

## SED continues to lead HK higher education institution delegation to visit Beijing (with photos)

The Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, today (May 10) continued to lead the delegation of Hong Kong higher education institutions to visit Beijing. They called on the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and the Ministry of Science and Technology, and visited a technology enterprise.

In the morning, the delegation called on the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Xia Baolong, to report on the latest developments of Hong Kong's higher education sector. Dr Choi expressed gratitude to Mr Xia for his constant care and love for Hong Kong.

Mr Xia pointed out that Hong Kong's higher education has unique advantages, including high teaching quality, strong basic research capabilities, extensive international connections, and solid co-operation with the Mainland, representing a strong foundation and huge influence.

He said that Hong Kong's education is an important part of national education. Universities must keep in mind the importance of cultivating more talent, producing more scientific research outcomes, and making more contributions to national development. He hoped that the leaders of Hong Kong's higher education institutions will shoulder their important responsibilities of adhering to the fundamentals of cultivating values and nurturing talent, strengthening their affection for and sense of belonging to the country, and enthusiastically promoting the key message of love for the country and Hong Kong; following firmly the strategy of developing their institutions with quality talent, reinforcing the cultivation and attraction of talent, and providing strong support for young students to become talent; persisting in giving full play to their unique advantages, and contributing Hong Kong's wisdom and strengths in the construction of a leading country in education.

He emphasised that the Central Government will fully, faithfully and unswervingly ensure that the "one country, two systems" principle remains unchanged, and wholeheartedly support Hong Kong in achieving a leap forward at the new stage. All must be united and proactively support the Chief Executive and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in governing Hong Kong in accordance with the law, and fully leveraging Hong Kong's advantages under "one country, two systems" and as an international city, working together to build an international education hub, and contributing further to Hong Kong in its transition from stability to prosperity and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Dr Choi said that the active participation of the leaders of the 22 Hong Kong higher education institutions in the study group has not only made history for Hong Kong's higher education sector, it also demonstrated the sector's unity, carrying great significance.

She pointed out that with the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, an improved electoral system and the Basic Law Article 23 legislation, a stable environment for development has been created. Coupled with the goal of building a leading country in education by 2035, Hong Kong's higher education will enjoy a golden opportunity for development in the next decade. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will give full support to institutions for continuous innovation and optimisation, and giving full play to the strengths of Hong Kong's first-class universities, to develop Hong Kong into an international hub for post-secondary education.

The delegation also called on the Ministry of Science and Technology to gain a deep understanding of the latest trend of national science and technology development, the overall national development, and the goal of building a nation strong in science and technology. Dr Choi said that Hong Kong and the Mainland have been working closely in the area of scientific and technological innovation, and Hong Kong's researchers are an indispensable force in building a nation strong in science and technology. She said that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has all along been committed to promoting STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education to nurture future talent for the country and Hong Kong.

In the afternoon, the delegation visited a Mainland technology enterprise to learn about the development trend of digital economy on the Mainland and explore opportunities for collaboration.

Members of the delegation include the Permanent Secretary for Education, Ms Michelle Li; the Chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC), Mr Tim Lui; the Chairman of the Research Grants Council, Professor Timothy Tong; the Chairman of the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, Dr Alex Chan; and presidents or representatives of eight UGC-funded universities, 13 degree-awarding self-financing post-secondary institutions and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. The delegation concluded its visit to Beijing today.

Tomorrow (May 11), Dr Choi will meet leaders of the National Academy of Education Administration to explore further co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland teacher training institutions. She will also attend the closing ceremony of a Mainland study tour for Hong Kong's promoted teachers held at the Academy. About 70 promoted teachers participated in the study tour, which included thematic talks, visits to schools and enterprises, and cultural visits that enabled teachers to learn about the latest developments in various areas of the country, and exchange views with Mainland school leaders for more effective promotion of school development.

Dr Choi will conclude her visit and return to Hong Kong tomorrow

afternoon.



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## [HKSAR Government strongly disapproves and rejects biased remarks by US Consul General to Hong Kong](#)

â€‹The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (May 10) strongly deplored and opposed the biased remarks about the situation in the HKSAR and the slanders and smears against the HKSAR's work in safeguarding national security, made by the Consul General of the United States of America (US) to Hong Kong, Mr Gregory May, at a forum recently held by a US think tank.

A HKSAR Government spokesman said, "The US side has ignored the large-scale and incessant riots during the 'colour revolution' in Hong Kong that occurred in 2019 which devastated our society, livelihood and economy. It ignored the fact that it is an international practice and an inherent right and responsibility for sovereign state to enact laws safeguarding national security. It blatantly attacked the HKSAR in safeguarding national security dutifully, faithfully and in accordance with the law. Such positions fully exposed the US' double standards. The HKSAR Government urges the US to discern the fact that the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) has enabled the livelihood and economic activities of the Hong Kong community at large to resume as normal."

