

Speech by SJ at 3rd Joint Legal Workshop 2026 (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the 3rd Joint Legal Workshop 2026 co-organised by the Department of Justice and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea on "Latest Developments in Arbitration and Mediation: Hong Kong and Korean Perspectives" today (August 5):

Ms Kim (Director of International Legal Advisory Division of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea, Ms Kim Min-jung), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 3rd Joint Legal Workshop 2026, co-organised by the Department of Justice of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea. May I first extend a warm welcome to our friends who have come all the way from Korea and to all distinguished participants from the legal, business and dispute resolution sectors joining us today.

Our theme this year is "Latest Developments in Arbitration and Mediation: Hong Kong and Korean Perspectives". Building on the success of the last two legal workshops, first in Hong Kong back in 2024, then in Seoul last year, and now back in Hong Kong this year, this workshop symbolises consistent forging on of our continuing partnership.

Korea and Hong Kong are long-standing and important economic and trading partners. In 2025, Korea was Hong Kong's seventh-largest trading partner. The total merchandise trade between Hong Kong and Korea reached an impressive HK\$314 billion, that is around 58,000 billion won, in 2025. This robust figure reflects the significant economic exchanges and the ever-expanding opportunities between these two places. As our business ties continue to strengthen, the demand for credible, efficient and user-friendly legal and dispute resolution services grows. These services are the very bedrock that supports these growing connections, and safeguards the interests of businesses and stakeholders in an increasingly complex global market. This makes the topic of this year's workshop especially timely and relevant.

Hong Kong is exceptionally well placed as a leading international legal and dispute resolution services hub. Under the principle of "one country, two systems", Hong Kong is

the only common law jurisdiction in China, and the world's only bilingual common law jurisdiction where both Chinese and English are used in legal proceedings. Our legal system is based on the principles of the rule of law, underpinned by an independent judiciary and a rich pool of experienced legal and dispute resolution professionals. Leveraging on our ties to the Chinese Mainland, our strategic geographical location, our East-meets-West culture and our world-class legal and financial systems, Hong Kong acts as the "super-connector" and "super value-adder" between the Chinese Mainland and the global market, offering unparalleled accessibility and predictability for cross-border investments. Chinese Mainland and overseas companies have made use of the Hong Kong platform as a channel to invest in Korea's Free Economic Zones, and our professionals are well positioned to offer services such as company incorporation, deal structuring, as well as legal and compliance to facilitate investments.

Dispute resolution is no doubt part and parcel of business deals. Hong Kong continues to excel and innovate in this area. Hong Kong ranks as the most preferred arbitration seat in the Asia Pacific region and the second most preferred arbitration seat globally in the 2025 International Arbitration Survey conducted by the Queen Mary University of London. To maintain our competitive edge, the Working Group on Arbitration Law Reform, chaired by myself, was established last year to review and study the need to amend our Arbitration Ordinance in order to ensure that the legislative framework for arbitration in Hong Kong stays at the forefront of international development.

On the mediation front, the establishment of the headquarters of the International Organization for Mediation in Hong Kong solidifies our role as the capital of mediation and underscores our commitment to advancing peaceful and efficient dispute resolution. In tandem with this milestone, the Working Group on Mediation Regulatory System, which is also chaired by me, has finalised recommendations following a comprehensive review of our current regime, and will soon introduce a legislative amendment to our Mediation Ordinance to take forward the recommendation. I am sure that our distinguished panelists will share with you all these exciting developments in arbitration and mediation in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong and Korea work closely to deepen our exchange in the alternative dispute resolution arena. Apart from organising this joint legal workshop to provide a valuable platform to facilitate meaningful dialogue in legal and dispute resolution matters, we

regularly welcome Korean speakers and participants to join our annual flagship events such as the Hong Kong Legal Week. Additionally, Hong Kong legal experts actively participate in major Korean-hosted dispute resolution events like the Seoul ADR Festival, sharing insights on emerging topics like artificial intelligence in arbitration. This cross-pollination of ideas is vital for strengthening the intellectual exchange and contributing to the building blocks of the legal and dispute resolution infrastructure of the East Asia region.

Looking ahead, we believe that there is significant potential for further collaboration between Korea and Hong Kong, whether in terms of capacity building, knowledge sharing, or facilitating the greater use of Hong Kong's dispute resolution services by Korean businesses. We are keen to explore such opportunities to create benefits for both sides. On this basis, I would like to invite all of you to join us at our annual flagship event - Hong Kong Legal Week 2026, which will be held from November 2 to 6, 2026 in Hong Kong. It will be an excellent occasion to continue the conversations and dialogues we start today.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea for their steadfast partnership, and to all supporting organisations for their significant contribution, without which this workshop would not have been possible. I will also like to express my deepest thanks to our distinguished speakers who will share their valuable insights and experiences in the upcoming panel discussion. On this note, I wish you all a very fruitful discussion and an enjoyable networking session ahead. Thank you.

Ends/Wednesday, August 5, 2026