

Legal Forum on Interconnectivity and Development held successfully today

As part of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2023, the Legal Forum on Interconnectivity and Development co-organised by the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Department of Justice (DoJ) was held successfully today (November 7), attracting more than 700 judges, academics, government officials, and other legal professionals from over 50 jurisdictions, including countries situated along the Belt and Road route such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Cambodia.

After a keynote address on the milestone of China's legislation on foreign relations delivered by Dr Huang Huikang, a member of the United Nations International Law Commission, the Legal Forum discussed the joint construction of international economic and trade rules, development of dispute resolution for investment disputes and use of mediation in promoting high-quality Belt and Road co-operation, as well as consideration of Hong Kong's role in strengthening legal safeguards under the Belt and Road Initiative.

There were also important discussions on the avenues and legal instruments in addressing external challenges such as unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction as well as discriminatory measures, citing the case brought by Hong Kong, China against the United States (US) in relation to the origin marking requirement imposed on Hong Kong products by the US. There was also exchange on China's foreign relations law and the extraterritorial application of Chinese law, and the role of private international law in promoting high standard of opening up of China.

In delivering the welcome remarks for the event, the Acting Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, Mr Li Yongsheng, said that China is committed to upholding true multilateralism, and safeguarding the international-law-based international order. With the introduction of the Law on Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China and other legislation on foreign affairs, the depth and breadth of China's opening up has expanded substantially, and the country's ability to protect its national interests through the adoption of mentality and methods based on the rule of law has continued to strengthen. The interconnectedness and interaction between national laws and international law have been further enhanced, providing Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to the consolidation and development of new ideas and approaches to international exchanges and co-operation. As Hong Kong embarks on its journey from stability to prosperity and further integrates into China's national development, such national strategies as the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will bring new and major opportunities to Hong Kong to leverage its strengths in the rule of law. Hong Kong will certainly have great potential and achievements in its contribution to the construction of China's foreign-related legal system. The

Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China will continue its staunch support for the Government of the HKSAR to administer its governance in accordance with the law, to respond to external risks and challenges based on the rule of law, in so promoting the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and bolstering the "one country, two systems" principle, which will continue to drive Hong Kong's progress.

When concluding the Legal Forum, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, highlighted that the HKSAR, as an integral part of China, shares China's resolute commitment to upholding the rule of law on a global scale and safeguarding the development interests through legal means. Under the principle of "one country, two systems", the HKSAR's open and independent judicial system and wealth of experienced legal professionals allow the city to serve as a "super connector" between the Mainland and rest of the world, providing an ideal business environment governed by the rule of law. The Secretary of Justice emphasised that the DoJ remains committed to developing the HKSAR as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region to support the Belt and Road Initiative and to contribute to higher-quality and higher-level development of Belt and Road co-operation.

For more details on the Legal Week, please visit the dedicated website www.legalweek.hk.