The spokesman continued, "The laws safeguarding national security in the HKSAR including the NSL and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance are precisely for safeguarding national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity; and ensuring the full and faithful implementation of the principle of 'one country, two systems' under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy. It also better safeguards the fundamental rights and freedoms of the residents of the HKSAR and other people, including those doing business, in the city. The relevant laws have

set out clear definitions and criminal elements which will not affect regular exchanges between Hong Kong residents and people here for business with foreign countries. These normal interactions and business activities are protected by the Basic Law and the local laws of the HKSAR, and cannot be confused with acts and activities endangering national security.

"The HKSAR's law enforcement agencies released information of fugitive offenders who have allegedly committed serious offences and are wanted, and appealed for the public's assistance in bringing fugitive offenders to justice. This is legitimate, necessary, and squarely in line with international practice. The US side on one hand claimed that it wished to 'stabilise the relationship', but on the other hand, it frequently smeared the law enforcement actions conducted by the HKSAR in accordance with the law; and its suggestion that certain persons should be immune from legal sanctions for their illegal acts and activities is totally contrary to the spirit of the rule of law."

Regarding the Court of Appeal's recent granting of an interim injunction concerning specified criminal acts in relation to a song (the Song), the spokesman for the HKSAR Government reiterated, "The purpose of applying for the injunction is to safeguard national security and preserve the dignity of the national anthem. The Song has been widely circulated since 2019, and has been used to incite others to participate in acts and activities which are very likely to constitute offences such as secession and sedition, thereby endangering national security. The Song has also been mistakenly presented as the 'national anthem of Hong Kong. This has not only insulted the national anthem 'March of the Volunteers' but also caused serious harm to the State and the HKSAR. The HKSAR Government has acted in accordance with the law and applied to the Court for an injunction for discharging the constitutional duty of the HKSAR Government to safeguard national security by effectively preventing, suppressing and imposing punishment on acts or activities endangering national security. The injunction targets four acts which already constitute criminal offences. It does not affect lawful and legitimate activities conducted for purposes such as academic activity and news activity, and will not stifle the free flow of information."

As for the economic and trade co-operation and people-to-people exchanges between Hong Kong and the US mentioned by Mr May, the HKSAR Government spokesman said, "The US enjoys significant economic benefit in Hong Kong, with more than 1 200 US companies having set up businesses in Hong Kong. It also enjoyed a trade surplus of US\$271.5 billion with Hong Kong in the past 10 years, the largest among its global trading partners. The US should take concrete actions to stop all wrongdoings that undermine Hong Kong-US economic and trade relations, and make efforts to foster mutual benefit between the two places in various areas, including promoting economic and trade relations and cultural exchanges."

The HKSAR Government has set up 14 Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) overseas (including the three ETOs established in the US). All along, the HKSAR has been proactively maintaining extensive ties and facilitating co-operation with different countries and regions in accordance with the Basic Law. It however premises on mutual respect of the 'one country, two

systems' principle and not to smear or slander the successful application of such principle nor interfere with the affairs of the HKSAR."

The HKSAR Government spokesman stressed, "With a comprehensive legal system in safeguarding national security in Hong Kong, we can move forward without worries or burden, fully focus on pursuing economic growth, advancing development, improving people's livelihood and bringing fulfilment to the people, with a view to creating a more prosperous and better home together. Under 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong commands irreplaceable standing with the distinctive advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world. There lies a plethora of opportunities ahead. The HKSAR Government will continue to ensure the successful implementation of the principles of 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy, so as to better serve Hong Kong citizens and foster the city's development."

The spokesman reiterated, "The HKSAR Government strongly demands the US to immediately stop acting against international law and basic norms of international relations and interfering in the affairs of the HKSAR."

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## **HKSAR Government finds statement in speech by Chairperson Hong Kong, China Weightlifting and Powerlifting Association factually wrong and unacceptable**

â€‹The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government finds it absolutely unacceptable that the Chairperson of the Hong Kong, China Weightlifting and Powerlifting Association (the Association), Dr Ip Wing-yuk, mentioned "13 countries participated in" the Asian Equipped Powerlifting Championship & Asian University Cup 2024 in her opening speech which was delivered on May 6 (Monday) during the event. The statement is grossly inconsistent with the fact that delegations from Hong Kong, China and Chinese Taipei participated as regional teams. It gives rise to suspected violation of the one-China principle.

