

**The First Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Lawyers  
Forum**

5 December 2025 (Friday)

**Keynote Speech 3 - Legal Practitioners Framework and Regulatory  
Regime for GBA Lawyers**

**大灣區律師制度及執業規管體制**

**Speech by Mr Roden Tong, President of The Law Society of Hong Kong**

1. Secretary for Justice, Deputy Secretary for Justice, Director Liu, Director Chen, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.
2. It is my great honour to address you at the First Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Lawyers Forum of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2025. Today, I will focus on legal practitioners' framework and regulatory regime for Greater Bay Area (GBA) lawyers.
3. The Greater Bay Area, comprising Hong Kong, Macao and nine municipalities in Guangdong Province, is one of the most dynamic and innovative economic regions in the world. Under the unique structure of "One Country, Two Systems, Three Legal Jurisdictions," our differences are not obstacles; they are opportunities.
4. Diversity fosters specialization, specialization accelerates collaboration, and collaboration enhances our collective international competitiveness.

### *The Law Society of Hong Kong*

5. As the self-regulatory body representing over 13,000 solicitors, the Law Society of Hong Kong ensures that all solicitors comply with the laws, regulations, codes and practice directions that underpin our profession.
6. This year marks the 118th anniversary of our establishment. Throughout our history, we have remained committed to upholding the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and service.

### *Legal Practitioners Framework and Regulatory regime for GBA lawyers*

7. The regulatory framework for GBA lawyers was designed to create an institutional bridge among the legal systems of the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao.
8. In 2020, the General Office of State Council has introduced a pilot measure, allowing eligible Hong Kong legal practitioners to take the Greater Bay Area Legal Professional Examination, administered by the Ministry of Justice. Successful candidates can obtain practice qualifications in the nine municipalities of the GBA, enabling them to handle matters in specified civil and commercial legal matters of Chinese Mainland law.
9. In 2023, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress extended the pilot scheme for another three years until 2026, including the welcome reduction of the required post-qualification experience from five years to three.

The GBA examination has now been held five times since 2021, with the most recent examinations taking place in Shenzhen and Zhuhai in October 2025.

10.GBA lawyers enjoy the same right and bear the same obligations as lawyers in the Chinese Mainland. GBA lawyers are supervised by the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province and local judicial administrative authorities in accordance with the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Lawyers*.

#### GBA lawyers

11.At present, more than 620 Hong Kong and Macao practitioners have passed the examination and obtained their Lawyers' Licenses. They have been certified to practise in over 170 law firms across nine Chinese Mainland cities in the GBA, nearly 70% of whom are Hong Kong lawyers.

12.These developments reflect the close ties within the GBA legal industry. The growth is not just about numbers, they demonstrate deeper cross-jurisdictional collaboration and the rising influence of GBA lawyers within the region.

13.Hong Kong is China's only common law jurisdiction and the world's only bilingual English-Chinese common law system. Our legal system stands as a pillar of stability, certainty and transparency.

14.GBA lawyers from Hong Kong offer unique strengths—their common law training enables them to provide Chinese Mainland counterparts with crucial insights into cross-border and international matters.

15.This blend of legal traditions enhances the quality of services available to clients navigating multi-jurisdictional environments.

16. Hong Kong's legal sector also serves as an inspiration in shaping the development of legal frameworks within the GBA. A notable example is our Professional Indemnity Scheme (PIS).
17. The PIS is a statutory scheme that provides indemnity against civil liability arising from legal practice, protecting both the public and law firms while reinforcing professional accountability.
18. Before the GBA lawyer regime, Hong Kong solicitors could only serve GBA clients from Hong Kong.
19. Today, GBA lawyers may provide services directly within the nine Chinese Mainland GBA cities—not to compete with Chinese Mainland lawyers, but to act as “super-connectors” and “super value-adders,” linking Chinese Mainland enterprises with global markets.
20. Policy developments continue to enhance opportunities for Hong Kong lawyers. The Second Amendment Agreement to the CEPA Agreement on Trade in Services, implemented in March 2025, introduced significant institutional innovations.
21. Among these are two key measures: Hong Kong-invested enterprises in Shenzhen and Zhuhai may now adopt Hong Kong law in their contracts, and enterprises in all nine GBA municipalities may choose Hong Kong as the seat of arbitration.
22. These measures strengthen the legal advantages available to businesses and reinforce Hong Kong's status as a leading international arbitration centre.

23. Meanwhile, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free trade agreement, has reshaped global trade since its entry into force in 2022.
24. While Hong Kong has not yet joined RCEP, the HKSAR Government submitted its application for accession in early 2022.
25. Once Hong Kong becomes a party to RCEP, Chinese Mainland enterprises are expected to expand their presence in the city to leverage our low tax regime, common law system and free flow of capital.
26. This will in turn create substantial new opportunities for GBA lawyers, who are uniquely positioned with both regional familiarity and international perspective.
27. The Law Society has been actively fostering the development of GBA lawyers.
28. In 2023, we established the Greater Bay Area Lawyers Sub-Committee to provide a platform for exchanging views on GBA practice and enhancing professional development.
29. The Sub-Committee also organises training, seminars and activities to deepen knowledge of GBA-related issues and encourage the profession to seize emerging opportunities.
30. In conclusion, Hong Kong legal practitioners serving as GBA lawyers embody a bridge built on mutual respect, shared values and complementary strengths.
31. Our role within the GBA is defined not only by legal expertise, but by our capacity to connect systems, people and markets.

32.Looking ahead, we will continue to strengthen regulatory cooperation, enhance collaboration and work closely with our counterparts across the GBA to advance our shared goals.

33.Thank you.