

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR. RODEN TONG, BBS
PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF HONG KONG
AT THE TEEN TALK GBA STUDY TOUR 2026
4 JULY 2026**

Good morning,

Deputy Director-General Cao (*Deputy Director-General of the Justice Bureau of Shenzhen Municipality Mr Cao Hai Lei*);

Deputy Director-General Xia (*Deputy Director-General of the Authority of Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone Mr Xia Sha*);

Chairman Pang (*Chairman of the Agency for Volunteer Service and Past President of The Law Society Ms Melissa Pang*);

Vice President Song (*Vice President of the People's Court of Shenzhen Qianhai Cooperation Zone Mr Song Liang*);

Olympics Champion Mr Li (*Olympic Gymnastics Champion Mr Li Xiaopeng*)

Distinguished guests, facilitators and students,

1. First of all, on behalf of The Law Society of Hong Kong, may I extend a very warm welcome to all of you to the Teen Talk GBA Study Tour 2026.
2. It gives me tremendous pleasure to be here with you today in Shenzhen. Looking around this room, I do not simply see a group of students participating in a study tour. I see future leaders, future professionals, future innovators and future contributors to Hong Kong, our country and beyond.

3. Today marks the beginning of a two-day journey. Yet I hope what you take away from this programme will remain with you for many years to come.

4. Many of you may know me today as the President of The Law Society of Hong Kong. What you may not know is that my connection with Teen Talk began almost from the very beginning. Long before I became President, I participated in Teen Talk as a volunteer facilitator. Over the years, I have had the privilege of meeting countless students through this programme. Some have gone on to become lawyers. Others have pursued careers in business, education, public service, technology and many other fields. What they all shared was a willingness to learn, to challenge themselves and to see a bigger world beyond their immediate surroundings. That is why Teen Talk has always held a special place in my heart.

5. In fact, I have been involved in youth development for close to two decades. During that time, I have had the privilege of serving the legal profession in many different capacities. Today, as President of The Law Society of Hong Kong, I carry a significant responsibility to serve the profession, Hong Kong and our country as a whole. The responsibilities are substantial, and the demands are considerable.

6. Yet despite all of this, one of the things I treasure most remains the opportunity to engage with young people.
Because whenever I meet students, I see hope.
I see energy.
I see fresh perspectives.

Most importantly, I see the future.

That is exactly why Teen Talk matters.

7. Since its launch in 2009, Teen Talk has inspired generations of students by promoting understanding of the rule of law, encouraging critical thinking, fostering empathy and nurturing civic responsibility. As one of the Law Society's flagship youth programmes, it reflects our belief that investing in the next generation is among the most important responsibilities any profession can undertake.
8. You may ask: what makes Teen Talk different from other youth programmes? There are many excellent programmes available to young people today. However, Teen Talk possesses several distinctive features.
9. First, it allows you to see the law in practice.
Over the next two days, you will visit important legal institutions and engage directly with legal professionals. You will gain first-hand exposure to how legal systems operate, how disputes are resolved and how institutions contribute to the development of communities and economies. Through these experiences, you will discover that law is not an abstract subject confined to textbooks. It is a living system that supports trust, fairness, cooperation and progress.
10. Second, this programme provides valuable exposure to the Greater Bay Area.
The Greater Bay Area is one of the most dynamic regions in the world. It brings together different cities, different strengths and different opportunities. Understanding how these cities cooperate and complement one another will

become increasingly important for your generation. Many of the opportunities available to you in the future may extend well beyond the city in which you live today.

11. Third, and perhaps most uniquely, the programme is conducted entirely in English.

Now, let me assure you that nobody expects perfection.

The objective is not to speak perfect English.

The objective is to develop confidence.

12. English remains an important language of international communication. It is widely used in business, diplomacy, law, commerce, arbitration and cross-border cooperation. More importantly, it serves as a bridge. It enables our country to communicate with the world and helps the world better understand our country.

