

China to pilot lawyer mediation system

China will pilot a lawyer mediation system in nine provinces and two municipalities in an attempt to better resolve civil and business conflicts.

A new guideline jointly issued by the Supreme People's Court and the Ministry of Justice encourages lawyers to play a more active role as a third party in the mediation process to assist disputing parties in resolving conflicts through negotiation.

Lawyers will be allowed to work as mediators at mediation offices set up at local courts and tribunals, as well as legal service centers, lawyer associations and qualified law firms.

The measure is expected to improve the efficiency of solving civil and commercial disputes, save legal resources and reduce litigation costs.

The new measure is the latest addition to China's mediation system. China has been adopting a "people's mediation" method to resolve disputes outside judicial proceedings.

In 2010, the country's legislative organ promulgated the Law on Mediation.

Under the guidance of the law, China has established people's mediation committees in village (neighborhood) committees, townships or towns (urban districts), enterprises and public institutions to handle the mediation process.

Administrative and judicial mediation have also been used in China to handle disputes outside judicial proceedings.