

Department of  
JUSTICE



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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

# HCCH ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL OFFICE IN HONG KONG



# FOREWORDS



**Mr. Hans van Loon**  
*Secretary General  
Hague Conference on  
Private International Law*

I would like to express my gratitude for the generous offer made by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China to host a Regional Office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law ("Hague Conference") in Hong Kong, and for all the Government have done to support the realisation of the idea of the Regional Office. With the support of the Central Government of the People's Republic of China and other Members of the Hague Conference in the Asia-Pacific Region, and the recent endorsement by the Council on General Affairs and Policy of the Conference, the Regional Office has now become a reality.

The success of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conferences in Sabah (2005), Sydney (2007), and Hong Kong (2008) and Manila (2011) have clearly demonstrated the significant relevance and potential of the Hague Conventions on private international law for the Asia-Pacific region. The rapid expansion of cross-border transactions, mobility of people, and family relationships within and outside the region, would all benefit from the support of an international legal framework. The Hague Conventions facilitate these transnational activities, and also protect the interests of vulnerable parties involved. The Conventions provide the infrastructure for coordination of laws and for cooperation

among courts and other authorities that are indispensable in an age of globalization and progressive regional integration. The conclusions reached at the Regional Conferences also indicated general support and aspiration to strengthen the presence of the Hague Conference in the Asia-Pacific region.

The 2002 Strategic Plan of the Hague Conference encourages exploration of the possibility of establishing some form of physical presence of the organisation in various regions of the world. The success of a subsequently created Regional Office in Latin America demonstrates that such an entity can be very useful and of enormous value in strengthening ties between the Hague Conference and States of a particular region.

Since 2009 both Member States in the Asia-Pacific region and Members of the Hague Conference generally, have been consulted on the possibility of establishing a Regional Office in Hong Kong. This consultation process culminated in the decision of the Council on General Affairs and Policy of the Hague Conference, in its meeting from 17-20 April 2012, to warmly endorse the proposal for the establishment of the Regional Office in Hong Kong.

This booklet was created on the occasion of the official opening of the Regional Office in December 2012. The booklet contains detailed information about the Office, its work programme and possible contributions by Member States in the region. I express the hope that this useful publication may assist in giving wide publicity to the Regional Office, facilitate understanding why it was established and what its purpose is, and attract interest from potential partners and stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific Region and beyond. May the Hong Kong Regional Office of the Hague Conference contribute to the further expansion of the work of the Hague Conference in the Region, in the interest of all those who benefit from this work or may benefit from it in the future!

## FOREWORDS



**Mr. Huang Huikang,**  
*Director-General, Treaty and Law  
Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
People's Republic of China*

**T**he establishment of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law ("Hague Conference") is a memorable event for both the Hague Conference and the Asia-Pacific countries.

Dedicated toward progressive unification of private international law rules, the Hague Conference has been playing an important role in increasing legal certainty for personal and commercial exchanges in our now interdependent world. As its influence becomes more global, a growing number of Asia-Pacific countries joined the Hague Conference and/or the Hague Conventions, both benefiting from and contributing to this renowned organisation.

China is one of the earlier Asia-Pacific participants to the Hague Conference, establishing contact with the latter in 1981, and becoming a member in 1987. During the last thirty years, it has been playing an ever more active part in the activities of the Hague Conference and the international judicial and administrative co-operation under the framework of relevant Hague Conventions. In accordance with the Basic Law of Hong Kong SAR, Hong Kong SAR began participating in the meetings of the Hague Conference by sending experts as part of the Chinese delegation

since 1997, and is now implementing eight applicable Hague Conventions including those previously applied in it.

The idea to strengthen the Hague Conference's presence and representation in the Asia-Pacific Region by establishing a regional office in Hong Kong SAR was broadly supported. Many countries in the region have demonstrated their enthusiasm by offering contributions to the Office in various ways. China is especially glad to be in a position to help to enhance the interaction between the region and the Hague Conference.

Conveniently located and better acquainted with the regional context, the Office will, under the guidance and with assistance from the Permanent Bureau, bring Asia-Pacific countries into closer co-operation in the fields of protection of family and children, and of civil procedures, and in turn enable them to make greater contribution to the Hague Conference.

This booklet is published on the occasion of the official opening of the Regional Office in December 2012. I hope the detailed information contained in it will give the readers a clearer view of the attractiveness of the Office and Hong Kong SAR.

Lastly, on behalf of the National Organ of China to the Hague Conference, I'd like to express my sincere hope that the Office will succeed in its future operation. China, as the host country, is and will remain supportive to the Office and its work.

