

Speech by DSJ at 2nd Anniversary of Opening of AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre (English only) (with photo)

Following are the opening remarks by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, at the 2nd Anniversary of the Opening of AALCO (Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization) Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre today (June 5):

Mr Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Mr Nick Chan (Director of the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre), heads of AALCO disputes resolution centres, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It gives me great pleasure to meet with you all here today to celebrate the second anniversary of the AALCO Hong Kong (AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre) and the remarkable achievements of AALCO Hong Kong in contributing to Hong Kong's success as a leading international legal and dispute resolution services centre over the past two years.

Hong Kong has long been hailed as a world-class destination for international dispute resolution. Our success is premised on our unique strengths under the principle of "one country, two systems" and supportive national policies, such as the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, our strategic position at the heart of Asia, as well as our valuable and diverse talent pool.

To maintain our success in light of the evolving international trade and economic developments, we will need a robust community comprising lawyers, disputes resolvers and regional disputes resolution centres, dedicated to providing top-quality international dispute resolution services.

First of all, our lawyers, disputes resolvers and disputes resolution institutions should be active in reaching out to the global community. AALCO serves as an excellent platform in this respect. As an inter-governmental organisation, AALCO has 48 member states comprising the major states from Asia and Africa, speaking for two-thirds of the world's population and among which 90 per cent are active participants of the Belt and Road Initiative. It is particularly encouraging that AALCO Hong Kong, with the support of AALCO, has successfully hosted the prestigious AALCO Annual Arbitration Forum 2023 last December. The two-day international flagship forum attracted over 1 500 in-person and online participants from different sectors across the globe to discuss a wide range of international legal topics. In the speech that I delivered at the Forum, I emphasised the significant contribution that AALCO Hong Kong had made towards providing a robust legal and technological infrastructure, being two key aspects of Hong Kong's unique position as an international legal hub. Today, on this celebratory occasion, we will be witnessing the appointment of a new panel of arbitrators of AALCO Hong

Kong, signifying the Centre's ongoing efforts in fortifying the dispute resolution profession in Hong Kong and the practitioners' eagerness to capitalise on the wide global network of AALCO to engage in international arbitration work.

Secondly, the dispute resolution community should stay competitive against the rapidly changing social and economic landscape. To this end, the Government is committed to enhancing capacity building to equip our professionals with up-to-date skills for resolving various types of international disputes. A clear example is the anticipated establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy aiming to provide foreign-related legal talent trainings and promote talent exchanges. Institutional support is equally essential. I am pleased to note that AALCO Hong Kong has been offering diverse learning and exchange opportunities for young legal professionals in Hong Kong. It also has a particularly strong focus on the promotion of lawtech and the use of online dispute resolution, complementing professional skills with innovative technologies to meet the growing trend of demand for dispute resolution services in international trade and business.

With the concerted efforts of the dispute resolution industry, I am confident that Hong Kong will continue to be a global leader in offering the best dispute resolution services and enhancing access to justice to sustain peaceful economic growth, thus improving the living standards for the local, regional and international community. Thank you.

Ends/Wednesday, June 5, 2024