

**For discussion on  
1 November 2024**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1283/2024(02)

**Legislative Council**  
**Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services**  
**2024 Policy Address – Policy Initiatives of the Department of Justice**

**Introduction**

This paper sets out the policy initiatives of the Department of Justice (DoJ) in the 2024 Policy Address (Indicators for Specified Tasks of DoJ are listed at **Annex**).

**Consolidating the unique strengths of Hong Kong**

2. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC Central Committee) adopted the Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization (the Resolution). The Resolution calls on Hong Kong to fully harness the institutional strengths of “One Country, Two Systems” while consolidating and enhancing its status as an international financial, shipping and trade centre. It also supports Hong Kong's position to become an international hub for high-calibre talents, to exert a greater role in our country's opening up to the world, and to deepen collaboration within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) through better harmonisation of rules and mechanisms. Under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”, Hong Kong is rooted in “One Country” and enjoys the benefits of “Two Systems”, enabling Hong Kong to serve the country's needs with its own strengths.

3. Hong Kong boasts both national and international advantages, including our well-established fundamental legal infrastructure, a common law system that connects with the world, as well as legal talents and qualities. Echoing the policy direction of this year's Policy Address, DoJ will continue to strengthen Hong Kong's unique strengths and collaborate with the stakeholders to actively dovetail with our country's development and overall strategy. In this regard, DoJ has introduced a number of new policy measures to consolidate the strategic positioning of Hong Kong as a regional centre for international legal and dispute resolution services, so as to strengthen the rule of law infrastructure.

## **DoJ's Major Policy Initiatives**

### **(I) Organising training for international legal talents**

4. DoJ will formally launch the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy (the Academy) on 8 November of this year to commence capacity-building programmes and conduct Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy projects. It will coordinate and collaborate with relevant legal bodies or organisations in a timely manner, and strengthen exchanges among talents in regions along the “Belt and Road”, so as to continue to provide training for talents in the practice of foreign-related legal affairs for the country.

5. The Government has mentioned in last year's Policy Address that a dedicated office and an expert committee would be set up within this year to take forward the establishment of the Academy. Hence, in October this year, DoJ established the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Office (the Training Office) to serve as the coordinating body to take forward the establishment of the Academy, as well as the Expert Committee for Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training (the Expert Committee) to advise DoJ on training and development projects and so forth pertaining to the foreign-related legal affairs. The Expert Committee was formed by three advisory boards comprising eminent legal experts and scholars from renowned international, mainland and local legal organisations and universities as members. The Training Office also serves as the secretariat for the Expert Committee.

6. Capitalising on Hong Kong's bilingual common law system and international status, the Academy will regularly organise different practical legal courses, seminars and international exchange activities and so forth, so as to promote talent exchanges in areas along the “Belt and Road” and provide foreign-related legal talent training for our country, as well as to cultivate legal talents who are familiar with international law, common law, civil law, national legal systems as well as litigation and advocacy skills.

7. By taking forward the establishment of the Academy, Hong Kong can make good use of its bilingual common law system and international background. This will help continuously consolidate Hong Kong's strategic position as a regional centre for international legal and dispute resolution services. Hong Kong can further participate in the next decade of jointly building the “Belt and Road” Initiative, contributing to the country's efforts to promote the construction of the rule of law, as well as give full play to Hong Kong's unique advantages and position in connecting our country to the rest of the world at the interface of the rule of law.

(II) **To continue to make every effort to develop Hong Kong into a Regional Centre for International Legal and Dispute Resolution Services**

8. The National Strategy of the 14th Five-Year Plan has supported the development of the “eight centres” in Hong Kong, injecting impetus to the growth of Hong Kong. Under the guidance of the Resolution of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, DoJ will continue to promote and consolidate Hong Kong’s status as a regional centre for international legal and dispute resolution services through a series of strategic measures, fully harnessing the institutional strengths of “One Country, Two Systems” and enhancing Hong Kong’s position as “three centres and a hub”<sup>1</sup>, so as to provide one-stop and diversified legal and dispute resolution services both internationally and regionally.