# FOREWORDS



**Mr. Rimsky Yuen, SC, JP**  
*Secretary for Justice  
Hong Kong Special  
Administrative Region of the  
People's Republic of China*

**T**his booklet is published for an important occasion – the official opening of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in Hong Kong.

Over the past few decades, Hong Kong, through faithfully implementing the applicable Hague Conventions, has been part of the global network of jurisdictions that benefit from the valuable work of the Hague Conference in the harmonisation of private international law and promotion of mutual legal co-operation.

Since 1998, representatives from Hong Kong have been participating actively in meetings of the Hague Conference as part of the Chinese delegation. This is made possible by the relevant provisions in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”), which is underpinned by the cardinal principle of “One Country, Two Systems”.

In 2008, Hong Kong was privileged to have hosted the Third Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the Hague Conference. Since then, with strong support from the Central Government and in consultation with other Member States, we have been exploring with the Permanent Bureau the possibility of strengthening the presence of the Hague Conference in the region.

In 2012, our collaboration with the Hague Conference on regional initiatives reached a new height when the Council on General Affairs and Policy endorsed the proposal to establish the Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Hong Kong. This not only marked a new chapter for the Hague Conference but also constituted a significant vote of confidence in Hong Kong’s position both as a regional legal services centre and as a springboard for the Hague Conference to further develop its work and extend its influence in the region.

I am confident that the Regional Office will play a crucial role in promoting awareness of the Hague Conventions and encouraging States in the region to sign up for more Hague Conventions. It will also support the provision of training and technical assistance to States in the region for the effective implementation of the Hague Conventions. Therefore, this would benefit not only States in the region but also all Members of the Hague Conference and the Contracting States to the Hague Conventions all over the world. The HKSAR Government will do its utmost to facilitate the work of the Regional Office.

This booklet will provide you with information on the objectives and advantages of the Regional Office, its structure and operation plan as well as other useful information about Hong Kong.

Last but not least, I would like to welcome you to Hong Kong to visit the Regional Office and to participate in the work of the Regional Office wherever in the region. May I wish the Regional Office every success!

## FOREWORDS



**Mr. Justice Michael Hartmann**  
*Representative of the Hague  
Conference for the Asia-Pacific Region*

It is said that today all of us are international citizens. At some time in our lives, one way or the other, increasing numbers of us, no matter our occupation or where we live, will be required to grapple with the complexities of systems of law beyond our borders. For most of us happily our dealings will require nothing more exotic than having documents certified for use in another country. For a small minority of us sadly our dealings will be more traumatic, all too often demanded by the need to restore a bond with a child wrongfully removed to another part of the world by a disaffected spouse or by the need to seek financial support from a spouse who has left the country and settled elsewhere. Without a system that assists us to grapple with cross-border problems such as these all too many of us would simply be defeated.

The Hague Conference on Private International Law was created to prevent such defeats. It was created not to harmonise the workings of sovereign states in the grand halls where geopolitical endeavours are debated but to ensure that private citizens – business people, family members, spouses seeking to adopt a child – are able to operate internationally too, doing so by adhering to rational, cost-effective systems that bind one country to another.

Through its network of Conventions, and the efforts it makes to ensure that these Conventions are both adopted internationally and operated uniformly, the Hague Conference has taken steps unimaginable a century ago to protect the interests of private persons. It is of course work that is largely unsung. Even lawyers, when asked, are sometimes in difficulties defining the work of the Conference. But the work is no less important for that. What must also be recognised is that, unsung or not, the last few decades have seen an almost exponential increase in the number of states becoming members of the Conference and adopting its Conventions. The work continues, steady and sure. The setting up of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office is part of that work.

Why an office for the Asia-Pacific? The answer, I think, is self-evident. The region includes some of the world's most populous nations and some of its most commercially energetic. As people in the region grow in affluence, as they travel more, as borders become more fluid, so the work of the Hague Conference grows in relevance to the needs of the region.

Hong Kong, uniquely, is a territory built on the ability to look beyond its own borders. That ability is part of Hong Kong's DNA. The Regional Office will act in the exact same manner. In all respects it will be a regional office.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL OFFICE

## *Introduction to the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China\**

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\* Extract from the Information Document No.2 of April 2012 for the attention of the Council on General Affairs and Policy of the Conference

