



THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF HONG KONG
香港律師會

Standing Committee on External Affairs

2021

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



The Standing Committee on External Affairs (“SCEA”) oversees public promotion of the Law Society and its objectives. It supports the fostering of amicable relationships between the Law Society and various external parties, including institutions in the Mainland and Hong Kong, international legal associations, and the general public of Hong Kong. The SCEA is supported and works closely with its three committees, namely, the Community Relations Committee, the International Legal Affairs Committee and the Legal “Fact Check” Committee.

Despite the halt of large-scale face-to-face events due to the global pandemic, this has not dampened the SCEA’s will in organising events under innovative and alternate modes. Under the growing influence of globalisation and the multitude of opportunities posed for the legal industry, it is paramount for the Law Society to actively reach out to the global legal community to facilitate professional collaborations with legal practitioners overseas and from a neutral perspective promote and inform the global community of the practice and respect for the rule of law in Hong Kong. Activities held by the SCEA have been directed towards such objectives.

Locally, the Law Society has been a key influencer in promoting legal awareness and heightening public legal knowledge. The Law Society continues to support and arrange many seminars to non-governmental, non-profitable organisations and encourages its members to support pro-bono activities.

Regarding SCEA membership movements during the year, in January, Ms. Ann Yeung joined as a member. In March, Ms. Maggie Tsui and Mr. James Wong retired. Then Council Member Mr. Denis Brock retired from Chairmanship in September and remained as a member. Council Member Ms. Doreen Kong retired from Vice-Chairmanship and the SCEA in October. In the same month, Vice-President Mr. Roden Tong and Council Member Mr. Ronald Sum joined the SCEA as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Council Member Ms. Janet Pang also retired from the SCEA, while Council Members Mr. Jimmy Chan and Mr. Tom Fu joined as members. In November, Mr. Pierre Chan resigned from the SCEA.

Below are highlights of the events and activities coordinated by the SCEA during the year:

Ceremonial Opening of Legal Year 2021 in Hong Kong

The Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year 2021 in Hong Kong was held on 11 January. Face-to-face discussion was not possible owing to the public health situation. The Law Society and the Hong Kong Bar Association jointly organised a virtual side programme for the overseas delegates, including the Presidents’ Roundtable and Leadership Insights Session on 12 and 13 January respectively.

The theme of the Presidents’ Roundtable was “Challenges and opportunities for the legal profession in the midst of COVID-19”. 58 head delegates from 50 overseas lawyers associations and international legal organisations coming from 26 jurisdictions joined the event. They actively exchanged ideas on what their respective bar associations and law societies have done to lead their members to play their parts in defending the rule of law and facilitating access to justice amid the pandemic.

At the Leadership Insights Session, we were honoured to have Mr. Nicholas Kwan, Director of Research of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, as the keynote speaker who shared his insights on the promising overview of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (“RCEP”) and the Greater Bay Area, and Hong Kong’s position under these two initiatives. Four concurrent

breakout sessions featuring RCEP, National Security Law, Greater Bay Area Development and LawTech were also held in a free-discussion format to allow fruitful exchange among the participants on these topics of growing significance to the legal profession. The event was well-attended by over 120 participants coming from 25 jurisdictions.

Law Week 30th Anniversary

The Law Society has been organising the *Law Week* since 1991, which embodies the aspiration of The Law Society to provide fuller legal knowledge and to promote legal services in the community.

Marking its 30th anniversary, Law Week 2021 kicked off on 19 November at an Opening Ceremony themed “Serving the Public Good for Three Decades”. Distinguished guests, notably including the Chief Executive, Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal and the Secretary for Justice, joined the President to officiate at the ceremony. The event was also graced by solicitors on the Roll of Honour, Past Presidents and Council Members and was livestreamed on Facebook to the general public. To celebrate this memorable occasion, the legal time capsule created in the Law Week Opening Ceremony back in 1997 was opened after 24 years of preservation. The legal time capsule is a testament to the robust legal system in Hong Kong, featuring items that represent the milestones of the legal systems in Hong Kong as well as Macao.

