

# Sixth Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Legal Departments Joint Conference promotes “soft connectivity” of dispute resolution services among three places

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, today (November 18) attended the sixth Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) Legal Departments Joint Conference in Zhongshan to meet with representatives from legal departments of Guangdong and Macao on promoting the flow of legal talent among the three places, taking forward the interface of regulatory frameworks and the establishment of a diversified dispute resolution mechanism in the GBA to provide legal support for the development of a world-class Bay Area.

The conference also made good progress in the area of "soft connectivity" of talent.

Firstly, on the interface of mediation professionals, the three parties agreed to complete the work on the GBA mediators' accreditation as soon as possible and submit the proposed list of GBA mediators to the Joint Conference for confirmation, with a view to jointly announcing a consolidated panel of GBA mediators within this year.

Dr Cheung expressed his gratitude in particular to the Guangdong and Macao authorities for their strong support for the first GBA Mediator Training Course of Hong Kong held earlier by the Department of Justice, as well as their assistance in arranging mediation experts from Guangdong and Macao to share in the Course their practical experiences, enhancing Hong Kong mediators' understanding of the mediation systems in Guangdong and Macao.

On the interface of arbitration professionals, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have considered and endorsed the Working Guidelines on the Panel of GBA Arbitrators and reached consensus on the detailed arrangements for the mechanism of setting up a panel of arbitrators. The three places will commence their respective nominations of local arbitrators and selection procedures next year, endeavouring to announce the first batch of GBA arbitrators within next year.

Dr Cheung said, "Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will announce a consolidated panel of GBA mediators and endorse the Working Guidelines on the Panel of GBA Arbitrators, both of which are important deliverables achieved by the three places in jointly taking forward the interfaces of regulatory frameworks and talent in the GBA, thereby facilitating the 'soft connectivity' of the non-litigation dispute resolution mechanism in the GBA."

Regarding the practice of GBA lawyers, Dr Cheung reflected at the meeting that the Hong Kong legal sector looks forward to participating in more practical training and explore further expansion of the scope of practice of GBA lawyers. He stressed that the Department of Justice is positively responding to the suggestions of the sector and will strive to establish a dedicated platform for GBA lawyers as soon as possible. The Department will also continue to support the sector in deepening professional co-operation with Guangdong and Macao counterparts and to support the sustainable development of GBA lawyers, contributing to the construction of foreign-related rule of law of the country.

On nurturing talent, Dr Cheung said that the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy, formally launched in early November, will proactively commence capacity-building programmes and conduct training projects, and also co-ordinate and collaborate with relevant ministries and institutions in the GBA to nurture legal talent.

Dr Cheung said that the full co-operation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao under the Joint Conference has yielded fruitful results, bringing forth stronger collaboration and synergistic development among the legal sectors of the three places, and promoting the development of the rule of law in the GBA.

This Joint Conference was hosted by the Director-General of the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province, Mr Chen Xudong, and attended by the Secretary for Administration and Justice of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government, Mr Cheong Weng Chon, and other representatives.