## I. BACKGROUND

1. With the approval and support of the Central Government of the People's Republic of China, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("the HKSAR") has offered to facilitate the establishment of a regional office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law ("the Conference") in the HKSAR ("Regional Office"). Under the principle of one country two systems, the HKSAR enjoys a high degree of autonomy including executive, legislative and judicial powers. Under this system, Hong Kong retains its common law and has a number of attractive qualities, including the facts that it is a legal service centre in the Asia-Pacific Region and that it is conveniently located, allowing for easy access to various places in the Region and worldwide.
2. The Permanent Bureau has consulted with Member States in the Asia-Pacific Region on the proposed establishment of an Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Hong Kong ("the Proposal"). The initial reaction was in general very positive. A short questionnaire concerning the Proposal, jointly prepared by Australia, China and the Philippines, was issued on 4 August 2011 to Member States in the Asia-Pacific Region ("the Questionnaire"). Responses to the Questionnaire indicated overwhelming support, as well as preference on the work priority, targeted countries and major activities of the Regional Office. Many Member States also offered to make various kinds of contribution to the Regional Office.<sup>1</sup>

## II. OBJECTIVES AND ADVANTAGES

3. A key objective of the Regional Office is to promote the Conference and its Conventions by increasing awareness of the value of the Membership of the Conference and the



usefulness of Hague Conventions to the Region, with a view to attracting more States in the Region to become Members of the Conference and States Parties to Hague Conventions. The Regional Office will also bring benefits in terms of assisting States with implementation of the Conventions.

4. Although the States in the Asia-Pacific Region are geographically close, they represent a wide variety of cultures and legal traditions. Hague Conventions, which are intended to bridge different cultures and legal traditions, are therefore very useful in providing a framework for co-operation both for the States in the Region, and between those States and those located outside the Region.
5. The increased Membership base in the Region will bring wider representation of a diverse range of legal traditions to the Conference and help the Conference to develop new instruments better adapted to meet the needs of the Region. It will also assist in raising revenues, help to reduce expenses for the services already provided to States Parties in the Region which are not yet Members of the Conference and facilitate ratifications or accessions to Hague Conventions by States in the Region.
6. The value of a Convention as well as its value to individual States Parties will generally increase in proportion to the number of States Parties to the Convention. Increasing the number of States Parties to Hague Conventions in the Region will provide additional opportunity for enhancing certainty and predictability of cross-border private, commercial and financial transactions and relationships; promoting judicial and administrative co-operation; and reinforcing protection of children and other vulnerable persons in trans-border cases covered by Hague Conventions. Benefits will accrue within the Region, and also between States in and outside the Region.

7. An important function of the Regional Office will also be that of involving the States in the Region more actively in the development of new Hague Conventions and other instruments, and more generally in the work of the Conference. Another key objective of the Regional Office, in co-operation with the Permanent Bureau's International Centre for Judicial Studies and Technical Assistance ("the Centre")<sup>2</sup>, is to develop a deeper understanding of Hague Conventions for States in the Region.
8. By deepening their understanding of Hague Conventions, States formerly unfamiliar with Hague Conventions may become more prepared to become States Parties. The better understanding of Hague Conventions by States Parties in the Region will also facilitate the development of good practice and consistent interpretation, which will in turn contribute to the successful operation of Hague Conventions to the benefit of all States Parties.

### III. ORGANISATION

9. The Regional Office will initially comprise a Representative, an office manager, legal officer(s) seconded by Member State(s), and intern(s), who will ultimately be selected and appointed by the Secretary General. Mr. Michael Hartmann, who has been a member of the International Hague Network of Judges for many years, has indicated a willingness to assume the role as the first Representative of the Asia-Pacific



Regional Office. An office manager will be recruited locally to assist in the daily administration. It is envisaged that legal officer(s) will be seconded from Member States in the Region (Australia, China, Korea and Sri Lanka have indicated interest in providing seconded experts). In addition, a Japanese university has committed to sending an intern to the Regional Office within the first year of its establishment. There will be further internship possibilities for the Member States, including China, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, which have all expressed interest in sending interns to the Regional Office.

10. As indicated in the attached Introductory Note, the Regional Office will work under the direction of the Permanent Bureau, with the support of its Centre, which will report to the Council of General Affairs and Policy.

## IV. OPERATION

11. Taking into account consultations with Members and responses to the Questionnaire, the Regional Office could initially focus on a select few “priority” Hague Conventions<sup>3</sup> and on the non-Member States which are Parties to Hague Conventions in the Region during its first two years of operation. It could also ensure that general support is available to all Member States in the Region, subject to the availability of resources. As the Office becomes more established, the services and support it offers could expand to more Hague Conventions and target other countries in the Region.
12. Apart from the essential role of liaising with the Permanent Bureau, the first year of operation would be focused on arranging visits to the Central Authorities, national organs and other relevant parties such as judges, academic institutions and legal professional bodies in the Region to establish an effective network with the key actors identified in each State.

