoption of the name “Inclusive Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Office” can better emphasise DoJ’s aim to facilitate access to justice and provide equitable opportunities for all sectors of the economy without boundary, hence contributing to advancing Goal 16 in this region and beyond.

7. Starting from 2019, the IDAR Office will undertake a number of work and projects to advance the above objectives. For instance, it will pursue and conclude cooperation or partnership arrangements with other jurisdictions and international organisation. The present MoC is an important one of these arrangements.

8. Japan is an important and long-time partner of Hong Kong. Last November, I joined a legal seminar of the “Think Global, Think Hong Kong” event in Tokyo with a delegation of private legal practitioners from Hong Kong.

9. I am pleased that the seminar and visit were fruitful in tightening the ties between the Japanese and HKSAR Governments and strengthened the co-operation between the legal and dispute resolution sector of the two places.

10. Signing of the MoC, which aims at strengthening communication and collaboration between the MoJ and the DoJ on international arbitration and mediation, is an encouraging step in furthering our legal cooperation and working relationship.

11. Following this important milestone, I look forward to having further exchange and dialogue with the MoJ in the future.

Thank you.