

Committees & Working Parties Reporting Directly to the Council



THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF HONG KONG
香港律師會

2018

BELT AND ROAD COMMITTEE (“BRC”)

The Belt and Road Initiative (“the Initiative”) was launched by the Chinese government in 2013, which aimed to promote economic cooperation among more than 65 countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes. Now the Initiative embraces all countries anywhere that subscribe to the five principles of connectivity espoused under the Initiative.

The BRC was convened at the end of 2015 to explore opportunities for members arising from the Initiative. The BRC set up four Subgroups in March 2016 to take charge of different areas of its work, namely: (1) to update the Committee on government policy on the Initiative; (2) to reach out to overseas lawyers associations covered by the Initiative; (3) to consider possible initiatives to harmonise trade and business law; and (4) to organise joint conferences or events with overseas lawyers associations.

2nd Belt and Road Conference

The Law Society’s *2nd Belt and Road Conference* entitled “The ABC to Building a Smart Belt and Road: Law and Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and Cloud” was successfully held on 28 September at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Featuring the development and application of Artificial Intelligence (“A.I.”) in the legal sector and its impact on multijurisdictional transactions brought by the Belt and Road Initiative, the Conference was well-attended by over 650 participants along the Belt and Road.

The Hon Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam, GBM, GBS; Mr. Xie Feng, Commissioner of Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China in the HKSAR; The Hon Secretary for Justice Teresa Cheng, GBS, SC, JP; and Mr. Wang Zhenmin, then-Director-General of the Department of Law of the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the HKSAR, were invited as officiating guests.

The Conference included three streams of nine concurrent breakout sessions on A.I., Blockchain and Cloud. Thought-provoking discussions were led by eminent speakers on various topics such as ethical issues on A.I., future of cross-border transactions with fintech and smart contracts, as well as the rise of cloud and machine learning of law and regulations. Debates among panel speakers on automation versus legal profession, the potential risks of blockchain applications, and challenging issues on data privacy and cyber-security stimulated inspiring interactions among participants.

The Law Society also took the opportunity to initiate the signing of “LawTech Alliance” with 34 lawyers associations from 17 jurisdictions (including Hong Kong) along the Belt and Road, which

all have the common goal of ensuring that the profession will take advantage of legal tech in an ethical, professional and responsible manner.

With the spirit of building a smart Belt and Road among various jurisdictions, The Law Society conducted a survey on the use of A.I. in the legal market, aiming to reach out to its members and lawyers associations around the world that are interested in sharing views on the future use of technologies within the legal profession.

The Organising Committee would like to express its sincere gratitude to the sponsors, supporting organisations, speakers, moderators, guests and fellow legal practitioners from all over the world for gracing us with their support and participation.

Other Belt and Road activities

The Law Society actively participated in the Initiative-related events in 2018. Furthermore, The Law Society grasped the golden opportunities in reaching out and promoting the Hong Kong legal system and legal profession to other legal professional bodies in countries covered by the Initiative.

These events include:

Date	Event Name	Location
3 February	Seminar on “Strategies and Opportunities under the Belt and Road Initiative – Leveraging Hong Kong’s Advantages, Meeting the Country’s Needs” by the HKSAR Government and the Belt and Road General Chamber of Commerce	Beijing
17 April	Inauguration Ceremony of the Belt and Road General Chamber of Commerce	Hong Kong
11 May	Belt and Road Forum on Commercial Legal Environment	Xi’an
27 June	Hong Kong Trade Development Council (“HKTDC”) Belt and Road Global Forum Roundtable	Hong Kong
28 June	HKTDC Belt and Road Summit	Hong Kong
15 October	Forum-cum-Dialogue on “Belt and Road Initiative: Infrastructure Financing” by the Hong Kong Institute of Bankers and Asia-Pacific Structured Finance Association	Hong Kong
12 December	“Belt and Road: Hong Kong – IN” Forum cum Inauguration of the Belt and Road Cross-Professional Advancement Programme by the HKSAR Government	Hong Kong
14 December	Inauguration Ceremony of “Mainland China-Hong Kong Belt & Road Business and Professional Services Council” cum Luncheon by the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce of Hong Kong	Hong Kong

The Law Society also set up a panel of law firms under the HKTDC Belt and Road Portal to provide one-to-one free investment related legal advisory services to businesses.

Looking forward, The Law Society will continue our effort in exploring ways to foster collaboration with lawyers associations around the world in order to maximise the opportunities arising from the Belt and Road Initiative for our members.

HONOURS COMMITTEE

The Committee met on one occasion. In accordance with the Nomination Guidelines, the Committee considered candidates for admission to The Law Society's Roll of Honour and for admission as an Honorary Member of The Law Society.

At the 2018 Annual General Meeting of The Law Society held in May, upon recommendation of the Honours Committee, the Council admitted Past President Ip Shing Hing, Mr. Vincent Liang and Mr Peter Sit to the Roll of Honour and Professor Michael Wilkinson as an Honorary Member of The Law Society.

WORKING GROUP ON YSG

The Working Party was convened in January to conduct an overall review of the composition, objectives and terms of reference of the Young Solicitors' Group ("YSG") and how YSG's work fits in with the work of The Law Society as a whole; and to make recommendations to the Council.

The Working Party met on a total of five occasions this year, including two consultation meetings with the YSG and the Standing Committee on Member Services on 3 May and 15 June respectively. In addition, the Chair of the Working Party also met with the Secretariat on 18 October to obtain their views.

In the review process, the Working Party has reviewed as much information and views as were provided to it by various stakeholders, as well as relevant past discussion records concerning The Law Society's policies on the establishment, objectives, work and operation of the YSG and the use of resources by the YSG.

The Working Party expects to complete its task and make recommendations to the Council by early 2019.

WORKING PARTY ON ELECTION SYSTEM

The Council set up a working party in June to identify any inadequacies of the Council election system that may compromise its integrity and to recommend practical ways to address those inadequacies for consideration by the Council. The Working Party on Election System held two meetings in July and August respectively and exchanged views through email circulations. The Working Party reviewed the existing system and the current forms adopted for election of Council Members and sought views from the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data on the proposed amendments to the forms with respect to some personal data issues. The Working Party continued to work on the proposed amendments to the election forms which were expected to be ready for submission to Council for consideration in the first quarter of 2019 in time for use at the 2019 Annual General Meeting where appropriate.