

Speech by SJ at opening ceremony of second edition of National Training Course for Talents Handling Foreign-related Arbitration (Hong Kong) (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the opening ceremony of the second edition of the National Training Course for Talents Handling Foreign-related Arbitration (Hong Kong) today (March 9):

Director Liu (Director of China Legal Service (H.K.) Limited, Ms Liu Changchun), Mr Huang (Vice Council Chair of the School of Continuing Education, China University of Political Science and Law, Mr Huang Ruiyu), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great pleasure to address you at the opening ceremony of the National Training Course for Talents Handling Foreign-related Arbitration (Hong Kong) today. On behalf of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy of the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to Hong Kong to take part in this Course.

This Course marks another successful collaboration between the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China and the Academy, building on the success of a similar course last year. I wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Justice, in particular the Bureau of Public Legal Services Administration, for their strong support and guidance, as well as to the China Legal Service (H.K.) Limited and the China University of Political Science and Law for their dedicated efforts in making this Course possible.

Hosting this Course in Hong Kong, a city internationally acclaimed for its robust legal system and world-class arbitration services, is particularly symbolic. Hong Kong is the only common law jurisdiction in China. Our arbitration legal framework is underpinned by our bilingual common law system. The Arbitration Ordinance is based on the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration, which is familiar to practitioners from both civil and common law jurisdictions. Arbitral awards made in Hong Kong are enforceable in over 170 Contracting Parties to the New York Convention and are generally upheld by local courts. The pro-arbitration position of the Hong Kong Judiciary is well documented in court judgments. Judicial independence, including the

power of final adjudication, is also guaranteed by the Basic Law of Hong Kong.

The overall attractiveness as an arbitration seat is further enhanced by the Arrangement Concerning Mutual Assistance in Court-ordered Interim Measures in Aid of Arbitral Proceedings by the Courts of the Mainland and of the HKSAR. This Arrangement, which came into force in 2019, has proven to be very useful in the context of cross-border disputes where urgent interim measures in the form of property and evidence preservation are called for, allowing parties to arbitral proceedings administered by designated arbitral institutions in Hong Kong to apply to courts on the Chinese Mainland for interim measures.

Hong Kong's edge in international arbitration has been recognised by the International Arbitration Survey published by Queen Mary University of London for many years. In the 2025 Survey, Hong Kong stands as the second most preferred seat of arbitration globally, and the leading seat in the Asia-Pacific region. This recognition reaffirms Hong Kong's status as a globally trusted venue for dispute resolution, supported by a large pool of experienced legal and arbitration practitioners, and first-class and diversified arbitration and dispute resolution institutions including the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC), the International Chamber of Commerce, AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre, eBRAM International Online Dispute Resolution Centre, as well as four leading Mainland arbitration institutions, which have set up their offices in Hong Kong.

Entering 2026, many arbitration institutions have just released their case statistics for last year. Let us look at the statistics recently released by the HKIAC. As one of the leading arbitration institutions in the world, both the caseload and amount in dispute of the HKIAC have reached record highs. With a diversified mix of parties originating from over 60 jurisdictions, and over 70 per cent of the disputes arising from contracts entered into after 2020, these statistics reflect international users' continued confidence in Hong Kong's international arbitration services.

To further strengthen Hong Kong's edge in international arbitration, the Department of Justice established a Working Group on Arbitration Law Reform last October to review and make recommendations to amend the Arbitration Ordinance. We would be pleased to share with you more about the proposed amendments in due course.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy, which is another key initiative of the Department of Justice. Since its launch in November 2024, the Academy has collaborated with over 20 international organisations, national and local authorities and professional bodies to deliver capacity-building training programmes across Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland, and other parts of the world. Moving forward, the Academy will continue to leverage 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 and dispute resolution professionals in Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and other jurisdictions, in particular those along the Belt and Road.

The Academy, building on last year's success, has refined the second edition of the Course this year, with a focus on international arbitration through lectures and practical sessions, covering topics such as the key elements of international arbitration and international investment arbitration, comparative studies contrasting international practices with Chinese Mainland arbitration mechanisms, etc. It is specifically designed to equip participants with both solid theoretical knowledge and advanced practical skills to excel in foreign-related arbitration and tackle complex cross-border challenges.

Beyond the classroom, you will have opportunities for exchanges through visits to the High Court of Hong Kong, arbitration institutions, barristers' chambers, professional legal bodies, and international organisations such as the International Organization for Mediation. We are also privileged to have an impressive line-up of esteemed speakers, including experienced legal practitioners and leading arbitrators in the region, as well as a legal counsel from the Permanent Court of Arbitration, who will generously share their expertise on various aspects of arbitration.

I recognise the remarkable diversity of your professional backgrounds, from arbitration institutions and state-owned enterprises to universities and private legal practice. This diversity speaks to the breadth and strength of our country's foreign-related legal talent, while also providing an atmosphere for exchange of experiences and insights from different perspectives. I therefore encourage you to make the most of this platform to proactively ask questions and share your thoughts, so that you can learn from each other through meaningful exchanges and dialogue.

I also invite you to take some time to explore Hong Kong during your stay. Beyond its

iconic skyline and world-renowned cuisine, Hong Kong offers a wealth of cultural experiences that will undoubtedly make your time here even more memorable.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you once again for your valuable participation. I wish the Course every success, and each of you a most rewarding and enriching experience in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.

Ends/Monday, March 9, 2026