Closing remarks by DSJ at Hong Kong Legal Week 2026: UNCITRAL's Contribution to the International Transport of Goods in the Digital Economy - A Celebration of UNCITRAL@60 (English only) (with photo/video)
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Following are the closing remarks by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, at Hong Kong Legal Week 2026: UNCITRAL's Contribution to the International Transport of Goods in the Digital Economy - A Celebration of UNCITRAL@60 today (November 4):

Mr Lee (Principal Legal Officer of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), Mr Jae Sung Lee), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour to deliver closing remarks as we draw the curtain on this momentous occasion - a celebration of the 60th anniversary of UNCITRAL jointly organised by UNCITRAL and the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy of the Department of Justice (DoJ) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China.

As mentioned during the welcome remarks this morning, UNCITRAL has excellent collaboration with the DoJ. In fact, as mentioned by Professor Cheng (Secretary-General of the International Organization for Mediation, Professor Teresa Cheng) in her keynote speech, Hong Kong has made valuable contributions to the work of UNCITRAL in various aspects and will continue our contributions. In particular, we supported UNCITRAL's contribution to the international transport of goods in the digital economy in the past and we are committed to continuing our contribution in the future.

The contribution of UNCITRAL to the international transport of goods in the digital economy has been thoroughly discussed by the four panels today. With the insights of members of the Judiciary, policy makers, legal scholars and practitioners, as well as stakeholders, we had constructive dialogues in four insightful panels.

The first panel titled "Digitalization and Platformization of Trade Finance - Past, Present & Future", set the stage by examining the transformative journey of trade finance. The speakers traced the evolution from traditional paper-based trade to the emergence of paperless trade, highlighting both the opportunities and the legal challenges that

accompany this shift. It became clear that UNCITRAL's work on digital platform, digital payments and digital assets has been instrumental in providing the foundational principles that facilitate digitalisation.

The second panel, "Enabling Paperless Trade - Applying the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (2017) (MLETR) to Support Single Window Operations", delved into the practical application of an important UNCITRAL instrument on electronic commerce. The discussion underscored how MLETR serves as a catalyst to enable paperless trade, facilitating the use of electronic documents in different industries to enhance efficiency. We have learned the experience of Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong on how MLTER has been implemented domestically.

In the afternoon, we had our third panel exploring "The Negotiable Cargo Document (NCD) as a New Tool for Trade Finance - the United Nations Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents (New York, 2025)". This session celebrated the newly signed NCD Convention that bridges the gap between transport and trade finance. It facilitates the standardisation and unification for international transport, which unlocks liquidity in supply chains, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises and landlocked countries. The panelists shared the pilot projects of the transport and banking sectors and emphasised the importance of widespread adoption of this Convention to foster trust among stakeholders in the global trade ecosystem.

Finally, the fourth panel addressed "Plugging a Gap in the International Legal Regime for the Protection of Maritime Creditors - the United Nations Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships". The panelists highlighted the need for a harmonised legal regime to protect the stakeholders, from shipowners, financiers, to lienholders, by securing the effects of a judicial sale conferring clean title on the purchaser as vessels navigate internationally, and the benefits for international shipping.

As shown by these four panel discussions, we have already seen UNCITRAL's enduring contribution to the international transport of goods in the digital economy. They remind us that international co-operation is the bedrock of promoting a seamless global trading system. As we celebrate UNCITRAL's six decades of achievements, we are also called upon to look ahead - to embrace digitalisation, to promote legal harmonisation, and to secure that no stakeholder is left behind in this journey.

Ladies and gentlemen, as it comes to the close of the conference today, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the speakers, moderators, panelists and participants who have made this event a resounding success. Special thanks go to UNCITRAL for its unwavering dedication to the progressive harmonisation, unification and modernisation of international trade law.

While today's event is closed now, other events of the Hong Kong Legal Week are still ongoing. I have learnt that some of you will also participate in the Fourth Legal Forum on Interconnectivity and Development tomorrow, and I look forward to seeing you then. I also look forward to seeing you at many other sessions that await us throughout this week. Thank you once again for your participation and contribution.

Ends/Wednesday, November 4, 2026