13. This is particularly important for Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is the only common law jurisdiction within our country and the only English-Chinese bilingual common law jurisdiction in the world. This unique position enables Hong Kong to serve as a bridge connecting the Mainland and the international community. One day, many of you may have the opportunity to play a similar bridging role.

14. However, if there is one message I hope you will remember long after this programme ends, it is not about English, and it is not even about the law.

It is about professionalism and integrity.

15. Over the past year, I have spoken frequently about professionalism because I genuinely believe it is one of the defining qualities of any successful individual and any successful society. Professionalism is not something that starts when you enter the workplace. It begins much earlier. It begins with how you conduct yourself as a student, as a friend, as a teammate and as a member of society.

16. Many people believe success is measured by grades, achievements, titles or awards.
Those things are important.
But they are not enough.

17. In every profession, and indeed in every aspect of life, trust is the most valuable asset you will ever possess. People may admire your intelligence.
People may recognise your achievements.
But people will only place their trust in you if they believe in your character.

18. Integrity means doing the right thing even when nobody is watching.
It means being honest when honesty is difficult.
It means taking responsibility for your actions.
It means treating others with respect.
It means keeping your word.

19. These principles may sound simple, but they are the foundation upon which meaningful and lasting success is built.

Whether you become a lawyer, doctor, engineer, teacher, entrepreneur, athlete or public servant, your reputation will ultimately be determined not only by what you achieve, but by how you achieve it.

20. Talent may open doors.

Knowledge may create opportunities.

But integrity earns trust.

And trust is something that takes years to build and only moments to lose.

21. That is why understanding the rule of law is important. At its heart, the rule of law is about trust, fairness, accountability and responsibility. These values are not only relevant to legal professionals. They are relevant to every citizen and every future leader.

22. Before I conclude, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to a number of people.

23. First, our volunteer facilitators.

These are busy practising solicitors who have generously volunteered their time to accompany and mentor you throughout this study tour. They are here because they believe in young people and because they are willing to invest their time and experience in helping the next generation grow. I encourage you to speak with them, learn from them and make the most of the opportunity to benefit from their experience.

24. I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Organising Committee and our Secretariat team. Events like this do not simply happen. Behind every visit, every activity and every detail is a tremendous amount of planning, coordination and hard work. Their professionalism, dedication and commitment have made this programme possible, and I know all of us are deeply grateful for their efforts.
25. Finally, to all of our students.
Over the next two days, I encourage you to ask questions, be curious, speak as much English as possible, make new friends and embrace every opportunity that comes your way.
26. More importantly, I hope you will take the time to get to know one another. Some of the most valuable things you gain from Teen Talk may not come from a presentation or a site visit, but from the friendships you build, the conversations you have and the experiences you share together.
27. As I mentioned earlier, one of the reasons I have remained committed to Teen Talk for so many years is because I genuinely enjoy spending time with young people. Every year I leave Teen Talk feeling more optimistic about the future after hearing the ideas, aspirations and perspectives of our students.
28. Over the next two days, I hope we will have the opportunity to get to know one another better. Please do not think of me simply as the President of The Law Society. Think of me as someone who is equally interested in hearing your stories, learning about your ambitions and sharing this journey with you.

29. If you see me during the programme, please feel free to come over and have a chat. Tell me about your school, your interests, your aspirations and what you hope to achieve in the future. Those conversations are often the moments I treasure most. And if we happen to take a selfie together along the way, I hope it will serve as a reminder of a meaningful conversation, a new friendship and a memorable Teen Talk experience.

30. Many years from now, you may not remember every presentation or every detail of this study tour.

But I hope you will remember how this experience encouraged you to think bigger, dream bigger and believe more deeply in your own potential.

31. The future of Hong Kong, the future of our country and indeed the future of our world will one day be shaped by young people like you.

When that day comes, I hope you will lead with professionalism.

Serve with integrity.

Act with courage.

And always remember that true success is not measured only by what we achieve for ourselves, but by how we contribute to others and to society.

32. I wish all of you a meaningful, inspiring and unforgettable Teen Talk GBA Study Tour 2026.

Thank you very much.