Following the Opening Ceremony, four sessions of free legal community talks were held at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre on a number of topics, namely personal injury and compensation, family law, wills and estates and building management. The community talks were available onsite and livecast online for citizens to interact with the volunteer solicitor speakers regarding their legal queries.

Law Society Council Members and Law Week Organising Committee members were invited to participate in filming almost 30 legal tips videos to help citizens better understand their legal rights. There was also a five-episode mini-drama series which adopted the concept of time travel to take the audience through different eras to promote legal knowledge. All videos were available at the Law Week Facebook Page, Instagram and YouTube channel.

The Law Society would like to express its sincere thanks for the support from the Legal Aid Department in organising this 30th anniversary programme.

Teen Talk 10th Anniversary

Targeting the younger generation, the Law Society has been organising Teen Talk in the past decade to provide an interactive learning platform to enhance social awareness and interest in law among adolescents. Over the years, over 10,000 local students from more than 470 schools have participated in Teen Talk.

Teen Talk celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2020 and organised interactive online activities including the “Legal Knowledge Smart Challenge Online”, “Teen Talk 10th Anniversary & Law Week Opening Ceremony and Basic Law Talk”. Continuing its 10th Anniversary celebration, the “2021 Law & Enforcement Student Tours”, which was unprecedentedly arranged with seven Disciplinary Services Departments, was held in 2021 with over 30 sessions of guided visits to the otherwise out-of-bounds facilities of various departments. Students actively participated in

the visits and raised a lot of questions, while our team of caring solicitor facilitators shared their legal knowledge to answer students' questions.

Disciplinary Departments	Visited Facilities
Correctional Services Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ma Hang Prison
Customs and Excise Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs and Excise Department – Hong Kong International Airport • Customs Canine Force • Customs Marine Base
Fire Services Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diving Base (Stonecutters Island) • Fire and Ambulance Services Academy
Government Flying Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Flying Service Headquarters
Hong Kong Police Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport Security Unit • Counter Terrorism Response Unit • Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau and Family Conflict and Sexual Violence Policy Unit • Marine Headquarters • Police Dog Unit Headquarters • Police Public Relations Branch • Police Tactical Unit
Immigration Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre & Institute of Training and Development, Immigration Service (Tuen Mun) • Immigration Tower
Independent Commission Against Corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICAC Headquarters Building

Apart from the visits, students also took part in the Teen Talk 10th Anniversary Final Challenge by submitting a piece of written reflection on the topic “My musings on Teen Talk 2020”. Five best-performing students having demonstrated impressive hard work and touching sharing were awarded the invaluable opportunity to join a flying experience at the Government Flying Service. The aforesaid Teen Talk events of the year attracted more than 4,800 student participants.

The Law Society would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the seven Disciplinary Services Departments for their great support in organising Teen Talk.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Community Relations Committee (“CRC”) is responsible for fostering relations between The Law Society and various sectors and organisations in the local community, with a view to providing suitable platforms for solicitors to provide community services and to promote legal awareness to the community. CRC is also tasked to organise talks and seminars to the general public including NGOs on legal topic of interest to the community, and mentorship programmes for schools to promote students' knowledge about the legal profession. CRC also strives to project the corporate image of The Law Society as a Caring Organisation.

The membership of CRC underwent a few changes. One member retired and two members resigned from the committee. CRC is now comprised of 17 members.

Over the past two years or so, to address public health issues during the pandemic, it has become the new normal for events to be conducted online or/and in hybrid format. CRC has also adapted to this new mode of social interaction in organising its events. In times when the pandemic situation eased off, some activities were held in person, with anti-pandemic measures suitably in place. CRC has continued its work to serve different sectors of the community both physically and through online channels. Below are highlights of its work:

Abide by the Law Education

The Sub-Committee for Abide by the Law Education is newly established under CRC with the aim to promote the importance and message of abiding by the law to youngsters. In 2021, the sub-committee jointly organised a Legal Forum with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups ("HKFYG") on 9 July at the HKFYG Auditorium. Themed "Be an Upright Citizen", the forum was physically attended by 317 secondary and university students.

