

DSJ commences visit to Beijing

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, called on various authorities and organisations in Beijing on June 13, and met with the senior officials of the ministries and authorities to exchange views on various issues including the construction of rule of law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), and nurturing foreign-related legal talent.

In the morning, Mr Cheung met with Deputy Director of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) Mr Wang Ruihe to introduce to him the Department of Justice's (DoJ) work on promoting the rule of law education including the Constitution, the Basic Law, and the legal mechanism for safeguarding national security, and have in-depth exchanges on matters including the taking forward of the extension of the measures of allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law and to choose Hong Kong as the seat of arbitration to the nine Mainland cities of the GBA. Also joining the meeting were representatives from the working units of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPCSC and the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the NPCSC.

He then 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 brief him on the latest developments of the DoJ's work on various fronts including establishing the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy, developing Hong Kong as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, and promoting the construction of rule of law in the GBA.

Mr Xia fully recognised the important role played by the DoJ of the HKSAR Government in fully and faithfully implementing the "one country, two systems" principle, steadfastly safeguarding national security, enhancing the rule of law in Hong Kong, and protecting the promotion of the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. He remarked that Hong Kong is one of the regions with the highest level of rule of law in the world. The Central Authorities firmly supports Hong Kong to maintain the common law system, to improve the judicial system and legal system of the HKSAR, to establish itself as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region and to develop into a regional intellectual property trading centre, fully leveraging on the strengths of the rule of law to promote the high-quality development of Hong Kong's economy and contribute to the building of China into a great country and the advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Mr Xia stressed that the golden reputation of Hong Kong's rule of law is built and maintained by all members of the judicial and legal sectors in Hong Kong, including judges at different levels of courts. The HKSAR judges at different levels of courts have all along played an important role in upholding the rule of law in Hong Kong, upholding fairness and justice and

safeguarding national security without fear or favour, self-interest or deceit. Their determination to safeguard the fundamental interests of the country and Hong Kong, "one country, two systems" as well as the rule of law in Hong Kong should be fully recognised. The Central Authorities will firmly defend the dignity of rule of law and the judges in Hong Kong, unwaveringly support Hong Kong courts to exercise judicial power independently according to the law, and steadfastly safeguard the lawful rights of Hong Kong judges and judicial officers. They have complete confidence that Hong Kong judicial and legal sectors will stand united, adhere to the principle of the rule of law, and stay committed to their duties, contributing to promoting Hong Kong's development from stability to greater prosperity.

Mr Cheung was very grateful for Mr Xia's recognition and support. He said that the DoJ would continue to fully, faithfully, and resolutely implement the policy of "one country, two systems", to spare no efforts in promoting and consolidating Hong Kong's status as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region through the implementation of various strategic measures, leveraging on Hong Kong's strengths to serve the country's needs.

In the afternoon, Mr Cheung visited the Supreme People's Court (SPC) and met with its Executive Vice-president, Mr Deng Xiuming, and discussed issues such as enhancing the arrangement for service of judicial documents between the two places. Mr Cheung and the Director General of the Research Office of the SPC, Mr Zhou Jiahai, signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing a standing interface platform on judicial and legal co-operation in the GBA as a high-level, regular and institutionalised official channel for communication and interface platform for both sides. The establishment of this platform is also 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 for strengthening the interface of communication mechanism between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Mr Cheung said he hoped this platform would facilitate the work of both sides on promoting the mutual legal assistance in various civil and commercial matters of the two places, and on the interfaces of mechanisms and regulatory frameworks in the GBA.

Accompanied by Deputy Director General of the Research Office of the SPC Ms Si Yanli, he also visited the Smart Court Laboratory to learn more about the latest development of the SPC in promoting the in-depth integration of modern technology with the work of the courts.

Mr Cheung also took the opportunity to visit the Peking University Law School for a meeting with the Dean of Law School, Professor Guo Li, to explore the strengthening of co-operation on nurturing foreign-related legal talent for the country. He also visited the Peking University Law School Law Library.

In addition, after his arrival on June 12, Mr Cheung met with the Director General of the Department of Policies and Regulations of the General Administration of Sport of China, Mr Chu Bo, to enhance understanding of the work of the China Commission of Arbitration for Sport, and explore co-operation opportunities between the two places on promoting sports dispute

resolution. He then called on Vice Chairman of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Mr Yu Jianlong, to discuss various topics, including enhancing co-operation and talents nurturing between the two places in commercial mediation.

Mr Cheung will continue his visit to Beijing on June 14.