

Speech by SJ at opening ceremony of second edition of Hong Kong Common Law Practical Training Course (English only) (with photo)

\*\*\*\*\*

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the opening ceremony of the second edition of the Hong Kong Common Law Practical Training Course - Company Law in Focus today (January 14):

Distinguished judges, ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning. Welcome to the Hong Kong Common Law Practical Training Course - Company Law in Focus, co-organised by the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China and the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy of the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. First, I would like to sincerely thank all of you for travelling to Hong Kong to take part in this course.

As you may know, the first edition of the Hong Kong Common Law Practical Training Course, which was held in January last year, was the inaugural programme of the Academy. It was a resounding success that sparked meaningful exchanges between Hong Kong's common law experts and eminent judges like yourselves from the Chinese Mainland. I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Supreme People's Court for their trust and continued support, which have made this second edition of the course possible.

Building on the success of last year's training course and in consultation with the Supreme People's Court, we have refined and enhanced this edition to ensure an even more targeted and impactful experience for our participants. This year's course features four notable highlights. The first is the impressive breadth of our participants. We are very delighted to have 24 distinguished senior judges from 22 courts across the Chinese Mainland, including judges from the Supreme People's Court, and judges from 12 provinces and three direct-administered municipalities. This remarkable diversity brings together a wealth of regional insights and perspectives that will undoubtedly enrich our exchanges.

The second highlight is our dedicated focus on company law. In recent years, with the rapid development and growing complexity of business activities, cross-border company-related disputes have accounted for a significant portion of civil and commercial cases before the Chinese Mainland courts. The 2023 revision of the Company Law in the Chinese Mainland, effective from July 1, 2024, introduced important reforms in corporate governance, shareholder rights, and liquidation, drawing keen interest from judges, lawyers and businesses. As a leading international financial centre and premier business hub, Hong Kong has established a robust company law framework well suited to addressing modern challenges and has ample experience in dealing with various complex company law issues. This course offers an excellent opportunity for us to learn from each other, through practical, in-depth exploration of key areas of Hong Kong company law

under the common law framework and dialogues between Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland company law experts. Over the week, through lectures, dialogue sessions, interactive practices and visits, we will delve into important topics such as company structures, guarantees, and liquidation, with particular emphasis on their practical application.

The third highlight of this year's course is an exceptional lineup of moderators and speakers, comprising some of Hong Kong's most respected and experienced legal experts in the field of company law. Among them are distinguished legal scholars and experts, as well as eminent judges, all bringing with them a wealth of practical knowledge and experience in company law and Hong Kong common law system. We are deeply grateful for their generous support and contributions, which have made this course a reality and will undoubtedly make it an enlightening and rewarding experience for all participants.

The fourth highlight is that apart from the classroom experience, this course also offers valuable opportunities to experience Hong Kong's legal institutions and bodies in action, with visits to the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal, the High Court of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Legal Hub, Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, and notably, one of the newest international organisations in Hong Kong or even in the world, namely the International Organization for Mediation. Participants will also attend the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year 2026, which will be held next Monday, where the Chief Justice, myself, the Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association and the President of the Law Society of Hong Kong deliver keynote speeches focusing on upholding the rule of law amidst evolving challenges. This important annual event stands as a cornerstone of our common law tradition, where the pillars of Hong Kong's legal system gather to reflect on the past year and chart the course for future judicial directions. In addition, we have arranged cultural and exchange visits, where participants can experience Hong Kong's unique blend of heritage and modern vibrancy.

This course is a key initiative to implement the national policy of strengthening Chinese Mainland judges' ability to handle foreign-related cases, which we believe, will align closely with the priorities anticipated in the 15th Five-Year Plan to be announced in March this year. We hope that by the conclusion of this course, you will have gained a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Hong Kong common law, in particular company law, enabling you to navigate cross-border disputes and to draw practical parallels with the ongoing reforms in the Chinese Mainland with greater confidence. We also hope that the comparative insights and shared experiences gained throughout this course will help further refine your approaches to case handling and enhance your ability to resolve complex commercial cases in today's increasingly interconnected economy.

This course aims to foster meaningful exchanges and mutual learning, rather than one-way presentations from our speakers. As experienced judges, your perspectives and insights will undoubtedly inspire meaningful dialogue and provide valuable learning opportunities for both our speakers and fellow participants. We therefore strongly encourage you to actively share your thoughts, engage in discussions, and raise any questions that arise from your own judicial experience or areas of interest. Your active

participation will be key to making this course a truly enriching and meaningful experience for everyone involved.

Alongside the training course, I encourage you to take some time over the week to discover the many facets of Hong Kong - from an international legal and dispute resolution centre, to its dynamic culture and stunning scenery. I am confident that these experiences will make your stay here all the more fulfilling, memorable and inspiring.

Before closing, allow me to briefly introduce the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy. Launched in November 2024, the Academy, in collaboration with over 20 international organisations, national or local authorities and professional bodies, has organised more than 12 capacity-building training programmes in Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland, other parts of Asia, Europe, Latin America and beyond. The Academy will continue to make good use of Hong Kong's bilingual common law system and international status, to serve as a capacity-building, as well as a knowledge and experience-sharing platform for legal professionals in Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and other jurisdictions, in particular those along the Belt and Road. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your support to the Academy, and I look forward to exploring further opportunities for collaborations with the Supreme People's Court in the near future.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you once again for your valuable participation. I wish you all a very rewarding learning experience and an enjoyable stay in Hong Kong. Thank you.

Ends/Wednesday, January 14, 2026