The half-day forum consisted of two sessions, namely "Introduction to the Hong Kong legal system and the Rule of Law" and "Internet-related crimes". Distinguished legal professionals were invited to join as speakers to introduce the legal system in Hong Kong, the Rule of Law and the role of the Department of Justice. Professional legal practitioners conducted an in-depth discussion on Internet-related crimes and shared interesting cases from civil, criminal and personal privacy perspectives.

Community Talks and Services

The Law Society receives invitations from external organisations from time to time to organise community talks. The sub-committee is responsible for reviewing the invitations and recruiting volunteer solicitors to deliver the talks. In 2021, a total of 18 community talks were held. Due to the unstable situation of Covid-19, most community talks were held in hybrid format.

The sub-committee also organises social services regularly to lead a team of solicitors to serve different social groups, including the elderly, low-income families and ethnic minorities. Considering that the elderly and children were among the more vulnerable groups during the pandemic, community service to elderly and children centres was suspended in 2021. To show love and care to the community, the sub-committee gave away goody bags to attendees of other community talks.

Law and New Generation Programme and School Talks

Since 2013, as a regular programme aiming to enrich secondary school students' legal knowledge, qualified solicitors have been recruited as speakers to deliver talks to students on different topics. Apart from talks for secondary students, the sub-committee also offers talks to school principals, teachers and administrators, as well as government organisations, to share knowledge on legal matters in school work context.

To keep up with the times, a new topic “Be a Smart Online Shopper” is added for schools’ choice. 39 school talks were held in 2021. Due to the unstable situation of Covid-19, most school talks were held in hybrid format.

At the end of the year, a certificate of appreciation was presented to speakers as a recognition of their contribution.

Sing Tao “Legal Mailbox”

CRC is also responsible for the important task of coordinating contribution of articles from Law Society members for publication in the Sing Tao column “Legal Mailbox” every Monday. The articles cover a wide range of everyday-life legal issues, promoting general legal knowledge to the public.

The sub-committee is responsible for recruiting writers, reviewing submitted articles to ensure relevancy of the subject matter and accuracy of the factual information cited by the authors, and coordinating the publication. At the end of each year, writers who have contributed articles would receive a certificate as a token of appreciation.

In 2021, 43 articles were published. Legal topics related to the pandemic were also covered.

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The International Legal Affairs Committee (“ILAC”) is a Committee established under the SCEA and is responsible for coordinating activities in the international arena so as to develop, maintain and establish relations with bar associations, law societies and other law-related organisations overseas for the purpose of promoting The Law Society as a professional association for solicitors in Hong Kong.

Although the pandemic has brought international travel to a near halt, it has not in any way impeded The Law Society’s effort in staying connected with our overseas counterparts. Throughout the year, The Law Society actively participated in international conferences/seminars and reached out to other legal professional bodies around the world.

Joint Webinar Series with Overseas Lawyers Associations

To foster collaboration and strengthen exchanges between The Law Society and overseas lawyers associations amidst the pandemic, a series of joint webinars covering a wide spectrum of topics were successfully held from March to December with the overseas counterparts that previously entered into Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with The Law Society. Details are as follows:

