



International Conference of Legal Regulators 2025

New Ways to Regulate in a Changing World?





THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF HONG KONG
香港律師會

**International Conference of
Legal Regulators 2025**

**New Ways to Regulate
in a Changing World?**

The Good Governance Risk

Mr. Roden Tong

President of The Law Society of Hong Kong

Trusted International Legal and Financial Hub



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Hong Kong's Ranking

**Global Financial Centres Index
by Z/Yen**



Global

(2 points difference with
New York; 1 point difference
with London)

Asia Pacific



**World Talent Ranking 2025 by
The International Institute for
Management Development**



**World Justice Project's Global
Rule of Law Index 2024**



(out of 142 Countries)

Corruption Perceptions Index



(Top 10)

The Law Society of Hong Kong



- ❖ Statutory self-regulatory professional association for solicitors in Hong Kong, incorporated in 1907.



The Law Society of Hong Kong

Aims

- ❖ To support and protect the character, status and interests of solicitors in Hong Kong
- ❖ To promote good standards of practice and maintain ethical practice
- ❖ To ensure compliance by solicitors with relevant laws, codes, regulations and practice directions
- ❖ To develop and maintain the work of solicitors in all areas of the law, legal practice and procedures
- ❖ To ensure the view of solicitors is accurately and purposefully communicated
- ❖ To provide services to its members
- ❖ To consider all questions affecting the interests of the profession, and to represent the profession to procure changes of law or practice

Functions

- ❖ Issue annual practising certificates and certificates of registration to Hong Kong solicitors, foreign lawyers and foreign law firms
- ❖ Investigate and refer allegations of professional misconduct to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal
- ❖ Arrange and maintain a compulsory Professional Indemnity Scheme
- ❖ Intervene in a solicitor's practice in cases of dishonesty, undue delay, bankruptcy or other causes
- ❖ Establish rules for the conduct and education of solicitors, foreign lawyers and trainee solicitors

Challenges

- ❖ Complaint free of charge → system highly accessible → heavy case volume
- ❖ >75% of 1,064 complaints in 2024 were non-professional misconduct complaints
- ❖ Increase in workload and resource pressure



Reform Initiatives

- ❖ Simplify procedures
- ❖ Accelerate respondents' turnaround time



Standing Committees



Compliance

- ❑ Deals with the regulatory and administrative aspects of the profession

External Affairs

- ❑ Deals with public policy issues and manages the Society's relationships with the legal profession (local, Greater China and international), media and communities

Member Services

- ❑ Formulates strategies that enhance members' benefits and interests

Policy & Resources

- ❑ Responsible for policy co-ordination, the management of the Society's resources and budget

Practitioners Affairs

- ❑ Deals with legal policy affecting the profession, good practice, and law reform

Standards & Development

- ❑ Sets and maintains standards of work and ethical practice through practice rules and guidelines, and oversees the CPD and Risk Management Education programmes

Solicitors in Hong Kong



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Solicitors	Number
Members	13,504
Members (with practising certificates)	11,845
Trainee solicitors	883
Registered foreign lawyers	1,595
Solicitor Advocates	106

Law Firms	Number
Hong Kong law firms	925
Registered foreign law firms	82
Representative offices of Hong Kong law firms in the Mainland	63

Overseas Lawyers Qualification Examination (OLQE)

- ❖ Qualified lawyers from overseas jurisdictions to gain admission as solicitors in Hong Kong
- ❖ Record-high application number in 2025 OLQE - 440 applications (compared to 414 applications in 2024)

Professional Indemnity Scheme (“PIS”)



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- ❖ Statutory scheme to provide indemnity against loss in connection with his/her legal practices
- ❖ Compulsory
- ❖ Purpose: protect public and maintain public trust and confidence
- ❖ Demonstration of the regime by shouldering the profession's ability and readiness to uphold the credibility and accountability for negligent practice

Professional Indemnity Scheme (“PIS”)



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- ❖ As of 30 September 2024, the indemnity fund maintains reserves of approx. HK\$4.8 billion
- ❖ Indemnity limit of the PIS
 - 1994: increased from HK\$5 million □ HK\$10 million
 - 2019: further increased to HK\$20 million
- ❖ Free run-off cover after retirement
- ❖ For the 2024/25 indemnity year, the total net contribution (net of 66.67% reduction) accounted for 0.49% of the total gross fee income of HK law firms



Hong Kong's Regulatory Framework: “One Country, Two Systems”

