

DoJ and SPC hold first high-level joint meeting to accelerate interface work in GBA (with photos)

The Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Supreme People's Court (SPC) held their first high-level joint meeting in Huizhou today (July 3) to accelerate the work on the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talent training relating to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), and to help different sectors seize the development opportunities in the GBA through the construction of the rule of law.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, and the Director General of the Research Office of the SPC, Mr Zhou Jiahai. The DoJ and the SPC signed a memorandum of understanding in Beijing in mid-June on establishing a standing interface platform on judicial and legal co-operation in the GBA. Today's meeting was the first high-level joint meeting under the framework of the platform.

Mr Cheung said that the establishment of the platform aims to deepen communication and collaboration between the two sides through practical interface work led by senior leaders, so as to more efficiently integrate resources and needs, as well as promote research, talent training and professional exchanges more systematically. The platform will also facilitate the implementation of more specific measures, benefitting exchanges and interactions between the people and businesses in the two places, so as to promote the high-quality development of the GBA.

He said, "It is especially meaningful to hold the meeting at the beginning of the third year of the current-term Government. Advancing from stability to prosperity, Hong Kong has ushered in the opportune time for development. The DoJ will continue to spare no effort in promoting the rule of law development, thereby helping different sectors to dovetail with national development strategies and in particular to seize the opportunities in the GBA development. The meeting was held just three weeks after the signing of the memorandum of understanding, demonstrating both sides' determination to deepen the interface work and to enhance speed and efficiency. I would like to thank the SPC for its arrangements."

He mentioned that the establishment of the platform is an important measure under the DoJ's Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area released in April 2024 for strengthening the interface of the communication mechanism with the Mainland, and also one of the policy initiatives in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address", as well as the first standing interface platform between the DoJ and a central state organ.

At the meeting, the two sides actively and pragmatically took forward the collaboration in three major areas comprising the interfaces of

mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talent training. The progress of the key measures and the directions set for future co-operation are outlined below.

(1) On the mechanism of mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters, both sides will review and enhance the relevant mechanism on an on-going basis, and jointly release notable cases relating to mutual legal assistance.

(2) On the measure of "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law", both sides will press ahead with the implementation of the pilot scheme as soon as possible, and take forward the implementation of the measure of "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong" in the nine Mainland cities in the GBA.

(3) The first GBA lawyers' practical training will be conducted on July 19 and 20 at the Guangdong branch of the National Judges College.

(4) Taking forward a practical training course for Mainland civil and commercial judges on common law and foreign-related civil and commercial legal issues this year, utilising Hong Kong's role in establishing the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy.

Mr Cheung said he hopes that the relevant initiatives will help better bring into play the unique advantages of "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions" of the GBA, so as to contribute to the construction of the rule of law in the GBA.