	Date	Event
1	10 March	<u>Joint Webinar with Daini Tokyo Bar Association</u> The unique legal systems and the latest development of the legal profession during the pandemic in the two jurisdictions were shared at the joint webinar, attracting over 90 participants from Hong Kong and Japan. On the occasion, an MOU was signed between The Law Society and Daini Tokyo Bar Association to foster professional cooperation between members of the two organisations.
2	27 July	<u>Joint Webinar with The Law Society of England and Wales</u> To cope with the latest issues of in the global legal profession, the joint webinar focused on the developments in cross-border dispute resolution as well as the challenges and solutions to gender inequality for Women in Law. It was well-received by more than 120 participants.
3	1 September	<u>Joint Webinar with The German Federal Bar</u> LegalTech is becoming increasingly important in the legal profession, especially when the pandemic continues to disrupt certain legal services. Against this background, the statutory basis of LegalTech Law and the LegalTech markets in Hong Kong and Germany were thoroughly examined in this joint webinar, which attracted over 100 legal practitioners from both jurisdictions.
4	1 December	<u>Joint Webinar with Hyogo-Ken Bar Association</u> To help participants gain a better understanding of the debt recovery process in Hong Kong and Japan, the procedure and enforcement of debt recovery from the perspectives of debtor and creditor under the law and practice of each jurisdiction were introduced at the joint webinar. It was well-attended by over 80 members from both associations.
5	10 December	<u>Joint Webinar with The Malaysian Bar</u> As Islamic finance gains widespread recognition around the world, the opportunities and benefits brought about by the development of Islamic finance, green sukuk and green bonds in Hong Kong and Malaysia were discussed at this joint webinar, which attracted around 70 registrations from the two jurisdictions.

AEA-EAL Webinar on Mediation

Bearing the theme “Mediation: Effective Tool for Commercial Disputes, Singapore Convention”, a webinar on mediation was successfully held by the European Association of Lawyers (“AEA-EAL”) on 28 January. The webinar attracted over 120 overseas participants from 15 jurisdictions.

On behalf of The Law Society, then-President Melissa Pang joined the speaker panel to discuss the importance of mediation in cross-border dispute resolution in various jurisdictions, particularly where the Singapore Convention on Mediation had come into force. As the only

speaker from Asia and as a mediator herself, then-President also took this opportunity to share her valuable views and experience on the mediation work in Hong Kong and to showcase Hong Kong as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services.

Opening Ceremony & Inaugural Webinar of the Constitutional & Rule of Law Webinar Series

The Constitutional & Rule of Law Webinar Series (“the Series”) themed “Formation & Succession in Parliamentary Governments: The Role of the Legislature, Executive & Judiciary” was jointly organised by LAWASIA, Commonwealth Lawyers Association, Law Council of Australia and the South Pacific Lawyers Association from 18 February to 11 March.

Then-President Melissa Pang was one of the distinguished speakers in the Series’ Opening Ceremony and inaugural webinar entitled “Rule of Law in Governance: Public Sector Corruption” on 18 February. Taking this opportunity, she introduced the anti-corruption regime in Hong Kong and shared the important factors behind Hong Kong’s success in the anti-corruption work, including but not limited to the rule of law, anti-corruption laws and Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption.

AIJA Women Network Webinar

Representing The Law Society, then-President Melissa Pang attended the International Association of Young Lawyers (“AIJA”) Women Network Webinar themed “Progressing towards partnership” on 31 March. As the only speaker from Asia, she shared with the webinar participants her own experience and views on the structural and societal barriers to women’s progression in the legal sector, and how she overcame them. The webinar attracted over 120 overseas participants from different regions across the world.

Rule of Law Webathon

Three of the major international legal organisations, namely American Bar Association (“ABA”), AIJA and Union Internationale des Avocats (“UIA”), have joined forces to launch the first 24-hour Webathon in defence of the rule of law from 4 to 5 May, with 12 panels addressing different aspects of the challenges faced by the rule of law.

On behalf of The Law Society, then-President Melissa Pang joined Panel 2 entitled “Gender Equality and the Rule of Law: Two Sides of the Same Coin” with other prominent female leaders from different jurisdictions to talk about gender equality and the rule of law from the Hong Kong perspective. Apart from introducing the work on gender equality in Hong Kong including the Equal Opportunities Commission, Women’s Commission, and the passage of the Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Bill 2020 in the Legislative Council, then-President also showcased The Law Society’s efforts in promoting and maintaining diversity and inclusivity in the legal profession. The session attracted over 130 overseas participants from around the world.