13. Upon request, it could also provide support and necessary advice to Parties to Hague Conventions in the Region, especially in its second and third years of operation, when an effective network with the key players in the Region has been established. Already, important work is being done under the framework of the ICATAP-programme with regard to the implementation of the 1993 Intercountry Adoption Convention, notably in Cambodia, Nepal and Vietnam. With regard to the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, different forms of assistance and advice have been given to the Philippines, Japan and Thailand. With regard to the anticipated implementation of the 1961 Apostille Convention, assistance has been given to the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. The Regional Office could hence further support, build on, and, in some cases, fully assume the above work. The Regional Office may also help to identify experts (such as academics or officials in the neighbouring States) and resources available in the Region (such as funding from national or foreign aid agencies, universities and other organisations) in response to the requests and to meet the needs of the requesting States.
14. In the third year of its operation, the Regional Office could focus on monitoring more systematically the practical operation of the priority Hague Conventions as well as extension and deepening of the various post-Convention services developed by the Conference, including training of judges, extending the family law-focused International Hague Network of Judges, twinning arrangements between Central Authorities and ICT support for the Hague Conventions. The Regional Office could also encourage and assist in the organisation of the Fifth Asia-Pacific Regional Conference.
15. Throughout the period, the Regional Office would develop and maintain good communication and co-operation with regional bodies such as ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre of the International Development Law Organisation.



16. A comprehensive evaluation of the work of the Regional Office will be held three years after its establishment to review the scale and scope of work and its future directions (including budgetary considerations).

## V. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

17. The Regional Office will be funded entirely from the Supplementary Budget contributed by the Member States for that particular purpose. So far, Australia has undertaken to contribute AUD\$ 50,000 (approximately Euros 40,000) for the first year and China (including the HKSAR and Macao SAR) has undertaken to contribute no less than Euros 460,000 over the course of the first three years. As of today, the total contribution pledged to the Supplementary Budget for the Regional Office is therefore estimated to be at least Euros 500,000 to fully cover the operating expenses for its first three years of operation.
18. In addition to the financial contribution, Member States such as China, New Zealand, the Philippines and Sri Lanka agreed to consider providing venues and necessary facilities for certain events organised by the Regional Office. Australia, China, New Zealand, the Philippines and Sri Lanka also agreed to support the publicity of the Regional Office and promotion of its work through appropriate channels. Moreover, China agreed to provide necessary assistance in the Chinese translation services.
19. Apart from the contributions by the Member States, the Regional Office may be able to obtain appropriate financial contributions from the aid agencies or other organisations in the Region. Certain operating expenses may also be offset through collaboration with academic and professional bodies or organisations in the Region. For instance, a Japanese university has already indicated an interest in organising jointly a course on the 1980 Hague Convention.

20. The following provides an estimate of the annual expenditure of the Regional Office:

### Overhead expenses

- a. *Furnished Office Accommodation: about Euros 50,000 (including utilities such as air conditioning, electricity, water and telecommunication expenses)*
- b. *Representative – an honorarium up to Euros 50,000*
- c. *Office Manager – about Euros 27,000 (including insurance, retirement benefits, medical benefits as well as other fringe benefits)*
- d. *Legal Officer(s) – to be seconded by Member States on a voluntary basis and that the cost for the secondment (including salary, accommodation allowance and additional allowance) be borne by those Member States*
- e. *Intern(s) – One to two interns, entirely funded by the interns or the university/organisation sending the interns*
- f. *Initial purchase of additional office furniture and equipment including computers – about Euros 3,000 (this heading will be removed after the first year)*

### Operating expenses

- g. *Organisational and management expenses for seminars and training programmes – about Euros 7,500 (taking into account free conference venues and facilities that may be provided by some Member States in the Region mentioned in paragraph 18 above)*
- h. *Publication and translation expenses – about Euros 1,500 (taking into account free translation services that may be provided by some Member States in the Region mentioned in paragraph 18 above)*

- i. *Travelling expenses and overseas subsistence allowance*<sup>4</sup> – about Euros 20,000 (based on an average of 6 trips in the Region per year and each trip of three to five days' duration as well as two trips to The Hague per year and each trip of one week's duration)
- j. *Contingency and sundry expenses* – Euros 3,000

21. The discussion in paragraph 20 above shows that the annual expenditure of the Regional Office will be about Euros 159,000 to 162,000 for the first three years. Such expenditure can be fully met by the current contribution to the Supplementary Budget (i.e. Euros 500,000) mentioned in paragraph 17 above (even if there is no further contribution from the Member States, or other additional contributions mentioned in para. 19 above).

