

Speech by SJ at Global Mediation Summit (English only) (with photos/video)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the Global Mediation Summit under Mediation Week 2026 today (May 8):

Secretary-General Cheng (Secretary-General of the International Organization for Mediation, Professor Teresa Cheng), Commissioner Cui (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Cui Jianchun), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. The Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy under the DoJ are extremely honoured to be the key sponsors of today's Global Mediation Summit organised by the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed).

Time really flies. I still remember that we hosted the signing ceremony of the Convention on the Establishment of the IOMed on May 30 last year. Shortly after that, we completed the conversion of the Old Wan Chai Police Station into the IOMed Headquarters. On October 20 last year, the formal inauguration and first Governing Council meeting of the IOMed were held. It is indeed remarkable that, within less than a year following the signing of the Convention, the number of signatories has increased to 41, out of which 13 have ratified the Convention and hence become Contracting States.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, in particular the DoJ, will continue to support the work of the IOMed in different ways. First, it will be responsible for the maintenance of the Headquarters. Second, the DoJ will continue to second Hong Kong legal professionals to the IOMed Secretariat. Since 2023, the DoJ has already seconded a total of four counsel to assist in the establishment of the IOMed. Third, the Government will actively promote the use of IOMed mediation by, among other things, taking the lead in procuring the inclusion of an IOMed mediation clause in suitable international agreements to which the HKSAR Government is a party.

Furthermore, we are at the preparatory stage of the construction of an entirely new Hong Kong International Legal Service Building, which will be located adjacent to the IOMed Headquarters. In addition to the provision of training and dispute resolution

facilities, space has been reserved for the IOMed in anticipation of its future needs.

I would venture to say that Hong Kong provides the ideal ecosystem for the conduct of international mediation under the IOMed.

To begin with, Hong Kong is well recognised as a leading international legal and dispute resolution services centre. Indeed, one of the mandates stated in the National 15th Five-Year Plan is that Hong Kong shall strengthen its status in this respect.

To be more specific on mediation, Hong Kong aims at establishing itself as the Global Capital of Mediation. Back in 2009, the DoJ launched the "Mediate First" Pledge campaign. The Pledge is a non-legally binding statement of commitment by pledgees to first explore the use of mediation to resolve disputes before resorting to other means of dispute resolution. To date, over 1 000 companies, organisations or associations and individuals have signed the Pledge. Since 2012, the DoJ has been organising the Mediation Week biennially to promote the wider use of mediation in Hong Kong. Today's Summit is indeed the finale of this year's Mediation Week. On November 6, 2024, the DoJ issued the Policy Statement on the Incorporation of Mediation Clauses in Government Contracts, under which the Government, as a matter of general policy, would incorporate a mediation clause in all government contracts. The policy has taken effect since February 6, 2025. The Working Group on Mediation Regulatory System, established by the DoJ in October 2024, has already completed a comprehensive review and made a series of recommendations, including a proposal to introduce legislative amendments to the Mediation Ordinance. The DoJ will take forward the legislative amendment work in the second half of 2026. Furthermore, capacity-building programmes offered by the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy, set up by the DoJ in late 2024, would include mediation wherever appropriate.

One of Hong Kong's strengths is its strong pool of legal professionals who are proficient and experienced in international dispute resolution. It is noteworthy that 10 out of the 24 mediators designated by China to the IOMed's General Panel of Mediators come from Hong Kong.

Let us not forget that Hong Kong is located in the heart of Asia, and within a five-hour flight of half of the world's population. It is an international, cosmopolitan city which offers a safe, inclusive and friendly environment to people coming from other parts of the

world.

All in all, we are very confident that the IOMed, with its Headquarters in Hong Kong, will make significant contributions to the international rule of law. The HKSAR Government, in particular the DoJ, will continue to do its utmost to promote and support the work of the IOMed in the future. On this note, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a most constructive Summit. Thank you very much.

Ends/Friday, May 8, 2026