UIA Webinar for Bar Leaders

On 7 July, Vice-President Amirali Nasir attended the UIA Webinar for Bar Leaders entitled “The future of the legal profession in the age of the Artificial Intelligence” on behalf of The Law

Society. In the capacity of Chair of InnoTech Committee, in addition to sharing his thoughts on the latest development and ethics of applying artificial intelligence in the legal profession, the Vice-President took this opportunity to introduce the LawTech development specifically in Hong Kong as well as The Law Society's technology roadmap.

Webinar on Risk Management Education (“RME”)

The pandemic may expose law firms to potential institution-threatening liabilities and legal risks in their daily operations. In light of this situation, The Law Society organised a webinar on RME for members of overseas lawyers associations and international legal organisations on 2 August to raise awareness of risk issues within law firms and to promote good risk management of legal practice. The webinar provided an overview of the RME programme devised by The Law Society and risk management in a law firm environment. It was well-attended by over 210 participants from 18 jurisdictions.

59th AIJA Annual Congress

From 24 to 28 August, Ms. Louise Wong, member of the SCEA and ILAC, participated virtually in the 59th AIJA Annual Congress under the theme “Innovation: Exploring Tomorrow's Legal World” on behalf of The Law Society. As the only female speaker based in Asia on the speaker panel, she spoke at the first session of the academic programme on “Innovative Development of Cities in a Competitive World”, sharing some of Hong Kong's recent efforts in the development of innovation and technology.

Webinar on Greater Bay Area (“GBA”) Development

To keep legal practitioners, especially those from overseas jurisdictions, abreast of the growth and opportunities arising from the GBA development, a webinar on GBA Development was organised by The Law Society on 16 September, with an encouraging participation of over 330 legal practitioners from around the world. The sector opportunities in the recent GBA development, including the GBA Legal Professional Examination and the newly promulgated Qianhai Plan as well as the role of GBA in the Belt and Road Initiative and Hong Kong were discussed at the webinar.

65th UIA Congress

The 65th UIA Congress took place from 28 to 30 October in hybrid format. On behalf of The Law Society, Vice-President Amirali Nasir joined the eminent speaker panel at the Collective Members' Forum/ International Bar Leaders' Senate themed “Making the Rule of Law understood and valued – UN, Sustainable Development Goal 16” on 29 October to discuss different challenges in the common cause of defending the rule of law. Particularly, the Vice-President highlighted the institutions and core values that underpinned Hong Kong's legal system and The Law Society's efforts in defending judicial independence and the rule of law.

LAWASIA 2021 Virtual Annual Conference

As the LAWASIA's flagship event, the LAWASIA Annual Conference was held virtually from 15 to 18 November. On behalf of The Law Society, Vice-President Amirali Nasir joined the

speaker panel to discuss the Green Silk Road, sustainable Belt and Road Initiatives and how to combat climate change along the Belt and Road at the “One Belt, One Road” session. Meanwhile, Council Member Ronald Sum spoke at the “Alternative Dispute Resolution” session to share his insights on the enforcement and execution of Arbitral Awards from the Hong Kong and China perspective.

Agreement with Overseas Lawyers Associations and Legal Organisations

As part of the ongoing mission of the ILAC to develop and further relationships with overseas lawyers associations and international legal organisations, The Law Society signed a total of two MOUs this year with details as follows:

	Date	Name of organisation
1	10 March	Daini Tokyo Bar Association
2	30 July	California Lawyers Association (International Law & Immigration Section)

Participation in International Conferences and Meetings

In 2021, the following visits and attendance of various international conferences and meetings by The Law Society representatives were coordinated by the ILAC:

