

Speech by SJ at thematic forum on policy co-ordination of second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, at the thematic forum on policy co-ordination of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing this morning (April 25):

Your excellency, ladies and gentlemen,

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) straddles different borders, cultures and legal systems. It reflects the design of the new type of international relations, featuring win-win co-operation. It creates a new globalism, and advocates harmony, multilateralism and inclusiveness. It resonates with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reinforces each other.

A policy angle that I would like to talk about is the rule of law and one facet of it is dispute resolution. The number of co-operation agreements and memorandums of understanding that have been signed under the BRI is 176 and the number is still growing. Yet, the implementation may create differences leading to conflicts and disputes. It is of paramount importance that a dispute avoidance and resolution system which echoes the spirit of the initiative be developed to ensure that the common cause of this new international co-operation for development remains the priority.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is keen to collaborate and develop such a system. Hong Kong is privileged to have a sound and robust legal system, coupled with up-to-date and fair arbitration and mediation laws and practice that have earned international recognition.

To address the characteristics of Belt and Road-related transaction disputes, we propose two points for consideration.

Firstly, thought should be given as to whether a body established through collaboration, based on creditability and sensitive to cultural diversity, be set up.

Secondly, consideration should also be given to look at how to enhance the system of dispute resolution and to be innovative so as to provide an inclusive and affordable mechanism that leads to a win-win solution.

Under the principle of shared growth through discussion and collaboration, active consideration may be given to the provision of

diversified dispute resolution services for Belt and Road countries.

Hong Kong hopes to contribute to the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, and facilitate the communication and collaboration of different countries, thereby ushering in an all-win situation hand in hand, and contributing to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16 which promotes the rule of law, peace, justice and strong institutions. Thank you very much.

