

**Roundtable Exchange Session cum Dinner Reception for Shanghai and
Hong Kong Lawyers and Enterprises**

**The Strengths of Hong Kong Lawyers in Foreign-Related Rule of Law
香港律師在涉外法治的優勢**

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Secretary for Justice,

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司長林定國資深大律師)

Deputy Director Mr Zhou,

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President Shao,

(Mr Shao Wanquan, President of the Shanghai Bar Association 上海市律師協會
會長邵萬權)

Distinguished speakers, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon. It is a great honor to stand before you today to speak on a subject that is both timeless and timely, the strengths of Hong Kong Lawyers in Foreign-Related Rule of Law.
2. Shanghai and Hong Kong have always enjoyed a close and long-standing partnership, with Hong Kong serving as the largest source of foreign investment for Shanghai, and a key gateway for Shanghai enterprises going global.
3. This deep engagement, built on a shared commitment to the rule of law, matters more than ever today. In a world marked by rapid transformation, geopolitical complexity, and economic uncertainty, the rule of law remains our most enduring compass.
4. President Xi has aptly stated that “Rule of law is the best business environment.” For the long-term success of any economy, a stable, transparent and predictable legal environment is the very foundation on which investment and confidence are built.
5. This brings us to Hong Kong.

Advantages under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”

6. From the bigger picture, the Central Government, in the latest 15th Five-Year Plan, once again underscored the importance of Hong Kong’s unique role to “have the backing of the motherland and maintain close connection with the rest of the world”. This captures the essence of Hong Kong’s value.

7. Under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”, Hong Kong occupies a unique position in the global legal landscape. As China’s only common law jurisdiction, and the world’s only bilingual common law system using both English and Chinese, Hong Kong is able to serve as an effective bridge between Chinese Mainland and the international community. Our independent judiciary, known for the professionalism and integrity, further reinforces this role and ensures that Hong Kong remains widely recognised and trusted by the international community.
8. According to the World Justice Project’s *Global Rule of Law Index 2025*, Hong Kong ranks 24th out of 143 jurisdictions worldwide, and continues to place within the global top 10 in “Absence of Corruption” and “Order and Security”.
9. According to the *Global Financial Centres Index 2025*, Hong Kong remains the world’s third leading financial centre, trailing London by just one point. These rankings underscore how Hong Kong’s position as one of the world’s freest economies, with its legal and financial foundations continuing to underpin its credibility and competitiveness on the global stage.
10. Beyond these rankings, Hong Kong’s position as a leading two-way international fundraising platform also reflects strong global recognition. Our stock market has performed robustly in recent years and topped the global IPO league table last year. We continue to attract significant international interest, with more than 400 companies currently in the IPO pipeline. These figures demonstrate the strong trust that global investors and Chinese Mainland companies place in Hong Kong’s financial and legal systems.

Strengths of Hong Kong Legal Sectors

11. Let me now turn to the role Hong Kong's lawyers contribute to advancing the foreign-related rule of law. In Hong Kong, our legal profession comprises two complementary branches - solicitors and barristers. Working closely in partnership, solicitors and barristers support and complement each other in delivering a wide range of legal services, covering both contentious and non-contentious matters.
12. Hong Kong lawyers, in both private practice and in-house roles, play an all-round and strategic role in facilitating Chinese Mainland enterprises to "go global," while helping international companies to "come into" the China market. Our strengths in language, legal expertise, and institutional connectivity together highlight Hong Kong's exceptional position as a true "super connector" and "super value-adder."
13. Speaking of the solicitor branch, as the statutory self-regulatory body for solicitors, The Law Society of Hong Kong has close to 14,000 members, many of which are dual-qualified or qualified in a few jurisdictions. The number of registered foreign lawyers has also increased to nearly 1,700 from over 30 jurisdictions.
14. The areas of specialisation of Hong Kong lawyers cover all range of legal services, including Merger & Acquisition, commercial law, intellectual property, dispute resolution, and emerging fields such as aerospace, enabling them to meet the needs of businesses operating globally and across jurisdictions.
15. For connectivity with the Greater Bay Area ("GBA"), the pool of Greater Bay Area lawyers qualified in both Hong Kong common law and Chinese Mainland law has been growing steadily. 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.

