Closing remarks by DSJ at Hong Kong Legal Week 2026: UNIDROIT Centenary: Regional Conference for Asia-Pacific and Opening Ceremony of Asia-Pacific Liaison Office (English only) (with photo/video)
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Following is the closing remarks by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, at Hong Kong Legal Week 2026: UNIDROIT Centenary: Regional Conference for the Asia-Pacific and Opening Ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Liaison Office today (November 2):

Professor Tirado (Secretary-General of UNIDROIT (International Institute for the Unification of Private Law), Professor Ignacio Tirado), your Excellency, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great honour and pleasure to deliver the closing remarks of this conference. This conference celebrates a remarkable milestone in the history of UNIDROIT for its unwavering commitment of a century to the modernisation and harmonisation of international private law. It was clear from today's discussions that the achievement of UNIDROIT extends far beyond the mere development of rules - its robust frameworks have laid a solid foundation for international commerce, economic stability and transnational legal certainty. This conference also provided a timely opportunity to look back on how the organisation has evolved over the century and to witness the beginning of its next chapter with the momentous opening of its Asia-Pacific Liaison Office right here in Hong Kong.

Highlights and key messages from panel discussions

As we draw this conference to a close, I would like to reflect on some highlights and key messages of today's discussions.

Unfolding UNIDROIT's Asia-Pacific chapter, the first panel examined how core UNIDROIT instruments can strengthen legal infrastructure across the region, supporting growth and deepening connectivity. The panel underscored the unique character of the Asia-Pacific - a region with diverse legal traditions, economic dynamism and rapid technological transformation - while it recognised that this dynamic landscape also brings complexities and uncertainties to cross-border transactions. It was inspiring to hear from

our distinguished speakers on how UNIDROIT's instruments have modernised commercial law frameworks - from secured transactions and international commercial contracts to agriculture and digital economy - which has supported sectoral development, mobilised finance to emerging markets and facilitated cross-border commerce.

The message here is clear: UNIDROIT's expanding regional presence will deliver profound benefits to the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The establishment of its first overseas office in Hong Kong therefore comes at the most timely and strategic juncture. By establishing its presence in this dynamic region, the UNIDROIT Liaison Office will play a vital role in supporting the fast-paced growth, resilience and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific. Such dynamics may even extend to regions beyond the Asia-Pacific with the strategic location of the Liaison Office.

This brings me to the second panel. Looking beyond UNIDROIT's first centenary, we examined the strategic role of the newly established Liaison Office as a focal point for promoting regional legal harmonisation and co-operation. The discussions highlighted the multifaceted nature of UNIDROIT's engagement: the Liaison Office will serve not only as a platform for dialogue with governments on the development and implementation of its instruments, but also as a hub for collaboration with academia, arbitral and mediation institutions, financial institutions and other key stakeholders. Most importantly, the panel demonstrated how UNIDROIT has evolved from a rule-making body to a trusted partner in the development and implementation of transnational private law, and for related capacity building.

In this regard, the Liaison Office is not working alone. It will be in partnership with other international organisations in the region. Such multilateral co-operation has been examined by the final panel. The discussion underscored the importance of regional and international partnerships to advance the development and promotion of transnational law. In an increasingly interconnected region with diverse legal systems, no single organisation can by itself address the full spectrum of challenges faced by the region. By partnering with other international organisations in the region, UNIDROIT and its partners can leverage on their respective expertise to deliver legal infrastructure that is robust and attuned to the needs of the region. This sustained multilateral co-operation - from rule-making to implementation and to capacity building - has underpinned that UNIDROIT's century of success will be further deepened in the future ahead.

Leveraging Hong Kong's unique strengths to supporting UNIDROIT's future work

Before I close, I would like to share with you my thoughts on how Hong Kong can further contribute to the work of UNIDROIT in the years to come.

First of all, UNIDROIT's strategic decision to open its first-ever overseas office here reflects a powerful vote of confidence in Hong Kong and in our legal system. Indeed, UNIDROIT's steadfast commitment to legal certainty resonates with Hong Kong's institutional bedrock. Supported by the principle of "one country, two systems", Hong Kong is an internationally trusted legal system underpinned by the robust rule of law, a sophisticated bilingual common law system and an independent judiciary. As a well-established international legal and dispute resolution services centre, Hong Kong is home to many international and regional institutions. These unique advantages strategically position Hong Kong as the ideal platform for international co-operation in the region. The Liaison Office can leverage on Hong Kong's connectivity to engage governments, professional bodies and other key stakeholders across the Asia-Pacific, facilitating the exchange of expertise, the dissemination of UNIDROIT instruments and the practical implementation of those standards in the region.

Further, Hong Kong has a large and diverse pool of international legal talents, which can offer UNIDROIT a ready platform for dialogue, research and capacity building. As a hub for high-calibre legal talent and capacity building, Hong Kong can also support UNIDROIT's work in this area. Since the launch of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy in 2024, we have collaborated with many international organisations, including UNIDROIT, in organising capacity-building programmes to promote the exchanges among international legal talents in the region. For instance, tomorrow, we will be hosting the 3rd edition of the UNIDROIT Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit, which is co-organised by the Department of Justice (DoJ) in partnership with UNIDROIT. With the establishment of the Liaison Office, I am sure there will be ample opportunities for more capacity-building events in Hong Kong.

Finally, Hong Kong's growing community of international organisations fosters the deepening of multilateral co-operation. With the establishment of the UNIDROIT Liaison Office, we are delighted to now have all "Three Sisters of Private International Law" united in the Hong Kong Legal Hub, alongside other prominent international legal organisations and bodies including the International Organization for Mediation with its

headquarters here. We are confident the Hong Kong Legal Hub will increase engagement and create synergies for advancing legal co-operation in the region. Looking ahead, we will be constructing the Hong Kong International Legal Service Building. It will be a landmark providing top-notch facilities and environment for international legal and dispute resolution services institutions to conduct activities such as arbitration and mediation, legal talent exchange and training, international legal conferences and research. The DoJ is fully committed to supporting the work of UNIDROIT and other international organisations hosted in Hong Kong, and will be a trusted partner in advancing their meaningful work in the region.

On this last note, I wish to express my sincere congratulations to UNIDROIT on its remarkable milestone achievement, and my heartfelt gratitude to all of our distinguished speakers for their contributions to this conference. I would also like to extend my warm thanks to all participants - whether joining us in person or online - for your active engagement, which has helped make this conference a great success. I hope that you have an enjoyable evening to explore this vibrant city, and I look forward to seeing you all at the Summit tomorrow. Thank you very much.

Ends/Monday, November 2, 2026