**(1) International Organisation for Mediation (IOMed)**

9. DoJ will continue to work closely with relevant bureaux, departments and contractors to take forward the project of converting the Old Wan Chai Police Station into the headquarters of the IOMed, so as to enable the IOMed headquarters to be formally established in Hong Kong upon the adoption and entry into force of the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation (the Convention).

10. Following the signing of the Joint Statement on the Future Establishment of The International Organization for Mediation by China and other like-minded countries in 2022, the IOMed Preparatory Office was established in Hong Kong in February last year to co-ordinate the negotiations on the Convention. Since its establishment, the IOMed Preparatory Office has organised five sessions of negotiations in Hong Kong and Macao. The Fifth Session was successfully held in Hong Kong in October this year. Representatives from various countries completed negotiations on the Convention at the Fifth Session and decided to organize a signing ceremony for the Convention in Hong Kong in 2025.

11. The IOMed will be the world’s first inter-governmental international legal organization dedicated to resolving international disputes through mediation, aiming to realize win-win co-operation between disputing parties. The IOMed is important for the implementation of settling international disputes by peaceful means as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and offers a new option to all countries for peaceful resolution of international disputes.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Three centres” refers to Hong Kong as “an international financial, shipping and trade centre”. “A hub” refers to Hong Kong developing as “an international hub for high-calibre talents”. (paragraph 27 of the Resolution)

12. The establishment of the IOMed headquarters in Hong Kong demonstrates the city's unique advantages and opportunities in international mediation. The important initiatives of establishing the IOMed Preparatory Office in Hong Kong, completing the negotiations on the Convention and facilitating the consensus among different parties on situating the future IOMed headquarters in Hong Kong, showcased the Central Government's staunch support to the Hong Kong in establishing itself as a regional centre for international legal and dispute resolution services. Upon its establishment, the IOMed will provide friendly, flexible, economical and efficient mediation services, thereby building Hong Kong as the capital for international mediation.

## **(2) Deepening Mediation Culture**

13. It is the long-term policy of DoJ to promote the wider use of mediation to resolve disputes. Mediation allows parties to a dispute the opportunity to resolve conflicts in a mutually acceptable, timely and economical manner. Since the Civil Justice Reform in 2009, the mediation landscape in Hong Kong has matured over the years. Public awareness has been aroused as to the benefits of mediation in creating win-win solutions for parties to disputes.

14. Mediation culture is one of the important elements in building a harmonious and stable society. To enable the mediation culture to take stronger root in Hong Kong, DoJ will implement the following measures:

- (a) To solidify Hong Kong's strategic position as a regional centre for international legal and dispute resolution services, DoJ has established the Working Group on Mediation Regulatory System (the Working Group). The Working Group aims to review the regulatory system on the accreditation and disciplinary matters of the mediation profession in Hong Kong and make recommendations on reinforcing the professionalism of mediators. Our goal is to complete the review of the regulatory system on the accreditation and disciplinary matters of the mediation profession in Hong Kong by end of this year so as to strengthen mediation professionalism, as well as to propose measures to strengthen the regulatory system and commence related work within the next year.
- (b) DoJ will issue a Policy Statement on the Incorporation of Standard Mediation Clauses in government contracts, with a view to using mediation as a means of resolving disputes before resorting to arbitration or litigation. With the Government taking the lead, private organisations are encouraged to include similar mediation clauses in their contracts, so as to help further promote the "Mediate First" culture. DoJ also plans to collaborate with the Civil Service College to provide

training for relevant civil servants. Our goal is to implement the policy to include mediation clauses in government contracts by the first quarter next year so as to encourage the private sector to adopt similar mediation clauses. We will also collaborate with the Civil Service College to provide mediation training for relevant civil servants.

- (c) DoJ will launch a two-year Pilot Scheme on Community Mediation to deepen the mediation culture in the community through the training of community workers. This can help them gain a better understanding of mediation and its value in harmonious dispute resolution, hence empowering them with mediation skillsets in resolving daily disputes.

