

Opening remarks by DSJ at seminar "Iteration and Assurance: Cross-Border Arbitration Practice under the New PRC Arbitration Law and the Amendment to the Hong Kong Arbitration Ordinance" of Hong Kong Arbitration Week 2026 (English only) (with photo)

Following are the opening remarks by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, at the seminar "Iteration and Assurance: Cross-Border Arbitration Practice under the New PRC Arbitration Law and the Amendment to the Hong Kong Arbitration Ordinance" of the Hong Kong Arbitration Week 2026 today (October 23):

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to join you today during the Hong Kong Arbitration Week 2026 for this seminar on the theme of "Iteration and Assurance: Cross-Border Arbitration Practice under the New PRC Arbitration Law and the Amendment to the Hong Kong Arbitration Ordinance".

As global trade and investment flourish, navigating commercial disputes becomes an inevitable feature of cross-border commerce. In this dynamic landscape, arbitration serves as a critical tool that offers a neutral, flexible and internationally enforceable mechanism to resolve cross-border disputes. To remain effective, however, our arbitration framework must stay responsive to the changing needs of international trade. Today's seminar is therefore very timely, as we examine major arbitration legislative advancements taking shape on both sides of the border.

New Arbitration Law of People's Republic of China

The landmark revision to the Arbitration Law of the People's Republic of China (PRC) came into effect in March this year. This represents the first comprehensive overhaul of the Chinese Mainland arbitral legal framework, aligning it more closely with international standards. Notably, the law introduces a dedicated chapter for foreign-related arbitration. Among its key innovations are provisions permitting ad hoc arbitration for foreign-related maritime disputes and commercial disputes between enterprises within the Pilot Free Trade Zones, the Hainan Free Trade Port, and other designated regions. It also establishes the legal basis for foreign arbitral institutions to set up offices and conduct foreign-related arbitration services in these zones. Furthermore, it explicitly

encourages parties to foreign-related disputes to choose arbitral institutions of the PRC, and to choose the PRC as the arbitral seat, both of which include the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Together, these dynamic reforms unlock unprecedented opportunities for Hong Kong's arbitral institutions and practitioners to expand their operational reach in the Chinese Mainland and contribute their international arbitration expertise to foreign-related disputes.

Hong Kong arbitration law reform

In parallel, Hong Kong is proactively modernising our arbitration legal framework. The Department of Justice (DoJ) established the Working Group on Arbitration Law Reform last year with members drawn from the leading figures of the legal and dispute resolution sector, including Edward (Partner of Haiwen & Partners Hong Kong Office Mr Edward Liu) who will be moderating today's panel discussion shortly. Based on the Working Group's deep-dive examination of Hong Kong's Arbitration Ordinance, the DoJ has formulated amendment proposals under four vital pillars: speed and convenience, confidentiality, scope, as well as fairness and justice. A one-month stakeholder consultation is now underway and will run until October 27. After considering the stakeholders' feedback, the DoJ will take forward the legislative amendments and will strive to complete the exercise within next year. Through these statutory refinements, we hope to offer global users a modern, transparent and forward-looking legal environment for them to choose Hong Kong as their arbitral seat with sheer confidence.

Hong Kong's strategic role as a premier dispute resolution hub

Anchored in "one country, two systems", Hong Kong's robust framework and dispute resolution ecosystem serve as a solid foundation to support both national and international development. As emphasised in Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan (First Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (2026-2030)) and the Policy Address 2026, the Government is committed to deepening Hong Kong's development as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre. As a "super connector" and "super value-adder", Hong Kong leverages its unique proximity to the Chinese Mainland alongside a trusted bilingual common law tradition. Reinforced by the deep expertise in both institutional and ad hoc arbitration, our multilingual legal and dispute resolution community offers global investors and Chinese Mainland enterprises an exceptionally professional, efficient and

world-class arbitration environment.

As landmark arbitration legislative developments unfold in both the Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong, new horizons are opening for the arbitration community to maximise synergy in cross-border arbitration in the region. On this note, I wish you all an engaging and rewarding seminar. Thank you.

Ends/Friday, October 23, 2026