The HKSAR Government attaches great importance to the series of mistakes in various gravity made by the Association and has requested the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) to conduct an in-depth investigation and submit an effective plan of improvement. The SF&OC has urged the Association to submit a report to them on or before next Wednesday (May 15).

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## Speech by DSJ at Mediation Conference 2024 (English only) (with photo)

Following are the closing remarks by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, at the Mediation Conference 2024 today (May 10):

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. On behalf of the Department of Justice of Hong Kong (DoJ), I would like to thank all of you for participating in the Mediation Conference 2024.

Today's Conference showcased the significant progress we have made in the promotion of mediation and charted a promising path for the future of mediation. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to our esteemed speakers, moderators, supporting organisations, distinguished guests, online and in-person participants from Hong Kong and beyond, and my colleagues who have worked devotedly in putting together this exceptional event.

The Mediation Week is our biennial flagship event dedicated to promoting the wider use of mediation in resolving disputes. This eventful week culminates in today's Conference, which provides a valuable platform for bringing together seasoned practitioners and experts for an insightful exchange of views on resolving cross-boundary and international disputes through mediation, as well as the intersection between artificial intelligence and mediation. We also gained valuable insights from Mr Luo Houru's (Director of the Bureau of People's Participation and Promotion of Rule of Law of the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China) keynote speech this morning on the Mainland's mediation system, including the enhanced infrastructure and regulatory framework.

Earlier this week, we also had four thematic seminars exploring the use of mediation in different sectors, including education, workplace, consumer and the family court.

Despite the diverse contexts, the common theme is that resolving disputes by way of mediation carries a lot of benefits. This brings me to reflect on the nature and characteristics of mediation, and I would like to highlight a few key takeaways from this week's events.

Key takeaways

Firstly, mediation is a valuable tool for resolving everyday conflicts, whether within schools, workplaces, families, or between consumers and businesses.

In the school setting, mediation can help resolve conflicts among students, teachers and parents. By fostering dialogue and understanding, mediation or the use of its skills could prevent the escalation of school disputes, preserve relationships and promote a positive and inclusive learning environment. During the School Mediation Seminar, the thought-provoking sharing of the experienced mediators, educators, students and parents reinforces our belief that cultivating mediation culture in schools helps lay a solid foundation for a harmonious community. The signing of the "Mediate First" Pledge by students demonstrated their strong dedication to first explore the use of mediation as a flexible and constructive means in resolving disputes.

Mediation is increasingly used to address workplace disputes. We all understand how hard it could be when conflicts arise in the workplace, especially when we spend a lot of time with our colleagues. As shared by the speakers in the Workplace Mediation Seminar, mediation involves skills such as active listening and emotional management, to facilitate candid communications. Mediation can help defuse tension at the workplace, create a harmonious working environment and, if applied effectively, get everyone back to work happily. In the unfortunate event that an accident happens resulting in an employees' compensation claim, mediation would also be a preferable means to resolve the claim in the legal proceedings, addressing the needs and concerns of both the employer and the employee.

Consumer dispute is another area where mediation proves highly useful. In the modern era of digital economy, consumer disputes arising from e-commerce activities have surged. As explored in the Consumer Mediation Seminar, consumer disputes usually involve a large number of low-value disputes. Although each dispute may involve a modest sum of money, the cumulative effect of these disputes can be significant. Mediation could provide a quick and economical way to resolve them. Particularly for businesses which value reputation and customer satisfaction, not only does mediation save time and resources for both consumers and traders, it also enables them to preserve their relationships. We are delighted to learn that the Consumer Council will be launching a new online dispute resolution platform, which will surely further facilitate the effective resolution of consumer disputes.

It goes without saying that parties in family litigation can benefit from mediation. Family court cases typically involve intense emotions and personal grudges. The Judiciary in Hong Kong has been actively promoting family mediation which helps the divorcing couple to improve communication and enhance the chance of maintaining an amicable relations to handle future responsibilities. We are pleased to learn from the Judiciary's Seminar yesterday that the recently introduced Mediator-assisted Financial Dispute Resolution and Mediator-assisted Child Dispute Resolution procedures, which run in parallel with litigation, have proven to be highly effective, and the feedback is positive and encouraging.

The second takeaway is that it is a clear global phenomenon to use mediation in resolving cross-boundary or international disputes, and Hong Kong has a lot to offer in this regard.

For those who have been involved in cross-boundary or international disputes, you would likely have first-hand experience dealing with the difficulties and complexities brought about by the legal and cultural differences. Traditionally, arbitration has been the preferred mode of alternative dispute resolution. However, as international arbitration has become increasingly costly and procedurally complex, there is a call for a more effective means of dispute resolution.