### **(3) Develop a Sports Disputes Resolution System**

15. As various major sports events (including the Paris Olympics this year and the upcoming National Games of the People’s Republic of China next year) take place and local athletes consistently achieve great results, Hong Kong has remarkable potential to cultivate a vibrant sports culture. As the global sports market continues to grow rapidly, different disputes have also emerged in the field of sports, hence making the establishment of a dispute resolution mechanism become particularly important. Hong Kong offers all-rounded dispute resolution services, featuring robust and reliable arbitration and mediation systems, along with a wealth of dispute resolution talents with sports expertise<sup>2</sup>, all these elements provide strong support for the overall sports development in Hong Kong.

16. With a view to enhancing the sports disputes resolution system in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong SAR Government has been actively engaging with key stakeholders to explore establishing a sports disputes resolution mechanism in Hong Kong, and to promote Hong Kong as a sports hub. During the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services in May this year, the Government briefed the Panel on the potential of developing sports-related disputes resolution in Hong Kong and sought Members’ views on the way forward. Members and the two legal professional bodies (the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Law Society of Hong Kong) generally supported to explore the establishment of a sports disputes resolution mechanism in Hong Kong.

17. The Government supports the industry to launch a Sports Disputes Resolution Pilot Scheme within the next year, thereby establishing a sports disputes resolution system and promoting sports arbitration, so as to leverage the institutional advantages of Hong Kong in dispute resolution.

---

<sup>2</sup> As of 14 October 2024, there are 102 arbitrators listed in Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre and 145 mediators on the panel of Hong Kong Mediation Accreditation Association Limited with expertise in sports.

### **(III) Promoting the Development and Application of LawTech**

18. DoJ will set up the Consultation Group on LawTech Development (the Group) comprising representatives from the legal and dispute resolution sector, law schools and LawTech solutions providers, to help the Government formulate policies and measures on LawTech, thereby encouraging the legal sector to enhance its efficiency and competitiveness with LawTech. By sharing their professional knowledge, experience and insights, the Group members coming from different fields can discuss how to promote the application of LawTech in the legal and dispute resolution sector (in particular for small and medium-sized law firms), as well as render advice on relevant policy measures in the promotion of LawTech development, standard and application.

### **(IV) Strengthening legal co-operation with the Mainland and the GBA**

#### **(1) Improved arrangement for mutual service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings between the Mainland and Hong Kong**

19. DoJ will continue to follow up on the conclusion of the improved arrangement for mutual service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings between the Mainland and Hong Kong, with a view to increasing possible modes of service and enhancing efficiency. The relevant parties have generally reached a consensus on the new service arrangement and, when the text is finalised and agreed, will proceed with the internal approval procedures. It is expected that the new arrangement could be signed by the end of this year. We aim to commence work for implementing the new arrangement such as amending the rules of court in consultation with the Judiciary within the next year.

#### **(2) “Allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law” and “Allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong”**

20. DoJ strives for the implementation of the extension of the measures “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law” to the pilot municipalities of the GBA and “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong” to the nine cities in the GBA in the Mainland within the next year.

21. The measure of “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law” enables Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law as the applicable law, even in the absence of “foreign-related elements” in the contracts. The measure is currently in force in Qianhai, Shenzhen.

22. The measure of “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong” enables Hong Kong-invested enterprises registered in the Pilot Free Trade Zones to choose Hong Kong as the seat of arbitration. With this measure, arbitration agreements choosing Hong Kong as the seat of arbitration would not be considered as invalid even in the absence of any “foreign-related elements”. For the GBA, the measure is currently in force in the China (Guangdong) Pilot Free Trade Zone (i.e. Guangzhou Nansha New District, Shenzhen Shekou Area, and Zhuhai Hengqin Area).

23. The CEPA Amendment Agreement II<sup>3</sup> signed on 9 October this year included the measures “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law” and “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong” as facilitation measures for Hong Kong investors and supports their expansion. DoJ will continue to strengthen its collaboration with Mainland authorities to strive for the early implementation of the expansion of “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law” to pilot municipalities in the GBA, and that of “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong” to the nine GBA cities in the Mainland. After such expansion takes effect, DoJ will further promote the measures to the stakeholders (including local and overseas chambers of commerce) and monitor their implementation.

