Welcome remarks by SJ at Hong Kong Legal Week 2026: 3rd Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit (English only) (with photo/video)
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Following are the welcome remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at Hong Kong Legal Week 2026: 3rd Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit today (November 3):

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

A very good morning. Welcome to the 3rd Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit on this second day of the Hong Kong Legal Week. Building on the successful conclusion of the UNIDROIT Centenary: Regional Conference (UNIDROIT Centenary: Regional Conference for the Asia-Pacific and Opening Ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Liaison Office) yesterday, we now move on to the 3rd Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit.

From legacy to the future

Since 2022, the Department of Justice (DoJ) has successfully partnered with UNIDROIT in the organisation of the Asia-Pacific International Private Law Summit. This biennial Summit has become a flagship event of the Hong Kong Legal Week, welcoming hundreds of local and foreign distinguished guests like yourselves to gather and exchange regional perspectives on pertinent international private law issues. This year, more than 600 people from over 40 jurisdictions have registered to attend this Summit, most of whom and some of you are physically with us here today.

This Summit arrives at a momentous juncture in the history of international private law. Yesterday, we celebrated a century of UNIDROIT's achievements in harmonising and modernising private law to build bridges across legal traditions, and looked at the significance of UNIDROIT's work in the Asia-Pacific in supporting a more open, resilient and prosperous region. Building upon yesterday's reflections on UNIDROIT's enduring legacy and future work in the Asia-Pacific region, today, we will dive deeper into international private laws for defining priorities of the region under the theme "Advancing Future-Ready Legal Infrastructure to Foster Digital Innovation, Sustainable Growth and Regional Connectivity in the Asia-Pacific". The Asia-Pacific region is uniquely distinguished by its diverse legal traditions, economic dynamism and deepening connectivity. It is also the world's fastest growing region, driven by technology, innovation and the rise of new markets. Digital innovation, sustainable growth, and regional connectivity are undoubtedly the engines of economic prosperity of the region. To turn these visions into reality, sound legal infrastructure is indispensable. In this Summit, we will explore how transnational commercial law may be harnessed to address emerging challenges for the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to support the region's next

chapter of growth, connectivity and prosperity.

Digital innovation and sustainable growth

Before we start our panel discussion, I wish to share a few of Hong Kong's recent policy initiatives that are closely relevant to our panel discussion later today.

The first panel today will explore the role of transnational law instruments for digital innovation and sustainable investment in shaping tomorrow's markets, which is very relevant to Hong Kong. Hong Kong is committed to promoting artificial intelligence as a core industry for Hong Kong's future development and empowering different sectors of the economy through AI technology. With a view to enabling innovation while safeguarding the legitimate interests of stakeholders against the potential risks arising from the use of AI, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has set up the Inter-Departmental Working Group to Review Legislation to Support Wider Application of AI, led by the DoJ. This review exercise is to ensure that our laws are at pace with rapid technological transformations arising from AI. Another relevant area is digital assets. It is one of the key policy objectives of Hong Kong to become a leading hub for digital assets. To achieve this objective, we will establish a world-leading licensing and regulatory regime for digital assets, as guided by the principle of "same activity, same risks, same regulation", to improve their liquidity and promote market innovation.

The development of green and sustainable finance is also one of our major objectives in the coming years, and we have concrete plans to advance the development of an international carbon market to channel funds into sustainable investment.

Secured financing and regional connectivity in trade and investment

Furthermore, Hong Kong is an international financial centre with a robust legal system underpinned by a deeply entrenched rule of law tradition, a sophisticated bilingual common law system, an independent judiciary enjoying the power of final adjudication and a large pool of international legal talent. Our robust system fosters a predictable and rule-based environment that facilitates cross-border trade and investments. These unique advantages, reinforced by our deep integration with the Chinese Mainland, strategically position Hong Kong as a "super-connector" and "super value-adder" for legal and economic collaboration at the heart of the Asia-Pacific region, linking diverse economies, legal systems and commercial markets. All these attributes could contribute significantly to trade finance and regional connectivity which will be discussed by the second and third panels today.

Hong Kong is also home to many world-class financial and dispute resolution institutions. Hong Kong offers comprehensive arbitration and mediation services backed by exceptional cross-border enforceability. Hong Kong will continue to enhance its already diversified and high-level dispute resolution services.

Emerging as a Global Capital of Mediation with the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation last year, we will implement reforms to the mediation regulatory system to provide more international, inclusive and professional mediation services.

Moreover, as the most preferred seat for arbitration in the Asia-Pacific region, Hong Kong will continue to develop its successful and widely trusted arbitration ecosystem of world-renowned arbitral institutions, a deep pool of highly experienced arbitrators and a globally recognised arbitration framework. We will implement a range of arbitration law reforms and enhance promotion of arbitration services in specific fields such as maritime, IP (intellectual property) and sports.

Strengthening regional co-operation and capacity building

In addition to being an international legal and dispute resolution services centre, Hong Kong is a hub for capacity building. Hong Kong serves as a regional platform for legal exchanges and training, fostering greater certainty, consistency and a coherent understanding of international commercial law. In November 2024, we launched the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy to consolidate Hong Kong's status as a capacity-building hub. Since its launch, the Academy has actively collaborated with about 30 international organisations (including UNIDROIT), central authorities and professional bodies, in delivering capacity-building programmes in Hong Kong and beyond for more than 5 000 participants worldwide. We will continue to develop Hong Kong into a leading hub for the training, exchanges and pooling of high-calibre legal talent in the region.

This Summit is one of our flagship capacity-building events, organised in partnership with UNIDROIT and the Academy. The Summit provides a platform for open exchanges on issues of pressing importance for the region, which would enable us to identify concrete areas for collaboration and implementation. The Summit also represents Hong Kong's unwavering commitment to building a well-connected, rule-based region and deepening collaboration with our partners towards a brighter, more connected future for the Asia-Pacific region. We trust that the arrival of the liaison office will bring synergy to our joint efforts in fostering legal co-operation and capacity building in the Asia-Pacific region, and in this connection, I very much look forward to the discussions in the last panel.

On this note, I look forward to our exchanges today and wish the Summit a resounding success. To our distinguished guests from overseas, I hope you enjoy a most memorable and fruitful stay in Hong Kong.

Thank you very much.

Ends/Tuesday, November 3, 2026