It is no surprise that people resort to mediation. In essence, mediation, as a voluntary and flexible process, avoids the need to tackle different legal rules and traditions. It is also solution-oriented and interest-based, and allows parties to develop tailor-made solutions which could go beyond traditional judicial remedies. Mediation even has the potential to turn disputes into deals and new opportunities.

Our distinguished speakers from Panel 1 and Panel 2 today have shed light on what Hong Kong is able to offer in this area.

Regionally, working together with Guangdong and Macao, we have established the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Mediation Platform. We heard from Panel 1 today that there are remarkable opportunities presented by the mediation standards and model rules promulgated by the GBA Mediation Platform. With the official promulgation of the local accreditation rules for accreditation of GBA mediators in late March this year, we are one step closer to forming a consolidated panel of GBA Mediators.

I would like to add that the DoJ released the Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Action Plan) last month. The Action Plan underpins the guiding principle of "Three Interfaces, Two Connects and One GBA". Building upon the Action Plan, through "Three Interfaces", namely the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talents, the DoJ will actively seek to foster "Two Connects" – the connectivity of hardware and software in the construction of rule of law in the GBA, thereby eventually achieving the goal of "One GBA". The GBA Mediation Platform will surely play a crucial role in improving the interface of non-litigation dispute resolution services in the GBA.

On an international level, the recent announcement that Hong Kong will host the headquarters of the International Organization for Mediation signifies a resounding vote of confidence in Hong Kong as a leading international legal and dispute resolution services centre in the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier this afternoon, we had the privilege of hearing from Dr Sun Jin (Director-General of the International Organization for Mediation Preparatory Office) on the vision and latest developments of the International Organization for Mediation, followed by the esteemed speakers of Panel 2 elaborating on Hong Kong's edge in providing top-notch mediation services to the international community, that is, the unique advantages under "one country, two systems", ample experiences, strong and diversified pool of talents, just to name a few.

Coming to the third and last takeaway – we should be fully prepared to embrace the opportunities, as well as the challenges, brought about by the



evolving technological landscape.

We heard from the interesting discussion in Panel 3 just now on how artificial intelligence is reshaping the dispute resolution sector. On the one hand, the use of technologies could streamline the dispute resolution process and improve cost efficiency. On the other hand, there are legal and ethical implications which demand our close scrutiny. While we may not have immediate answers to some of the novel questions, it should not stop us from exploring and harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence.

#### DoJ's mediation initiatives

It is the Department of Justice's long-term policy initiative to promote the wider use of mediation. We firmly believe that mediation transcends boundaries, and is a key to fostering cultural understanding, and ultimately shaping a better and brighter future.

We are committed to promoting the use of mediation in Hong Kong through various measures, including publishing and disseminating mediation leaflets and e-newsletters to the public and stakeholders, as well as organising capacity-building activities and promotional events, such as the Mediation Conference today.

As the Secretary for Justice pointed out in his opening remarks this morning, "deepening the mediation culture" is one of the key initiatives in the Policy Address 2023. To take the lead, the Government is actively pursuing the initiative of incorporating standard "mediation first" dispute resolution clauses in government contracts in so far as practicable. It is hoped that this will encourage private companies to follow suit.

Further, in terms of capacity building for dispute resolution talents, we have been co-organising the Investment Law and Investor-State Mediator Training for mediation practitioners and government officials from various jurisdictions since 2018. The next round of the training course will take place later this month. Through the training course, we would continue nurturing local and overseas talents on investment mediation, and impressing upon governments from different jurisdictions to opt for mediation in resolving investment disputes.

#### Closing

Throughout the Mediation Week and today's Conference, we have garnered a wealth of insights and observations from our distinguished speakers with diverse backgrounds and expertise. Their inspiring sharing has provided us with food for thought and given us the confidence to continue promoting mediation locally, regionally and internationally.

As we set our sights on the future, Hong Kong will no doubt continue to capitalise on its advantages in bridging connections with the Mainland and international community, and strengthen its position as a leading international and dispute resolution hub in the Asia-Pacific region under the National 14th Five-Year Plan.

Before I close, I would like to draw your attention to our "Mediate First" logo where you can see the pair of holding hands forming a heart shape under the Hong Kong skyline. Hand in hand, heart to heart, together, we can "bridge cultures, build futures".

Thank you once again for joining today's Conference and the Mediation Week 2024. I look forward to seeing you all again in our future events. Thank you.



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## [Missing girl in Tin Sum located](#)

A girl who went missing in Tin Sum has been located.

Liang Tsuen-miu, aged 14, went missing after she was last seen at MTR Tai Wai Station this morning. Her family made a report to Police on the same day.

The girl was located in a shopping mall on Sha Tin Centre Street this afternoon. She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.