

Speech by SJ at signing ceremony of MoC between DoJ and Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam on dispute avoidance and resolution (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Department of Justice and the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam on dispute avoidance and resolution today (May 4):

Honorable Chief Justice Chong (Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam, Dato Seri Paduka Steven Chong Wan Oon), Mrs Mohammad (Consul General of Brunei Darussalam in Hong Kong, Mrs Ainatol Zahayu Mohammad), ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to sign the Memorandum of Cooperation, on behalf of the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China, with Chief Justice Chong of the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam.

The Memorandum marks an important milestone of enhancing communication, collaboration and co-operation on issues relating to dispute avoidance and resolution between Brunei and the HKSAR.

The signing of the Memorandum is significant not only in the areas of dispute avoidance and resolution covered by the document. More importantly, it reflects our joint determination in adhering to promoting regional and international co-operation in general, which resonates with the values and spirit of the Belt and Road Initiative launched by President Xi a decade ago. I strongly believe that the Memorandum will assist in fostering a more coherent, compatible and inclusive international legal atmosphere, which is conducive in strengthening the co-operation and relationship between Brunei and the HKSAR in this region and beyond.

This is the first Memorandum signed by my Department with a foreign jurisdiction since the COVID pandemic, following the signing of similar memorandums with Japan, Korea and Thailand respectively in 2019.

I hope that the signing of this Memorandum physically in Hong Kong will mark the end of the pandemic and the full opening up of Hong Kong to the outside world. The Memorandum would definitely create synergy and facilitate exchanges and collaboration between both our jurisdictions, not only for the public sector, but also for our legal and dispute resolution professionals who may travel more frequently between the two jurisdictions to enhance mutual exchanges and collaboration. It is my hope that the synergy arising from the mutual collaboration and co-operation under the Memorandum can bring about fresh perspectives and new achievements to both jurisdictions. In this connection, I note that the Brunei delegation will be visiting our Judiciary and some international dispute resolution bodies in Hong Kong. I look forward to more of such reciprocal visits in the future in pursuant to the Memorandum.

Lastly, I would like to mention that the HKSAR Government has commenced preparation work with a view to joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free trade bloc that commenced on January 1, 2022. Upon becoming a party to this instrument, the HKSAR can make good use of her existing advantages in deepening the co-operative and business relationships with its trading partners in the future. This move, together with the increased volume of trade and business transactions of the different jurisdictions in these post-COVID times, may also entail a greater demand upcoming for a robust, impartial and predictable dispute resolution mechanism in resolving disputes arising from different sectors or industries in the various jurisdictions.

The signing of this Memorandum is therefore very timely which opens up further opportunities under RCEP for the legal and dispute resolution sectors in both jurisdictions. I am confident that such opportunities will bring tangible benefits to the trade and investment of both sides.

On this note, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Brunei authority once again for their trust and support in us. With the signing of the Memorandum today, our relationship is embarking on a new journey. I am very confident that there are countless opportunities ahead to enable us to foster closer collaboration and co-operation, which would serve the common interest of both Brunei and the HKSAR. Thank you very much.

Photo

The Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam signed a Memorandum of Cooperation today (May 4) to strengthen their co-operation on issues relating to dispute avoidance and resolution. Photo shows the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, delivering his speech at the signing ceremony.

Ends/Thursday, May 4, 2023