

CE meets Member of Political Bureau of CPC Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met today (May 30) at Government House with Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Wang Yi, to welcome Mr Wang as he visits Hong Kong and attends the Signing Ceremony of the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation (the Convention). Mr Lee and Mr Wang had a working luncheon and exchanged views on the work of the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed), and international exchanges and co-operation related to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki; the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan; the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan; and the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Ms Carol Yip, also attended the meeting.

Mr Lee expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government for its strong support in establishing the IOMed headquarters in Hong Kong. He noted that the IOMed is a high-level international organisation. He said that the Central Government demonstrated its staunch support to the HKSAR in its development as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region under the National 14th Five-Year Plan through setting up the IOMed Preparatory Office in Hong Kong, completing the negotiations on the Convention, facilitating the consensus among different parties on situating the IOMed headquarters in Hong Kong, and hosting the signing ceremony of the Convention in Hong Kong.

Mr Lee said that the presence of Mr Wang in Hong Kong to witness the historic moment of signing the Convention is a great encouragement to him and the HKSAR Government. The HKSAR Government is well-equipped to promote the IOMed and to develop Hong Kong into a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Lee said that basing the IOMed headquarters in Hong Kong will bring a host of significant benefits to the city.

First, the IOMed will elevate Hong Kong's international status and role in international mediation. Under the "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong, as the only common law jurisdiction in China, boasts an established legal system, a solid foundation of the rule of law, diverse legal and dispute resolution services, and a wide pool of legal professionals with a global perspective. He noted that Hong Kong could make important contributions to the work of the IOMed.

Second, the IOMed will generate substantial economic benefits. Its service demand will create a large number of job opportunities in positions such as mediators, translators and researchers. The IOMed will also attract

international organisations, non-governmental organisations and academic institutions to establish a presence in Hong Kong, drawing high-quality conferences and exhibitions to the city and further boosting sectors like hospitality, food and beverages, logistics and transportation, as well as industries in the conference economy. With a status on par with the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration of the United Nations in The Hague, the IOMed will become a pivotal institution for resolving international disputes. This will facilitate deeper economic co-operation between Hong Kong and overseas economies such as regions participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, creating more business opportunities.

Third, the IOMed will further enhance Hong Kong's ecosystem related to the rule of law, promoting the popularity of a mediation culture and encouraging the community in resolving issues through dialogue. Mr Lee highlighted that the IOMed will help Hong Kong attract more legal and dispute resolution professionals from around the globe, contributing to the development of the legal framework for dispute resolution and further consolidating Hong Kong's status as an international legal hub.

Mr Lee also expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR, and Chinese diplomatic and consular missions overseas for their continued support in deepening the HKSAR Government's international exchanges and co-operation. This includes the meticulous arrangements for overseas visits of Mr Lee and other HKSAR Government officials, enabling Hong Kong to more effectively showcase its unparalleled advantages of having the strong support of the country while maintaining connectivity with the world under the "one country, two systems" principle.

Noting that consular protection of the country has always been the strongest safeguard for Hong Kong people travelling abroad, Mr Lee thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its ongoing support and care provided to the people of Hong Kong through Chinese diplomatic and consular missions overseas. The HKSAR Government will continue to enhance Hong Kong people's understanding of consular protection policies and work related to Hong Kong, and raise their awareness and capabilities in the areas of security and protection.