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- 1 For the text of the questionnaire and the responses, see < [http://www.doj.gov.hk/eng/about/pdf/DOJ\\_HCCH\\_Booklet\\_web.pdf](http://www.doj.gov.hk/eng/about/pdf/DOJ_HCCH_Booklet_web.pdf).>
  - 2 The International Centre for Judicial Studies and Technical Assistance was created in 2007 within the Permanent Bureau to provide organisational and fundraising support for technical and regional assistance carried out by the Conference.
  - 3 The “priority” Hague Conventions identified by the Member States include the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, 1993 Inter-country Adoption Convention, the 1961 Apostille Convention, the 1965 Service Convention, the 1970 Evidence Convention, the 2005 Choice of Court Convention and the 2007 Child Support Convention.
  - 4 Generally speaking, the average round trip airfare on economy class from the HKSAR to destinations in Asia and Oceania ranges from Euros 100-500. The cost of accommodation varies significantly among places in the Region, on average, about Euros 100 per night. Return business class ticket from the HKSAR to The Hague in the low season is around Euros 2,500 and the accommodation cost in The Hague is around Euros 150.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE PRACTICAL OPERATION OF THE APOSTILLE CONVENTION (6-9 NOVEMBER 2012)

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The Council warmly endorsed the proposal to establish an Asia-Pacific Regional Office for the Hague Conference on Private International Law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The Council notes with gratitude that funding for the Office's operation was now ensured for an initial period of three years. The future directions and the question of the financial sustainability of the Office beyond this initial period will be decided by Council in light of a comprehensive evaluation.

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The SC [Special Commission] looks forward to the official opening of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of The Hague Conference on Private International Law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and encourages that Office and the Regional Office in Latin America to offer support in their respective regions to assist Contracting States in implementing the Convention and non-Contracting States in becoming Parties to the Convention.

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# PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT HONG KONG





## HONG KONG IS DYNAMIC

*Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China. From the hustle and bustle of its streets to its busy harbour and thriving bourse, Hong Kong radiates vitality. A finance, trading and shipping centre of world stature, the city supports a major film industry while also serving as a regional design and innovation hub.*

### GLOBAL VILLAGE

About eight per cent of Hong Kong's seven million population, or around 570 000 people, hold foreign passports. Of these, the largest groups come from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, US, India, Canada, Nepal, Pakistan, Malaysia and Australia. Chinese and English are official languages.

### WORLD'S FREEST ECONOMY

The Heritage Foundation's annual Index of Economic Freedom report has ranked Hong Kong – the world's 10th largest trading economy – as the world's freest economy for 17 consecutive years. A similar study by the US-based Cato Institute and Canada's Fraser Institute has also ranked Hong Kong as the world's freest economy since 1970.

### MOST GLOBALISED ECONOMY

Hong Kong topped the 60 largest economies in the Globalisation Index 2010 released by Ernst & Young and the Economist Intelligence Unit. The US-based Foreign Policy magazine in its Global City Index 2010 ranked Hong Kong fifth, while City of London's Global Financial Centres Index ranked Hong Kong third.

## COMPETITIVE CITY

Hong Kong came first in the World Competitiveness Yearbook 2011 published by the Lausanne-based International Institute of Management Development. It remained China's most competitive city in the China Institute of City Competitiveness survey in 2010. For six years running, the city has ranked first in the Japan Centre for Economic Research's 'Potential Competitiveness Ranking'.

## BUSINESS-FRIENDLY

Hong Kong is one of the easiest places in the world to do business, according to the World Bank's Doing Business Report 2010, which ranked the city second overall. Hong Kong was again voted 'Best Business City in the World' and 'Best Business City in Northeast Asia' in the 2010 readers' poll organised by the Business Traveller Asia-Pacific magazine.

## TOP BANKS AND INSURERS

About 70 of the world's 100 largest banks, and 12 of the world's top 20 insurers, have operations in Hong Kong.

## FUND MANAGEMENT CENTRE

In 2009, Hong Kong's combined fund management business amounted to US\$1,091 billion, the second biggest in the Asia-Pacific region.

## ASIAN HEADQUARTERS

Hong Kong remains the preferred location for foreign companies in Asia. As at June 2010, there were 3,638 overseas, Mainland and Taiwan companies with regional headquarters or regional offices in the city.



## HONG KONG STOCK MARKET

In 2010, Hong Kong ranked first globally in initial public offerings, raising US\$58 billion. The local bourse is Asia's third and the world's seventh largest by market capitalisation, at US\$2.8 trillion. As of end-March 2011, there were 1 426 companies listed. The stock exchange also extended its trading hours in the same year.

## THE 12<sup>TH</sup> FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The national Five-Year Plan has endorsed Hong Kong's status as an international financial, trading and shipping centre. It pledged support for Hong Kong's development into an offshore Renminbi business centre and an international asset management centre.

## OFFSHORE RENMINBI CENTRE

As an offshore Renminbi market, Hong Kong is serving as a testing ground for the wider external use of the yuan. Developments are seen especially in the areas of trade settlement, bond issuance and investment products. As at March 2011, 70 per cent of the Mainland's yuan trade settlements was conducted through Hong Kong.

