

**Speech of Ms Teresa Cheng, SC
Secretary for Justice**

**3rd UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit 2019
Judicial Conference**

Welcome Remarks

4 November 2019 (Monday)

The Honourable Mr Justice Cheung (Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Justice Andrew Cheung), Ms Joubin-Bret (Secretary, United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, Ms Anna Joubin-Bret), Professor Tirado (Secretary-General, International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, Professor Ignacio Tirado), distinguished Judges, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour and pleasure to welcome you all here to the 3rd UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit 2019 (Judicial Summit), co-organised by the

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL) and the Department of Justice of the Government of the HKSAR (DoJ).

2. Today marks the opening of the first Hong Kong Legal Week 2019. Following the Judicial Summit, there will be the Inaugural Hong Kong Mediation Lecture and the 32nd LAWASIA Annual Conference in the week. In this inaugural annual Hong Kong Legal Week, we aspire to achieve four “I” s: inclusive, innovative, interactive and informative.

Inclusive

3. Hong Kong has always prided itself as an inclusive society not only for respecting different culture, but also

as a city that cherishes, respects and protects the freedom of speech and expression. Today, we have gathered over 150 participants from various international organisations and over 25 jurisdictions from all over the world. In spite of the fact that we come from different legal tradition, culture and background, we may freely share our views and opinions on a wide range of legal issues, which shows the inclusive nature of the event today. Indeed, inclusiveness is an important dimension of the “rule of law” which is the cornerstone of our society.

4. Hong Kong has a strong and solid foundation for rule of law – the strong legal fraternity, the independent judiciary, the application of the common law and the protection of human rights guaranteed under the Basic Law. We are committed to safeguarding this deeply entrenched value of the society and will devote more

resources and effort for the promotion and education of the rule of law in the years to come. To this end, in 2020, the Department of Justice (DoJ) will launch a ten-year initiative, namely the “Vision 2030 for Rule of Law”. Under this new initiative, a dedicated inclusive platform will be established for stakeholders, including youth, practitioners and experts, to take forward the initiative through academic and professional exchanges, research, capacity building and activities to promote and reinforce the rule of law in Hong Kong and beyond. We hope that, with this new initiative, not only can we strengthen the rule of law and promote inclusive access to justice, but also contribute to “China’s National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and provide capacity building for neighbouring regions and countries under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Innovative

5. With the use of the latest technologies, trade crosses borders in a split second, transforming our economy into a truly global and connected one. Under this new paradigm of trade and commerce, we must not only enhance our existing dispute resolution mechanisms, but also explore other innovative ways, utilising the latest technologies, to facilitate inclusive access to justice for the global community.

6. This Conference brings together an international community composed of esteemed members of the judiciary, the legal profession and academia, leaders from the private sector and members of international bodies with experience and expertise in international trade and

private international law. They will no doubt provide us with useful insights and critical analysis to map the way forward for deal-making and dispute resolution in this new paradigm of the digital economy.

Interactive

7. As the world has become more inter-connected and with the continuous growth of cross-border trade and investment, dispute resolution also takes on a more global dimension, and hence international cooperation and exchange has become more pertinent. I am pleased to announce that Hong Kong will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations (UNCITRAL) and a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Office of the Judiciary of the Kingdom of Thailand during the Judicial Summit. The signing of the Memorandum is another

encouraging step in furthering legal cooperation and working relationship between Hong Kong and international organisations as well as foreign jurisdictions. The Memorandum will be the third and the fourth instruments on enhancing exchanges and cooperation signed this year, in addition to the similar ones signed with Japan in January and Korea in September.

8. We will continue to enhance our efforts to interact and collaborate with international organisations and foreign jurisdictions in this increasingly globalised and digital world.

Informative

9. Finally, I must address this distinguished international audience on the situation in Hong Kong.

You might have read, seen or heard about the situation in Hong Kong on the news or social media, but we hope that your presence in Hong Kong will enable you to see the fuller picture. Notwithstanding the disruptions, the fundamentals and institutional underpinning of our economy and society are strong. Our legal system, judicial system, financial infrastructure and trade transactions have continued to function well.

10. The principle of “One Country, Two Systems” provides the constitutional guarantee for Hong Kong’s continued development and success as a free and open society. Freedom of expression and other human rights that are enshrined in our Bill of Rights Ordinance and guaranteed under the Basic Law are very much cherished and protected in Hong Kong. On the other hand, those who violate the laws will be brought to justice through our legal

and judicial systems.

11. Hong Kong remains a safe, open, welcoming and cosmopolitan society and an internationally connected, vibrant and dynamic economy. In fact, in the past months, we have successfully hosted a number of international events, such as the Inaugural Global Conference of the Judgement Convention of the Hague Conference on Private International Law and the Belt and Road Summit in September. Last month, we held the Hong Kong Arbitration Week, with a record number of participants, followed by the Investment Mediation Training co-organised by the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes and the Asian Academy of International Law.

12. Looking ahead, the ICC Mediation Competition will

be held in December this year and an international conference in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the UN Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods will be held in conjunction with the annual Vis East Moot in Hong Kong in March 2020. Also in 2020, the Government of the HKSAR will be opening a Legal Hub at the heart of Hong Kong which will house a mix of local, regional and international law-related organisations. Details on the above will be available on our website. Please feel free to disseminate the information in your country or organisation.

Closing

13. Hong Kong has always been resilient. We are confident that the current situation will subside, law and order will be fully restored, challenges will be overcome,

and in the years come, Hong Kong will continue its success and prosper under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”.

14. May I wish this Judicial Summit every success, and for those coming from overseas, an enjoyable stay in Hong Kong!