

UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit marks opening of Hong Kong Legal Week 2023 (with photos)

The five-day Hong Kong Legal Week 2023, an annual flagship event of the legal sector and the Department of Justice (DoJ), themed "Onward & Forward: Connecting the World" began today (November 6). During its various conferences and forums, prominent legal and dispute resolution experts and academics from around the world are brought together to discuss a wide range of important topics, including international legal co-operation, mediation, arbitration, and opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the Belt and Road Initiative. There are over 600 registrations for each day from over 50 jurisdictions, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Middle East, Central Asia, South America, Africa and Pacific Island States.

This morning, the event's opening was marked by the 5th UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit – Judicial Conference, which was one of the highlights of the week. Guest speakers from different places such as Australia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand shared their insights on a variety of topics on international trade law. Jointly held by the DoJ and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit is a biennial flagship event consisting of two parts – the Judicial Conference and the Judicial Roundtable to be held tomorrow (November 7), signifying Hong Kong's status as an international legal, deal-making and dispute resolution services centre. Around 50 judges and officials in this region attended the Judicial Summit in person. This is the first time simultaneous interpretation in the language of Timor-Leste was provided with the support of the Asian Development Bank, showcasing the importance of this capacity-building event for participants from the region.

In his welcome remarks, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, said that Hong Kong has distinctive advantages of enjoying strong support from the motherland while being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems". Having direct access to the huge Mainland market and strong international connectivity at the same time, Hong Kong is determined to serve as a "super connector" and a bridge linking the Mainland and the rest of the world. He also pointed out that in line with 'The Chief Executive's Policy Address 2023', the DoJ will set up a dedicated office and an expert group within next year to take forward the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy. Leveraging Hong Kong's bilingual common law system and international status, the Academy will promote exchanges among legal professionals, judges and government officials in the Asia-Pacific region as well as around the world. The Academy will also provide training for talent in the practice of foreign-related legal affairs for the country, and nurture legal talent conversant with international law,

common law, civil law, and the country's legal system.

The Secretary of UNCITRAL, Ms Anna Joubin-Bret, and the Acting 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 (HKSAR), Mr Li Yongsheng, gave their welcome remarks as well. The closing remarks will be delivered by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan.

Other conferences and seminars of the Hong Kong Legal Week include the Legal Forum on Interconnectivity and Development co-organised by the DoJ and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR tomorrow (November 7); the 6th Shanghai-Hong Kong Commercial Mediation Forum, fireside chat on arbitration issues around the globe, experience sharing of the practice of arbitration funding in major arbitral jurisdictions and the annual Hong Kong Mediation Lecture 2023 under the theme "New Domains in Mediation and Arbitration" on Wednesday (November 8). On Thursday morning (November 9), the Gateway to the Opportunities in the GBA, co-organised with the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province and the Office of the Secretary for Administration and Justice of Macao, will discuss advancing the legal practice in the GBA and a mock court case will be conducted according to the different modes of trial in the three places. The GBA Young Lawyers Forum will be jointly held by the DoJ and the Law Society of Hong Kong in the afternoon. The Rule of Law for the Future will be held on Friday (November 10) as the finale of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2023. The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee; Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR Mr Liu Guangyuan; and the Secretary for Justice will speak at the event, and the Secretary for Justice will attend a special dialogue session to answer questions and clarify misunderstandings about the Hong Kong National Security Law.

This year, exhibition booths dedicated to the promotion of the legal services in Hong Kong, Macao and the nine Mainland cities in the GBA will be set up for the first time during the Hong Kong Legal Week outside the main event venue. Representatives from the cities will introduce the new developments and opportunities of the legal services in the GBA and answer participants' enquiries.

For more details on the Legal Week, please visit the dedicated website www.legalweek.hk. The event is broadcast live on the dedicated website and at webcast.info.gov.hk.