24. Expansion of such measures not only benefits Hong Kong-invested enterprises, but also facilitates the synergistic development of the legal and dispute resolution sectors in both places, whereby facilitating Mainland enterprises going global via Hong Kong as the springboard, and bringing in overseas investors via Hong Kong as the gateway. Further, it will fully leverage on Hong Kong’s unique advantages on international legal and dispute resolution services, fueling the development of a more internationalised business environment in the GBA.

### **(3) A dedicated platform for GBA lawyers**

25. More than 480 Hong Kong and Macao lawyers are currently holders of the Lawyer’s License (Guangdong-Hongkong-Macao Greater Bay Area), and over 1,000 Hong Kong lawyers have passed the first four GBA Lawyers Examinations. However, our lack of a dedicated organisation for GBA lawyers is detrimental to unifying GBA lawyers, as well as to their training and development.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Second Agreement Concerning Amendment to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) Agreement on Trade in Services

26. DoJ is actively taking forward the set-up of a dedicated platform in Hong Kong for GBA lawyers within the next year, so as to address the pressing needs of the stakeholders. The dedicated platform for GBA lawyers will promote professional exchange and training, and consolidate the professional strengths of GBA lawyers. The platform will also facilitate communication and team building among GBA lawyers, promote exchanges and collaboration within the Bay Area, and contribute to the building of the foreign-related legal infrastructure in the country.

#### **(4) GBA Legal Information Platform**

27. There is currently no platform providing comprehensive information in relation to law and dispute resolution in the GBA. Useful information (such as judgments of the courts of various cities in the GBA, court announcements, legal practice requirements and so forth) are not easily accessible online.

28. DoJ will take forward the set-up of the GBA Legal Information Platform within the first half of 2026, which seeks to gather information on legal and dispute resolution services in the GBA. This platform will enhance the interconnectivity and transparency of information in the region, and will facilitate the access to the latest and most authoritative information by the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao as well as foreign enterprises, citizens and the legal profession, so as to better support the high-quality development of the GBA.

#### **(V) Promoting the strengths of and opportunities for Hong Kong’s legal services on all fronts**

29. DoJ will lead local delegations comprising professionals from the legal sector to visit different regions annually to promote Hong Kong as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region. Through these visits, DoJ will share with the local legal and business community Hong Kong’s unique strengths under the common law system and its role as a “super connector” and “super value-adder” between the Mainland and the rest of the world which would facilitate overseas businesses to explore investment opportunities in China and beyond and tell the good and accurate stories of Hong Kong to other parts of the world.

#### **(VI) Rule of Law Education**

30. The Government has all along attached great importance to the work on the rule of law education. With a view to enhancing correct understanding of the

rule of law in different sectors of the community, DoJ has been actively initiating various rule of law education programmes in a diversified manner.

31. With the assistance of the Steering Committee on Rule of Law Education (Steering Committee) and its working groups (i.e. the Working Group on Course Design and Teaching Materials and the Working Group on Coordination and Liaison), DoJ launched the first phase of the ROLE Stars Train-the-Leaders Programme (TTL Programme) in late 2023. The second phase of the TTL Programme was also completed in late-September this year.

32. The two phases of the TTL Programme not only include the Foundation Course which provides basic legal knowledge in a diversified, “down to earth”, easy-to-understand and interactive manner (for further details of its content, please refer to the LC Paper No. CB(4)924/2023(02) submitted by DoJ to the Legislative Council in November 2023), but also the Advanced Course which focuses on the practice of the rule of law. Through visits to different law enforcement institutions and mock court activities, the Advanced Course further deepens the trainees’ understanding of the legal system and the implementation of procedures in real life, so as to enhance the promotion of correct messages on the rule of law in the community. A total of about 290 trainees, coming from 21 organisations responsible for youth-related and community work and more than 100 secondary schools in Hong Kong, have participated in the two phases of the TTL Programme. To date, over 250 trainees have completed the Foundation Course and amongst them, more than 80 have further participated in the activities of the Advanced Course with over 40 of them having completed all the trainings under the Advanced Course.

