

**Welcome speech of Ms Teresa Cheng, SC**  
**Secretary for Justice**  
**Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot**  
**22 March 2020 (Sunday)**

On behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Department of Justice (“DoJ”), it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this 17th Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot (“Moot”).

2. We are in times of change. The outbreak of Covid-19 has changed our travel patterns and presented many challenges to us. Fortunately, advance in modern technology may help us to address many of the challenges. For the first time in the Moot’s history, the competition is going virtual this year with the support of eBRAM, which is an efficient, cost-effective, and safe online platform for deal-making and resolution of cross-border commercial and investment disputes. The eBRAM platform will enable around 70 teams from 21 jurisdictions and about 200 arbitrators to take part in the Moot as scheduled. This exemplifies the importance of technological developments in the legal field. The Government of Hong Kong has supported the development of lawtech spearheaded by, amongst others, eBRAM (a non-profit making organisation formed by enthusiastic professional arbitrators, mediators and legal practitioners in Hong Kong) and you will be among the first to experience how the expected rollout in 2020 will change the ways cross-border disputes are to be resolved.

3. Technologies change, so do trade policies. The ongoing trade war reminds champions of globalization that they cannot simply wait and hope that failures of unilateralism become evident. They have to courageously step up and defend the rule-based trading system, the very engine for continued growth and sustainable development. Hong Kong’s long-established liberal approach to trade and investment

has enabled us to obtain some of the highest rankings in major world indicators of competitiveness, economic freedom and ease of doing business. Hong Kong pitches strongly for the rule-based, multilateral trading system, and will continue to play an active and constructive role in strengthening it.

4. Together with market economy and good governance, rule of law is one of the defining signature values of our contemporary global economy. Rule of law is also one of the core values of Hong Kong and the cornerstone of our success. 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. To this end, the DoJ is going to launch a visionary 10-year initiative “Vision 2030 for Rule of Law”, in line with Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to promote the rule of law at national, regional and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

5. Changes are inevitable. Hong Kong has strived to respond timely to these global changes. Likewise, I encourage all participants to open your minds to changes, embrace them and equip yourselves so as to gain the most from them. For this, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Vis East Moot Foundation for again holding this remarkable event in Hong Kong, or in this year’s case, with the Hong Kong-based online platform, eBRAM. Over the years and through the organization of the Moot, the Foundation has been offering opportunities to nurture the advocacy and legal skills of our future talent, an enterprise which is truly commendable. I also wish to thank the volunteer arbitrators from Hong Kong and across the world for your support.

6. On this note, I wish the Moot every success and I look forward to welcoming you personally to Hong Kong in the near future.