- Attendance at virtual conferences hosted by the AIJA, IBA, LAWASIA and UIA by The Law Society delegates.
- Attendance at the LAWASIA Executive Committee (“ExCo”) and Council meetings by then-President Melissa Pang and then-Vice-President C. M. Chan who are The Law Society’s official representatives at LAWASIA. Currently, Ms. Pang is the LAWASIA President, while Mr. Chan is an ExCo member for the term of 2021-2022.
- Attendance at the UIA ExCo meetings by Vice-President Amirali Nasir who is The Law Society’s official representative in the ExCo. Mr. Nasir also serves as the UIA Regional Secretary for a term of two years from October 2020 to October 2022.
- Attendance at the International Institute of Law Association Chief Executives (“IILACE”) meetings by Secretary General who is The Law Society’s official representative at IILACE. Currently, Ms. Chu serves as the President of IILACE for the term of 2020-2022.
- Attendance at the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (“CLA”) Council meetings by then-President Melissa Pang who is The Law Society’s official representative at the CLA from April 2019 to January 2022.
- Attendance at the AIJA ExCo meetings by Ms. Louise Wong, member of the SCEA and ILAC, who is The Law Society’s official representative at the AIJA. Apart from her current role as the National Representative representing AIJA in Hong Kong and Asia-Pacific Regional Co-ordinator, Ms. Wong was also elected by the AIJA General Assembly as an ExCo Member for a term of three years from September 2019 to August 2022.

- Attendance at the Opening of the Legal Year of Singapore and England and Wales by Vice-Presidents Amirali Nasir and then-Vice-President C. M. Chan respectively.
- Please refer to the following table for the international events that The Law Society delegates attended virtually:

Date	Event
28 January	AEA-EAL Webinar on Mediation
16 – 17 February	UIA Webinar – Networking, Marketing, and Attracting Clients in Times of Pandemic
18 February	LAWASIA – Opening Ceremony & Inaugural Webinar of the Constitutional & Rule of Law Webinar Series
10 March	Joint Webinar with Daini Tokyo Bar Association
31 March	AIJA Women Network Panel
6 April	Roundtable on International Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution in Malaysia
4 May	Rule of Law Webathon jointly organised by ABA, AIJA and UIA
19 May	IBA Bar Leaders' Forum
7 July	UIA Webinar for Bar Leaders
27 July	Joint Webinar with The Law Society of England & Wales
27 July	LAWASIA Committee Webinar Month – One Belt, One Road Webinar
2 August	The Law Society's Webinar on Risk Management Education
4 August	2021 ABA Virtual Distinguished Guests Roundtable
24 – 28 August	59 th AIJA Annual Congress
1 September	Joint Webinar with The German Federal Bar
16 September	The Law Society's Webinar on Greater Bay Area Development
28 September – 1 October	International Conference of Legal Regulators: A Virtual Experience
21 – 24 October	16 th LAWASIA Moot Competition 2021 - International Round
27 – 30 October	65 th UIA Congress
1 – 3 November	IILACE Conference
2 – 3 November	31 st POLA Conference
15 – 18 November	LAWASIA 2021 Virtual Annual Conference
1 December	Joint Webinar with Hyogo-Ken Bar Association
10 December	Joint Webinar with The Malaysian Bar

Meetings with Overseas Visitors

Throughout the year, a number of meetings were held with overseas visitors to facilitate constructive and fruitful exchanges of knowledge and ideas. Details are as follows:

Date	Organisation
22 January	Australian Consulate-General in Hong Kong
28 January	German Consulate-General in Hong Kong
29 January	British Consulate-General in Hong Kong
3 March	Hyogo-Ken Bar Association (via Zoom)
20 May	The Polish National Bar Attorneys (via Zoom)

30 July	California Lawyers Association (via Zoom)
15 September	Consulate General of Sweden in Hong Kong
8 October	Consulate General of Finland in Hong Kong
13 October	The Law Society of England and Wales (via Zoom)
2 December	The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
15 December	Astana International Financial Centre Authority and Academy of Law (via Zoom)
22 December	Hong Kong Trade Development Council

LEGAL “FACT CHECK” COMMITTEE

The Legal “Fact Check” Committee (“LFC”) is responsible for identifying misinterpreted legal concepts and issues and explaining the legal topics with the aim to clarify common misunderstandings. The LFC is comprised of 13 members. Short explanatory articles and infographics covering different legal matters are uploaded to the dedicated webpage on the Law Society’s website from time to time. In 2021, two articles were published.