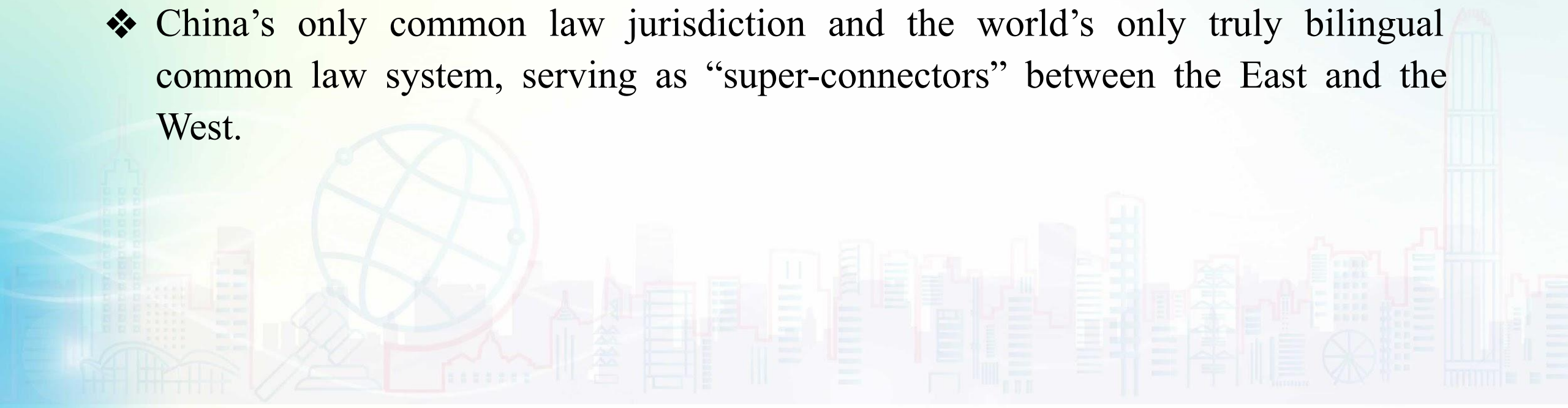




“One Country, Two Systems”

Constitutional Framework

- ❖ “One Country, Two Systems” provides Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy and a bilingual common law legal system.
- ❖ China’s only common law jurisdiction and the world’s only truly bilingual common law system, serving as “super-connectors” between the East and the West.



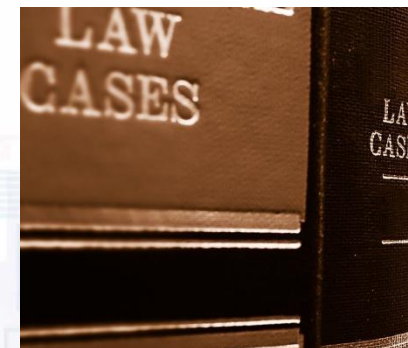
Hong Kong's Unique Advantages

One Country, Two Systems



**Only Common Law
Jurisdiction in the Country**

**Only English-Chinese Bilingual
Common Law Jurisdiction
in the World**





Good Governance - Understanding Regulatory Integrity





Good Governance – Understanding Regulatory Integrity

Meaning of Regulatory Integrity

- ❖ Decision-making free from undue influence, bias, or pressure.
- ❖ **NOT** absolute isolation.

Importance for Good Governance

- ❖ Crucial for regulatory legitimacy, maintaining public confidence and supporting the rule of law.
- ❖ Regulators must balance independence with accountability, transparency, and stakeholder engagement for effective governance.



Commitment to Regulatory Integrity





Commitment to Regulatory Integrity

Separation from the Executive Authorities

- ❖ Operates separately from the executive branch of the Government

Apolitical stance

- ❖ Always adheres to its apolitical position and perform duties strictly from a legal perspective to uphold the rule of law.

Multi-Tiered Disciplinary System

- ❖ The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal operates externally with judicial review, ensuring fairness and transparency in enforcement.

Commitment to Regulatory Integrity

Collective decision-making

- ❖ Collective decision by the Council and committees
- ❖ Dual responsibility: (1) supporting members' development and interests while (2) regulating the profession to uphold standards and protect the public.
- ❖ Challenges: (1) misconceptions that the Law Society of Hong Kong inclined to side with the professional members and (2) diverse opinion from the profession.
- ❖ In the face of diverse members, the Law Society of Hong Kong remains dedicated to regulate the profession fairly, impartially, and in accordance with the law.



Multi-Tiered Disciplinary System





Multi-Tiered Disciplinary System

Collective Referral to Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel

- ❖ Decision by the Standing Committee on Compliance composed of 19 members currently.

Composition of Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel

- ❖ Appointed by the Chief Judge : 55 Practising Solicitor and Foreign Lawyer & 50 lay members
- ❖ Members of the Council of the Law Society of Hong Kong not eligible
- ❖ Independent from the Law Society of Hong Kong

Review Process

- ❖ Decisions are subject to review by the courts
- ❖ Judicial independence under Basic Law
- ❖ The Chief Judge of the Judiciary may submit the matter to the Tribunal.



Regulatory Integrity and Public Engagement





Regulatory Integrity and Public Engagement

Foundation of Public Trust

- ❖ Regulatory integrity is the foundation of public trust in any regulatory body.
- ❖ Regulatory integrity could only exist if the public believe it does.





Regulatory Integrity and Public Engagement

Public Legal Awareness

- ❖ Work with the Judiciary, the Department of Justice, the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong and other stakeholders on matters such as legal education, access to justice, law-making and the promotion of Hong Kong.
- ❖ Partnership with the Government and media promotes public understanding of the law through programs like the radio show “Nitty Gritty on Law”.





Regulatory Integrity and Public Engagement

Community Engagement Commitment

- ❖ Initiatives focus on enhancing public trust in the legal profession.





Commitment to Good Governance



Commitment to Good Governance

Integrity of Purpose

- ❖ Ensures regulatory independence serves the public interest with unwavering commitment and ethical standards.

Transparency of Process

- ❖ Makes independence demonstrable by maintaining clear, open processes that build public trust.

Resilience in Practice

- ❖ Enables governance frameworks to withstand external pressures through accountability and foresight.



Final Thoughts



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Regulatory Integrity and Good Governance

- ❖ The ability to make decisions free from undue influence, bias, or pressure.

Collaboration Importance and Public Engagement

- ❖ Effective collaboration to empower the public to confidently assess whether the regulators are living up to the standards the public expect.

Commitment to Values

- ❖ Commitment to rule of law, public confidence, and ethical governance.

THANK YOU

