

Speech by SJ at Workshop on Use of International Legal Instruments in Cross-Border Commercial Disputes and in Digital Economy (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the Workshop on Use of International Legal Instruments in Cross-Border Commercial Disputes and in the Digital Economy today (August 21):

Secretary General (Secretary General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), Dr Christophe Bernasconi), EC Chair (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Committee Chair, Dr James Ding), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. On behalf of Hong Kong, China, I would like to welcome you all to the Workshop on Use of International Legal Instruments in Cross-Border Commercial Disputes and in Digital Economy, during the Third APEC Senior Officials' Meeting and Related Meetings.

Although I am not able to join you in person today, I would like to first send my gratitude to the host of the APEC 2026 for having this Workshop in Dalian. I would also like to send my gratitude to the HCCH and its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for organising this Workshop jointly with the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy of my Department (Department of Justice).

For over decades, Hong Kong, China has been working very closely with the HCCH, especially since its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has been established in Hong Kong in 2012. With the staunch support of the Central People's Government, colleagues from my Department have been actively participating in the working groups, meetings and activities of the HCCH as part of the Chinese delegation since 1997. Through a standing arrangement with the HCCH, Hong Kong legal talents from both the private and public sectors have the opportunity to be seconded to the Permanent Bureau of the HCCH at The Hague since 2021. This in fact is a testimony of the successful implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle and our unique strength in international legal and dispute resolution services.

In terms of our capacity building work with the HCCH, the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy, launched by my Department in 2024, has played a pivotal role in hosting international scholars, training officials in

different areas of laws through collaboration with international organisations, national and local authorities and professional bodies. Last December, the Academy, in collaboration with the HCCH, successfully organised the Symposium of the HCCH Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific on Private International Law held in Hong Kong during the Hong Kong Legal Week 2025. The Workshop today will showcase another successful collaboration with the HCCH on capacity building for economies in the region.

Echoing with the theme of APEC 2026 "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together" and the priorities of "Openness, Innovation, Cooperation", this Workshop to facilitate legal cooperation among economies in the digital era through the use of international legal instruments. We believe the shared expertise and range of viewpoints exchanged today will enhance the understanding and practical application of the international instruments and innovating practices, with a view to adapt to the rapid and ever-evolving technological advancements over the years.

Ladies and gentlemen, today's Workshop is timely as we explore how innovating practices, including digital means, can streamline cross-border document circulation and enhance efficiency in litigation support under the relevant international legal instruments. I hope today's Workshop will allow us all to engage in meaningful exchanges and drive forward the future of private international law.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to the co-sponsoring economies of Indonesia, Korea, Singapore, for their support, all the speakers for their efforts and all of you for your participation in this Workshop. I also look forward to welcoming you to Hong Kong later this year as the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting will be held in Hong Kong in October 2026. On this note, I wish you all a very fruitful and enlightening discussion. Thank you.

Ends/Friday, August 21, 2026