## SIX NEW GROWTH SECTORS

The Government seeks to broaden the economic base by promoting the growth of six industries where Hong Kong enjoys distinct advantages. They are: testing and certification; medical services; innovation and technology; cultural and creative industries; environmental industries; and education services.

## WINE SPARKLES

According to the industry, Hong Kong overtook New York to become the largest wine auction centre in the world in 2010. The total wine auction sales in Hong Kong reached US\$164 million that year. Two home-grown wine events, the third International Wine and Spirits Fair and the second Wine and Dine Festival, attracted a record number of exhibitors and visitors in 2010.



## HONG KONG IS SECURE

*The rule of law, clean government and a police force among Asia's finest combine to create a stable and safe environment for people to live, work, study and enjoy life. A comprehensive health and welfare system, free education and a level playing field for business make a society that cares for the rights and well-being of its citizens.*

## THE BASIC LAW

Hong Kong's mini-constitution, under Beijing's authority, guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms of residents, from freedom of speech to freedom of movement, equality before the law and access to the justice system.

## SAFE CITY

Hong Kong is one of the world's safest cities, with overall crime rates (including armed and violent crimes) among the lowest. Regarded as 'Asia's finest', the highly efficient Hong Kong Police make a great contribution towards keeping Hong Kong safe. The ratio of nearly 400 officers for every 100,000 people is among the world's highest.

## CORRUPTION FREE

International surveys consistently rate Hong Kong as one of the 'least corrupt' places in Asia. In 2010, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Hong Kong the 13th least corrupt among 178 countries and places polled – the second least corrupt in Asia. According to the 2011 survey by the Hong Kong-based Political & Economic Risk Consultancy Limited, Hong Kong remained the second cleanest place among 14 Asian regions surveyed.

## ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS

This principle defines Hong Kong's relationship with Mainland China, providing the Hong Kong SAR with a high degree of autonomy, including executive, legislative and judicial powers. Under Beijing's sanction, this system enables Hong Kong to



retain its common law and capitalist way of life and participate in such international forums as the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in its own right.

## LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

The rule of law, upheld by an independent judiciary, is Hong Kong's greatest strength. Local and international companies compete on equal footing and intellectual property rights are rigorously protected.

## LOW TAXES

Hong Kong places a minimal tax burden on residents – only 15 per cent maximum salaries tax for individuals; 16.5 per cent profits tax; no value added or sales tax; and no capital gains tax.

## ARBITRATION

Hong Kong is strengthening its position as an Asia-Pacific arbitration centre. Arbitration awards made in Hong Kong are enforceable through the courts of most of the world's trading economies and in the Mainland

## EQUALITY

The Basic Law protects equality before the law. Specific anti-discrimination laws further protect people against discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability and family status. The independent Equal Opportunities Commission enforces the anti-discrimination laws and promotes equal opportunities in the community. Women in Hong Kong make up 46 per cent of the labour force and hold many key positions in the Government, business and other sectors.

## HEALTHY CITY

Hong Kong has a world-class healthcare system supported by professionals. Hong Kong people enjoy among the highest life expectancies and lowest infant mortality rates in the world. In 2010, the average life expectancy was 80 years for men and 85.9 years for women, while infant deaths stood at 1.7 per 1,000 registered live births.



## HONG KONG IS DIVERSE

*Hong Kong is an open, tolerant and pluralistic community. Here people are free to air their views and follow their religious and political beliefs. Hong Kong's diversity is also reflected in the array of international cuisine on offer.*

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Political parties, independent voices and interest groups speak freely and openly in Hong Kong, while a vocal and vibrant press ensures debate and reportage on issues of the day. Public demonstrations are common and, by and large, people exercise such rights in a peaceful and orderly way.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Churches, mosques, synagogues, Chinese temples and other places of worship give all major religions a focus for their faith.

## CULINARY PARADISE

Just about every kind of cuisine can be found in Hong Kong. The Michelin Guide to Hong Kong and Macau 2011 features 215 local culinary attractions, ranging from hotel restaurants to modest noodle shops. Just follow the Guide and you will find the world's most affordable Michelin-starred restaurants right here!

## SOCIAL HARMONY

Ethnic minorities, making up five per cent of the population, live in harmony in Hong Kong. The Government facilitates their integration into the community while preserving their cultures.





