

**English translation of the Chinese speech to be delivered by Mr. Dieter Yih, JP,
the President of the Law Society of Hong Kong at the Opening Ceremony of the
“Hong Kong Legal Services – Think Global, Think Hong Kong” in Guangzhou
on 13 September 2012**

Honorable Guests, Secretary for Justice of the HKSAR Mr. Rimsky Yuen, SC, JP, delegates from enterprises, ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning,

Today, I am very happy to be here for the “Hong Kong Legal Services Forum” organized by the Department of Justice of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. First of all, let me extend my gratitude to the Department of Justice for inviting the Law Society of Hong Kong to be a co-organizer of this event. It is indeed a great honor for me and fellow member of the Law Society delegation to be able to participate in this forum for exchange of our professional experience with corporate leaders and lawyers from both Hong Kong and the Mainland.

The theme of this forum is “Hong Kong Legal Services – Think Global, Think Hong Kong”. Thanks to the host, the forum provides a valuable platform for interaction between Mainland enterprises and solicitors from Hong Kong. Through the platform, enterprises may better understand the kind of legal issues they may face as they “go out” and develop their business in international markets, as well as the solutions to tackle these issues. Likewise, Hong Kong solicitors can introduce how we may use our international network and practice experience to help Mainland enterprises deal with cross-boundary projects, expand their corporate business plans, enhance their competitiveness and establish a firm foothold in the international arena.

The Heritage Foundation, a distinguished international organization announced the Index of Economic Freedom in January 2012 and Hong Kong has been ranked the world’s No. 1 freest economy for the 18 consecutive years. The report also cited Hong Kong as one of the top international financial centers in the world. Hong Kong maintains its leading status as the freest global economy as a result of its free trade policy, well-established judiciary and monitoring mechanism, as well as an open economic system.

In addition, Hong Kong has a pool of talents who are well-versed in international affairs, a simple taxation system, capital raising capability, and its close link with Mainland China. All these make Hong Kong the best platform for Mainland

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enterprises to establish a foothold in the international arena.

As seasoned members of Hong Kong's legal profession, solicitors have substantial experience in international legal services, are well-acquainted with the laws of various regions and the manner in which business is operating in international markets. These knowledge and experience are invaluable in assisting Mainland enterprises to expand, strengthen and internationalize their businesses.

According to the statistics of the Law Society of Hong Kong as at the end of August 2012, there are nearly 8,400 registered solicitors in Hong Kong and over 7,300 of them hold practicing certificates. Of those who hold practising certificates, 5,760 are in private practice in law firms. The statistics also show that there are 802 law firms in Hong Kong of which over 360 firms are operated by sole proprietors, and over 430 firms were operating in the form of partnership. There are also a total of 72 Hong Kong law firms operating representative offices in the Mainland.

In addition, there are 75 registered foreign law firms and 1,266 registered foreign lawyers in Hong Kong. They come from 28 overseas jurisdictions. We may therefore say that we have a team of talented solicitors who are familiar with the legal practices in the East and the West. Solicitors from Hong Kong have all along been working closely with their counterparts from the Mainland in handling legal transactions involving foreign parties. Through such collaboration, we have successfully assisted clients 'go out' and internationalize their business making all three parties concerned winners in the process.

For a long period of time, Hong Kong has been the main offshore financing center for Mainland enterprises to raise funds. Hong Kong solicitors manage to apply PRC laws in innovative ways to handle transactions involving foreign parties, and also promote cooperation between lawyers from the two regions in developing cross-regional legal services covering mergers and acquisitions, listing projects, capital markets, loans, finance, insurance, arbitration for resolving international trade disputes, as well as transfer and management of intellectual properties. These services help enterprises reduce operational risk.

Today, over 400 representatives from enterprises based in the Mainland and lawyers gathered here to learn more about the professional services provided by Hong Kong solicitors. I wish to highlight that Hong Kong solicitors are proficient in both the Chinese and English languages. They have substantial experience as legal consultants advising on investment risks, fund operations and financial matters. Their knowledge of international legal practices also facilitates communication between the legal profession from China and members of the international community. In addition,

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Hong Kong solicitors are able to offer professional advice to mainland enterprises to help them branch out to foreign markets, raise funds through listing in Hong Kong, or resolve commercial disputes using arbitration.

China has a significant role to play in the global economy. Volume of external trade and foreign investment in the Mainland opened up opportunities for cross-regional projects. To capitalize on these opportunities, it is important for enterprises to pick up their pace in the process of reaching out to international markets and to raise their competitiveness in the global economy.

With an international vision and practical experience in cross-border legal services, Hong Kong solicitors are well-positioned to provide legal advisory service to mainland enterprises and satisfy their business needs. To know more about how Hong Kong solicitors can help enterprises expand and strengthen their businesses in order to become a key player in the international arena, you are welcome to attend the breakout session to be hosted by the Law Society this afternoon and learn more. I am sure everyone will walk away with loads of useful information from the breakout session.

Last but not least, I hope that solicitors from Hong Kong and our counterparts in the Mainland may seize the opportunity to work together to provide one-stop legal advisory services to help mainland enterprises achieve their goal of internationalize their business on the basis that cooperation between the two sides would be complimentary and mutually beneficial resulting in a 'win-win' situation for all.

I wish the Forum every success. Thank you!

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