

# First International Ombudsman Summit in Hong Kong officially opens to foster meaningful discussions, closer international co-operation and exchange of insights at global level (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The inaugural International Ombudsman Summit 2024 hosted by the Office of The Ombudsman of Hong Kong in the Hong Kong Palace Museum, West Kowloon Cultural District officially opened this morning (December 3).

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki; the Director-General of International Cooperation Department, National Commission of Supervision, Mr Cai Wei; Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Fang Jianming; and the Ombudsman of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China, Mr Jack Chan, officiated at the Summit Opening Ceremony.

In his opening remarks at the ceremony, Mr Chan Kwok-ki said, "Hong Kong has much to offer the world, East and West. Our judiciary is independent, we practice the rule of law, believe in efficient government and a simple and low tax system. We are blessed with modern infrastructure, a world-class financial and professional services sector, and, yes, an internationally respected Office of the Ombudsman."

Mr Cai provided three suggestions in his keynote speech to further enhance exchanges and co-operation within the ombudsman community, firstly, to respect equality and inclusiveness; secondly, to focus on practical co-operation; and thirdly, to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning. Mr Cai's suggestions reiterate the objectives of the Summit.

The Summit has received an overwhelming response from ombudsmen and institutions worldwide and representatives from international bodies. Around 140 overseas and Mainland participants from about 40 countries and regions across six continents, including the First Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute, Mr Mohamed Benalilou, the President of the Asian Ombudsman Association, Mr Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, a multitude of ombudsmen, over 30 consuls, and senior personnel from more than 20 international bodies and local organisations, attended the Summit. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Office of European Union to Hong Kong and Macao, the Badan Arbitrase Nasional Indonesia Arbitration Centre and the Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of

Morocco are among those international bodies. The Office has also arranged live streaming to facilitate global counterparts' participation in the Summit, attracting a large number of online participants. This reflects that the Summit has served its purpose of promoting knowledge exchanges at the global level.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr Jack Chan noted, "The Summit offers the best occasion for bringing together ombudsmen and institutions from around the world, local, the Mainland and international professionals and academia. It also provides the best opportunity for Hong Kong to demonstrate our distinctive advantage of having strong support from the motherland and close connection with the world under 'one country, two systems'.

"The Summit, with the theme 'Ombudsman in a Changing World: Learning from the Past; Preparing for the Future', provides a platform for ombudsmen of different jurisdictions and systems, dispute resolution organisations, professionals and academics from all around the globe to exchange insights and share experiences and best practices. It also enables meaningful discussions about the evolving challenges faced by ombudsman systems and institutions as well as in-depth deliberations on future developments in the field. The Summit features three panel sessions: the first two sessions, namely 'Learning from the Past' and 'Preparing for the Future', finished this morning, while the third session, 'Promoting Mediation and Multi-agencies Collaboration in Handling Public Complaints', will take place in the afternoon."

Following the afternoon panel session, the Closing Ceremony of the Summit and the 35th Anniversary Reception Ceremony will be held in the evening. The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, will officiate at the closing and anniversary ceremonies and witness at the Exchange Ceremony of Memoranda of Understanding on Bilateral Cooperation. Overseas guests, Members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, senior government officials, chairpersons of chambers of commerce, and local professionals and academics will join the reception to celebrate the Office's achievements of the past 35 years.

For more information on the Summit and the anniversary celebration, please visit the Summit website: [www.ios2024.ombudsman.hk](http://www.ios2024.ombudsman.hk)

