

DoJ releases Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (with photo)

The Department of Justice (DoJ) today (April 12) released the [Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area](#) to set forth the guiding principle, the development direction and specific policy measures on the construction of rule of law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) in the future.

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, said that the Action Plan is an important policy document. The first-time release of the Action Plan on the fifth anniversary of the promulgation of the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area demonstrated the importance the DoJ attaches to its work relating to the GBA and its proactive and pragmatic approach. He said, "The DoJ will take action as a means and adopt a result-oriented approach to pursue in a pragmatic spirit the implementation of the Action Plan during the tenure of the current-term Government, with a view to contributing to the construction of rule of law in the GBA with concrete results."

Mr Lam pointed out that there are two key features in the Action Plan: underpinning the guiding principle of "Three Interfaces, Two Connects and One GBA", and strengthening collaboration with the legal and dispute resolution sectors and other stakeholders to effectively implement the various policy measures set out in the Action Plan.

The DoJ has been actively promoting the construction of rule of law in the GBA with a view to taking full advantage of the establishment of Hong Kong's position as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre in the Asia-Pacific region provided for under the Outline Development Plan, thereby enabling the GBA to capitalise on its unique strengths under "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions". By means of the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talent constituting the "Three Interfaces", the DoJ will continue to proactively promote the connectivity of hardware and software in the construction of rule of law in the GBA, and the co-operation of various cities with their respective strengths and the collaboration of different legal systems in the GBA, thereby eventually achieving the goal of "One GBA".

As for the specific measures under the "Three Interfaces", the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, who is the official on the Hong Kong side leading the working group on Guangdong-Hong Kong co-operation on legal and dispute resolution services as well as the working group on Hong Kong-Shenzhen legal co-operation, said that in relation to the interface of mechanisms, the DoJ will not only continue to make good use of the mechanisms

already established with relevant ministries and stakeholders in the GBA, but will also proactively promote the establishment of a high-level GBA standing interface platform jointly with the Supreme People's Court to take forward the practical and research work on judicial and legal matters relating to the GBA, including closely following up on the implementation of various arrangements on mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters. At the same time, the DoJ will also promote the establishment of a GBA legal and dispute resolution services information platform to enable people and enterprises in the three places to obtain comprehensive and accurate information.

On the interface of regulatory frameworks, the DoJ has been taking steps to expand the scope of application of 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" to enable legal and dispute resolution professionals of the area to complement each other for the promotion of market interface. To facilitate the interface of professional services, the department will also promote the formulation of best practices of GBA non-litigation dispute resolution rules to facilitate the interfacing and co-ordinating of different dispute resolution services in the GBA; make preparations for organising GBA mediators training programme in Hong Kong; set up a GBA online dispute resolution platform to facilitate the development of a multifaceted dispute resolution mechanism in the GBA; and continue to actively support Hong Kong mediation organisations to handle commercial mediation cases in the GBA in the form of "specially invited mediation organisations".

As for the interface of talent, the DoJ will also promote new measures, including the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy to gather and nurture more foreign-related legal talent in the GBA; actively promote the establishment of a platform for GBA lawyers to empower the professional development of GBA lawyers more systematically; enable Hong Kong's legal sector to integrate into the construction of the GBA to build a competitive brand of legal services; and at the same time continue to organise various visits and exchanges to promote the flow and foster synergy and development of GBA legal talent.

Mr Lam emphasised that the DoJ will continue to deepen co-operation among stakeholders from different sectors, including establishing standing and effective interface mechanisms with relevant Mainland authorities, and continue to listen to the views of the legal and dispute resolution sectors and other stakeholders, encourage the sectors to open up new opportunities, and at the same time assist them to establish a platform for exchanges and collaboration so as to achieve integrated development through extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, contributing to the country's key strategic development.

The Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is available on the DoJ website at www.doj.gov.hk/en/publications/pdf/gba_action_plan_en.pdf.