33. Going forward, DoJ will make reference to the experience of the two phases of the TTL Programme and take forward the launching of the third phase within the next year with the assistance of the Steering Committee and its Working Groups. In addition to continuously organising the Foundation Course and the Advanced Course to provide training to more people from different sectors on fundamental legal concepts and the practice of rule of law, DoJ plans to launch other training activities to strengthen the trainees’ understanding of the law on specific areas, such as common criminal offences and civil laws which are closely related to daily life (such as marriage and succession, consumer rights and so forth), with a view that the course content would better meet the practical needs of the trainees and further enhance their ability and confidence to disseminate correct messages on the rule of law in the community. We will continue to announce the details of the TTL Programme and other information related to rule of law education on DoJ’s dedicated website ([www.role-ttl.gov.hk](http://www.role-ttl.gov.hk)).

34. In addition, DoJ will actively pursue the rule of law education and promotion through other diversified means. Aside from utilising mediums such

as short videos, publications, online media and social media platforms, DoJ also seeks to promote rule of law education through lively and interesting interactive drama performances related to the rule of law.

35. DoJ launched the “Rule of Law through Drama” project in the 2020/21 academic year. As of now, over 300 drama shows have been performed in primary schools in all districts of Hong Kong with many positive feedbacks received. DoJ is actively organising a large-scale interactive drama activity to be held in the next year so that more members of the public could gain a proper understanding of the rule of law through interactive drama performances.

36. DoJ will continue to organise various law-related courses and seminars to reinforce the rule of law awareness of Government Counsel and legal sector, as well as their understanding of the Mainland legal system and the latest developments of our country. Those already organised for DoJ colleagues this year include the National Security Education Seminar for Government Counsel of DoJ (Sessions 2 to 4 held in January, May and June 2024 respectively) and the seminar on “Learning the Spirit of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China” (September 2024).

## **Conclusion**

37. In 2024, DoJ has been actively implementing the relevant policy measures under the 2023 Policy Address, including the promotion of rule of law education, conduct of duty visits to the Mainland and overseas, strengthening of the communication and integration within the GBA, promotion of the training of international legal talents and the international legal and dispute resolution services. Looking ahead, DoJ will continue to promote the training of international legal talents, deepen the mediation culture and develop a sports disputes resolution system, as well as keep engaging with places within and outside our country to promote Hong Kong’s competitiveness as a regional centre for international legal and dispute resolution services. We will also tell the good stories of Hong Kong and further consolidate our solid foundation of the rule of law, hence contributing to the construction of rule of law in our country.

**Department of Justice**  
**October 2024**

**Extract of the 2024 Policy Address – Indicators for Specified Tasks of DoJ**

1. Step up the promotion of mediation services:
  - Complete the capital works of the conversion of the Old Wan Chai Police Station into the headquarters of the International Organization for Mediation **in mid-2025**;
  - Implement related policies to include mediation clauses in government contracts **by Q1 2025** and encourage the private sector to adopt similar mediation clauses and collaborate with the Civil Service College to start providing mediation training for relevant civil servants;
  - Launch a two-year Community Mediation Empowerment Pilot Scheme **within 2025**; and
  - Support the industry to launch the Sports Dispute Resolution Pilot Scheme **within 2025**.
2. Promote the development of digital economy:
  - Set up a Consultation Group on LawTech Development **in Q1 2025** to research and formulate specific recommendations to promote the application of LawTech.
3. Strengthen collaboration with the GBA:
  - Take forward the setting up of a dedicated platform for GBA lawyers **within 2025**; and
  - Take forward the setting up of a GBA legal information platform **within the first half of 2026**.
4. Promote the development of legal and dispute resolution services:
  - Strive for the implementation of the extension of the measures of “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law” to the trial cities in the GBA and “allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong” to the nine GBA cities in the Mainland **within 2025**; and

- Complete the review of the regulatory system on the accreditation and disciplinary matters of the mediation profession in Hong Kong **by end-2024** to strengthen mediation professionalism; and propose measures to strengthen the regulatory system and commence related work **within 2025**.