Initial Public Offering (“IPO”)

16. To bring this into clearer focus, let me illustrate my point with an example from an IPO transaction.
17. When Chinese Mainland enterprises seek international capital, an IPO is not simply fundraising, it is an investor-grade compliance and disclosure exercise. Global investors, sponsors, underwriters and regulators require documentation, due diligence and liability frameworks they recognise. Without Hong Kong's common law listing environment and Hong Kong lawyers who operate in that environment, an international-quality IPO cannot be delivered with the same level of credibility and market acceptance.
18. Hong Kong is uniquely positioned because our capital market runs on common law principles and international disclosure standards, while we understand Chinese Mainland corporate structures and regulatory realities. Hong Kong lawyers routinely run the cross-border execution: coordinating Chinese Mainland counsel, offshore counsel, auditors, banks and investors; driving due diligence; and producing disclosure that is robust, defensible and trusted. That is what turns a growth story into investable paper.
19. For foreign enterprises entering the China markets, the same discipline applies. Whether the route is investment, partnership, or acquisition, they need clean structures, governance, disclosure-quality contracts and financing-ready

documentation that can withstand scrutiny. Hong Kong lawyers bring that international discipline and make it executable in the Chinese Mainland context so that transactions are not only announced, but implemented.

Dispute Resolution

20. I will now move on to discuss Hong Kong's role in dispute resolution.

21. Hong Kong is recognised as a centre for international dispute resolution services.

22. On arbitration, there are eight reputable international arbitration institutions in Hong Kong, reinforcing our role as a leading international arbitration centre in the Asia Pacific region. Institutions such as the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre, eBRAM International Online Dispute Resolution Centre, Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, offer international arbitration services, with arbitrations seated in Hong Kong. Arbitral awards made in Hong Kong are enforceable in over 170 jurisdictions under the New York Convention.

23. On mediation, Hong Kong has been chosen by the International Organization for Mediation ("IOMed") to be the home city of its headquarters. IOMed is the first intergovernmental international legal organisation dedicated to resolving international disputes through mediation. As of 22 March 2026, there are 40 Signatory States under the IOMed. The IOMed provides top tier mediation services for international commercial and investment disputes, where settlement agreements reached through mediation are more likely to be voluntarily conducted by the parties while commercial relationship is preserved.

Hong Kong's role in the global stage

24. Hong Kong has a long-standing relationship with the international community.

The Law Society of Hong Kong has worked closely with legal organisations around the world. During our official visits, we have met with government leaders, representatives of lawyers' associations and members of the judiciary across a diverse range of jurisdictions. Through active engagement, we remain closely informed about global business operations, evolving international standards, and the practical handling of cross-border legal issues.

25. In 2025, The Law Society of Hong Kong had signed 67 Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with lawyers' associations or organisations in the Greater China region, and more than 51 MOUs with overseas lawyers' associations and international organisations. These partnerships strengthen our exchange with both domestic and overseas legal communities, providing us with clear views and updates.

26. Through participation in major international legal events, Hong Kong stay connected with the world and promote professional exchange across jurisdictions globally. It reaffirmed Hong Kong's role as a global legal hub with strong international trust and recognition.

Closing

27. Our robust legal system and strong international connections, combined with Hong Kong's trilingual language advantage and deep understanding of both Chinese Mainland and global markets and cultures, place Hong Kong in a well-positioned role to support cross-border cooperation and development.

28. By harnessing their respective strengths and collaborating in close alignment, Shanghai and Hong Kong will jointly advance national development. Collectively, these strengths underpin the clarity, predictability, and trust that cross-border commerce and cooperation require. Hong Kong will continue to give full play to its distinctive advantages in support of the country's sustained development and its ongoing international engagement, and the Hong Kong legal profession will remain committed to delivering steady, professional, and substantive contributions.

29. Thank you.