

Speech by SJ at Collaborate2Win seminar in Kazakhstan (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the Collaborate2Win seminar on "Hong Kong - A Premier Financial Hub with Common Law Advantages - Your Indispensable Partner for Global Success" co-organised by the Department of Justice and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council in Almaty, Kazakhstan, today (August 26, Almaty time):

His Excellency Mr Umiraliyev (First Deputy Prosecutor General of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Umiraliyev Zhandos Zhanibekovich), His Excellency Mr Su (Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Almaty, Mr Su Fangqiu), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great pleasure to speak to you today at the Collaborate2Win seminar in the beautiful city of Almaty. I am particularly delighted to lead this inaugural visit to Kazakhstan in my capacity not only as the Secretary for Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), but also the chairperson of the Working Group on Belt and Road Development under the Steering Group on Integration into National Development of the HKSAR Government.

This visit rides on the strong momentum generated by our Chief Executive's highly fruitful visit to Astana in June, during which altogether 61 Memoranda of Understanding and agreements were signed. It also reaffirms our sincerity, determination and readiness to foster Hong Kong's relationship with Kazakhstan. To set the scene, I would like to explain what this seminar is about and what we aim to achieve by referring to the theme of the seminar, namely, Collaborate2Win.

First, let me focus on the phrase Collaborate2. The Arabic number "2" reminds us of the obvious yet important point that collaboration requires the joint efforts of two parties; in the present context, Kazakhstan and Hong Kong. Long-term collaboration is a gradual and incremental process. The essential preconditions are the enhancement of mutual understanding, and the development of mutual trust and confidence.

At this seminar, you will hear from members of my delegation coming from both the public and private sector with knowledge and experience in international co-operation, in particular, in relation to legal and financial matters. We will try to convince you that Hong Kong can and will be Kazakhstan's important and even indispensable partner in view of its unique status as a premier financial hub with common law advantages.

While Hong Kong is a part of China, it operates as a special administrative region under the principle of "one country, two systems" in accordance with the provisions set out in the Basic Law, which is an important constitutional document. Among other things, Hong Kong adopts the common law system with an independent judiciary enjoying the power of final adjudication. Hong Kong is a leading common law jurisdiction providing reliable and top quality international legal services. Under the

national development plan of China, Hong Kong serves as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre. What is of particular significance to Kazakhstan is that, although we practise the common law, we are familiar and have rich experience of working together with civil law jurisdictions for the simple reason that the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong's motherland, is a civil law jurisdiction.

Hong Kong is, indeed, under a constitutional duty to use our common law advantages to maintain and promote Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre. Articles 109 and 110 of the Basic Law provide that the Government of the HKSAR shall provide an appropriate economic and legal environment for the maintenance of the status of Hong Kong as an international financial centre; and that it shall, on its own, formulate monetary and financial policies, safeguard the free operation of financial business and financial markets, and regulate and supervise them in accordance with the law.

We have been making tremendous and continuous efforts to discharge our constitution duty in this respect. Under our common law system, we make and enforce relevant rules and regulations, which are fair, transparent, predictable, and user-friendly. They provide enormous incentives and opportunities for people coming from any part of the world, including of course Kazakhstan, to engage in financial activities in Hong Kong in a safe, convenient and financially rewarding manner.

While my fellow delegates, who will speak to you soon, will provide you with details to make good my point, I would like to cite two recent events to highlight that, as a matter of fact, Hong Kong is always playing an increasingly important role in the economic development of Kazakhstan. First, on June 2, 2026, Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited signed two Memoranda of Understanding with the Astana International Exchange and the Astana International Financial Centre Authority respectively, to strengthen collaboration and enhance capital markets connectivity. Second, on July 1, 2026, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, a state-owned national railway and logistic company, filed an initial public offering on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong.

I wish to return to the latter part of the theme of today's seminar, namely, the phrase "2win", to make an important point. Again, the Arabic number "2" is significant: it means that both of the two parties, not just one of them, will win as a result of the collaboration. It highlights the crucial point that the ultimate objective is to achieve a win-win situation. In other words, the outcomes of collaboration shall be to the mutual benefit of both parties.

While we shall focus on collaborations in legal and financial related areas, it is necessary to also bear in mind the increasing connectivity in other areas between Kazakhstan and Hong Kong. At present, over 600 Kazakh students are pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Hong Kong's world-class, English-medium universities. The first authentic Kazakh restaurant was opened in late 2025 in the central business district of Hong Kong, which I had visited personally. Cathay Pacific, the flagship airline of Hong Kong, announced last week that they will start three-times-weekly direct flights to Almaty from January 9, 2027. All these developments help to

build an ever better ecosystem for interaction and co-operation between the people of these two places. There is every reason for us to be optimistic about and confident in the future relationship between Kazakhstan and Hong Kong.

On this note, I wish you all a very constructive and enjoyable seminar. Thank you.

Ends/Wednesday, August 26, 2026