## HONG KONG IS CONNECTED

*Hong Kong is located at the heart of Asia. Connected by some of the best transport systems and by state-of-the-art telecommunications which everyone can access, the city is an international centre for finance, logistics, trade, shipping and tourism.*

### HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (HKIA)

This is the world's busiest airport for cargo and one of the busiest for passenger traffic. Over 95 airlines operate flight services at HKIA to and from about 160 destinations worldwide, including around 45 points in Mainland China. HKIA has won nearly 40 best airport awards from various international and regional organisations since its opening in 1998. In 2010, HKIA served about 51 million passengers and about 4.1 million tonnes of cargo, setting new annual records. Year 2011 marked the centenary of powered flight in Hong Kong and the 65th anniversary of the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department.

### BOUNDARY CROSSINGS

Each day in 2010 an average of 489,000 people and 44,000 vehicles crossed the Hong Kong-Mainland boundary by land, while more than 60,000 made the trip using ferry services. The Lo Wu checkpoint alone handles 250,000 passengers per day. Cross-boundary coach services link the airport to 115 Pearl River Delta (PRD) destinations. The world's largest fleet of high-speed ferries links Hong Kong with Macao and various Chinese cities. In January 2010, a new cross-boundary ferry terminal, the SkyPier, was officially opened, linking the airport to PRD cities by high-speed ferry services.

### BUSY PORT

In 2010, Hong Kong handled 23.74 million TEUs of containers, making it one of the world's busiest ports. About 400 shipping lines per week connect with over 480 destinations worldwide. The port is renowned for efficiency.

### VITAL STOP IN GLOBAL TRIP

Along with London, Suez, New York, San Francisco, Shanghai, Yokohama and Bombay, Hong Kong is one of the stops in Jules Verne's novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*, first published in 1873 – highlighting the city's global connectivity as far back as the 19th century!

### EFFICIENT TRANSPORT NETWORK

With a highly efficient transport network ranging from its modern metro-rail system to the gravity-defying peak tram, double-decker buses, minibuses and high-speed ferries, Hong Kong is one of the least car-dependent cities in the world. The public transport network handles around 11 million passenger trips a day.

### TOP COMMUTE

Hong Kong's public transport system is smooth, efficient and reasonably priced. About 90 per cent of Hong Kong's passenger trips are made on public transport. In 2008, Forbes magazine placed the city top of the world's '10 Best Commutes'.

### MASS TRANSIT

The Mass Transit Railway's territory-wide network comprises nine lines and the Airport Express line, carrying an average 3.8 million passengers daily. In addition, a Light Rail system running in northwestern New Territories transports 423,300 commuters daily.

## HISTORIC TRAMS

Hong Kong's first tramway opened in 1904, and its current fleet of 163 double-decker tramcars, the world's largest, carries an average of 226,800 passengers every day. The Peak Tramway, in service since 1888 and running from Central up Victoria Peak, is one of the oldest and steepest cable-car systems in the world.

## STAR FERRY

The stately Star Ferry ride across Victoria Harbour remains highly popular with residents and tourists alike. It came first in a poll of the world's 'most exciting and scenic' ferry rides by the Society of American Travel Writers in 2009.

## EMISSION CAPS

Hong Kong has taken concrete steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and proposes to set a target to reduce carbon intensity by between 50 per cent and 60 per cent by 2020, using 2005 as the base level. Stringent vehicle emission and fuel standards, in line with EU practices, have been introduced. Emissions of three major pollutants from the power generation sector were cut down by 52 per cent to 67 per cent between 1997 and 2010.

## GREEN TRANSPORT

To reduce roadside air pollution, the Government offers a subsidy to encourage bus companies to upgrade their fleets with the aim of achieving zero emission. It also takes the lead in procuring and using electric vehicles (EVs), and exempts EV owners from First Registration Tax.

# HONG KONG FACTS AND FIGURES 2010

## POPULATION

Total :	7.1 million
Median age :	41.1
Gender ratio :	881 males per 1 000 females
Life expectancy :	Men 80 years, Women 85.9 years

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Chinese, English

## ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product :	US\$225 billion
GDP per capita :	US\$31,836
Average wage :	US\$1,544 per month
Exchange rate :	US\$1 = HK\$7.8

## LAND AREA

Total :	1 104km <sup>2</sup>
Total countryside :	70 per cent
Developed areas :	25 per cent
Vacant or undeveloped land :	5 per cent

## WEATHER (1971-2000)

Coldest month :	January (mean temperature 16.1 °C)
Hottest month :	July (mean temperature 28.7 °C)
Mean annual rainfall :	2,383mm

## TIME ZONE

GMT + 8 hours



N

Tung Ping Chau

Sha Tau Kok

Lo Wu

Lo Ma Chau

Shenzhen

Sheung Shui

Fanling

Tin Shui Wai

Yuen Long

Tai Mo Shan

Tsuen Wan

Ma On Shan

Sai Kung

Kwai Chung

Tsing Ma Bridge

Tsuen Wan

Tsing Yi

Mong Kok

Hong Kong International Airport

Tung Chung

Lantau Island

Lei Yue Mun

Tsim Sha Tsui

Central

Causeway Bay

Hong Kong Island

Aberdeen

Stanley Bay

Shek O

Ocean Park

Lamma Island

Cheung Chau

South China Sea

# Hong Kong

Special Administrative Region

## Legend

Major Road

Railway

Country Park

Ferry Route

Hong Kong International Airport

# Wan Chai and Causeway Bay



### Legend

## MTR Stations Entrances and Exits

--- Tramway





Central



Legend



MTR Stations Entrances and Exits





# Sai Wan

Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park



Shek Tong Tsui

Regional Office

HK PLAZA

The University of Hong Kong

Legend



Tramway



The University of Hong Kong

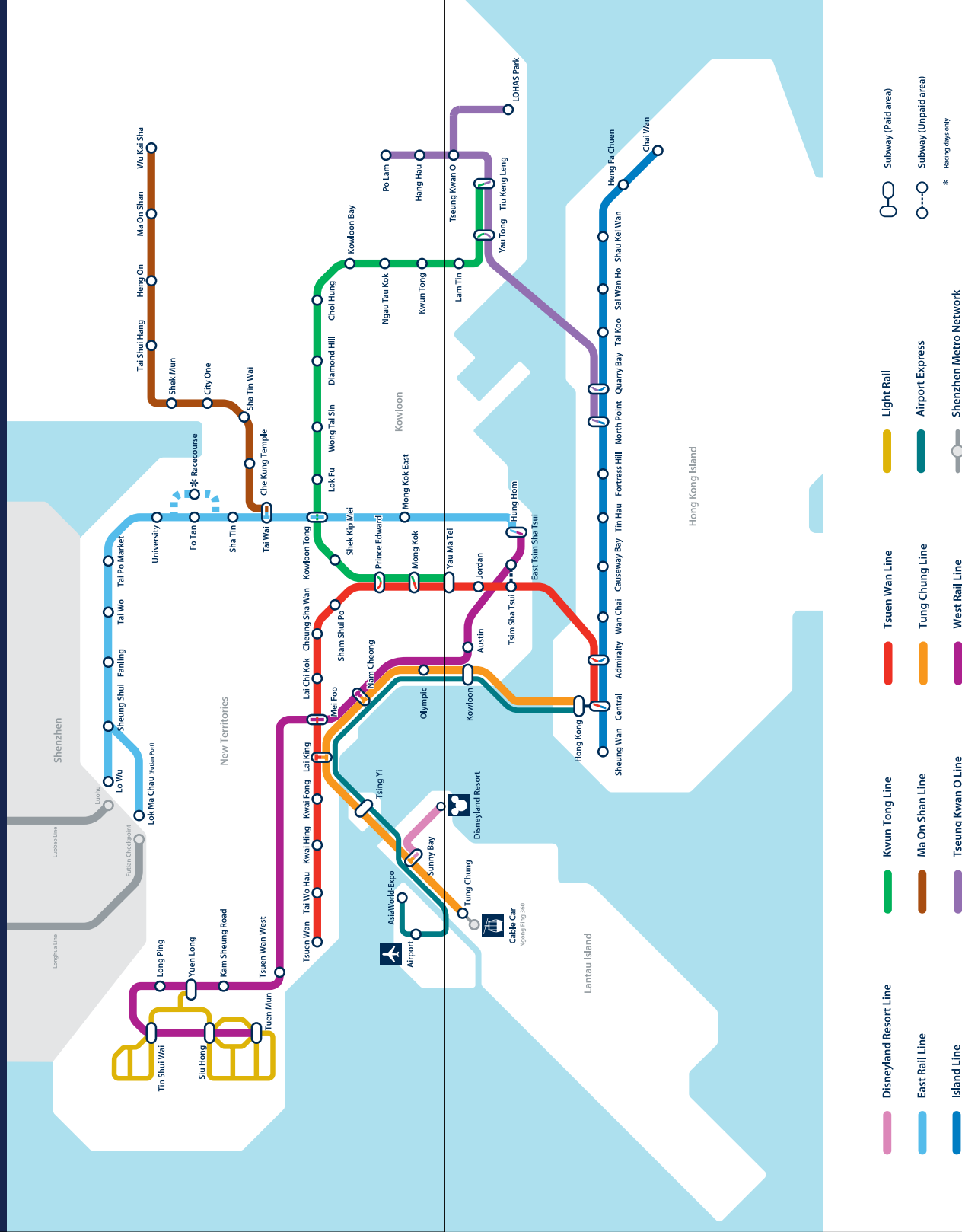
# Tsim Sha Tsui



Legend



MTR Stations Entrances and Exits



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