

# Keynote speech by SJ at 2024 Annual Conference of In-House Lawyers (English only) (with photo)

Following is the keynote speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the 2024 Annual Conference of In-House Lawyers entitled Strategic Positioning of Hong Kong Lawyers today (September 9):

President of the Law Society Mr Roden Tong (President of the Law Society of Hong Kong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my honour to speak to you all at this special event organised by the In-House Lawyers Committee of the Law Society of Hong Kong. You may not at all be surprised that I am, as the Secretary for Justice, also one of the in-house lawyers. In fact, my department, the Department of Justice, is the largest employer of in-house counsel in Hong Kong. Speaking from my limited experience, it is by no means an easy task to be an in-house lawyer, but you all have certainly done an amazing job. For that, I would like to take this opportunity to salute each and every one of you.

The theme for this year is "Strategic Positioning of Hong Kong Lawyers". My goal today is to share with you my views as to how you may make use of your capacities, not only to advance your legal career, but also to assist in enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre.

Hong Kong as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre

Hong Kong has long been hailed as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre because of our common law system and our diverse pool of legal talents. This is a very unique, and perhaps the most unique, advantage enjoyed by Hong Kong under the principle of "one country, two systems".

Being the only common law jurisdiction within China, Hong Kong has unparalleled advantages in offering opportunities to top-notch legal and alternative dispute resolution services, and to people doing business in Hong Kong, as well as the Mainland and beyond.

We must fully leverage these advantages. That means proactively integrating into our country's development, participating in and promoting national strategies such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) development plan and the Belt and Road Initiative.

It is of crucial and particular importance for Hong Kong to enhance its status as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre. However, the global landscape has undergone profound transformations accompanied by an array of complex challenges. In the face of competition

from global and neighbouring economies, geopolitical tensions and the advance of technology, Hong Kong is facing increasing challenges. We must strive to transform these challenges into opportunities. The in-house legal community can help to enhance our chances of realising those opportunities by providing us with ideas, by sharing with us your experiences and insights.

Without the support from all of you, our drive to strengthen Hong Kong's status as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services would not be successful. I firmly believe that, as in-house lawyers, you should not only use your legal expertise to serve your organisations but also use it in performing four important roles. I shall describe these four roles as "PPRT" in short – representing promoters, protectors, reformers and teachers.

The first role as promoters

The first "P" stands for promoters. As I emphasised last year, you all are indispensable members not only of the Hong Kong legal community but also Hong Kong as a whole. You, as in-house lawyers, should be promoters for the use of Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services both internally and externally.

By internally, I mean within your own organisations. You are in a strategic position to advise your organisations to make important decisions, such as advising your organisations to move or expand their businesses to Hong Kong, choosing Hong Kong law and Hong Kong as the applicable law and the place to resolve disputes respectively in the relevant contracts and, if necessary, engaging legal practitioners from Hong Kong law firms.

This is indeed in the interests of your organisations for various reasons. As many of you have already noted, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Mainland have concluded a number of exclusive arrangements on mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters, covering procedural assistance, arbitration-related matters, as well as mutual recognition and enforcement of orders and judgments relating to matrimonial and family cases, bankruptcy and winding-up proceedings, as well as other civil and commercial matters. This comprehensive mutual legal assistance regime is one of the key factors contributing to Hong Kong's unique competitiveness in legal and dispute resolution services, giving Hong Kong an advantage that is unavailable in any other jurisdiction.

Under the mutual legal assistance mechanism, the legal services provided by Hong Kong allows overseas investors and businesspeople to explore investment and business opportunities on the Mainland, while having the option of safeguarding their interests by making use of the Hong Kong common law system, which is trustworthy and familiar to the international community. With Hong Kong's impartial, independent and transparent judicial system, the international business community is assured with a predictable, certain and secure legal environment which is conducive to investment and business activities.

At the same time, you should promote the use of Hong Kong's legal and

dispute resolution services externally to your business partners, clients and other contracting parties. In particular, you should try your best to persuade them to agree to use Hong Kong law as the applicable law and Hong Kong as a place to resolve disputes respectively, and to dispel any misunderstanding or misgivings about our legal and judicial system, if any. I would urge all in-house lawyers to make use of every opportunity to tell the good and true story of Hong Kong's rule of law whenever possible.

### The second role as protectors

The second "P" represents protectors. As a result of the complex business environment and globalisation of the world's economies, the role of an in-house lawyer as a protector has become even more challenging. Substantive legal and business issues that confront in-house lawyers include compliance and regulatory issues, such as those arising out of environmental, social and governance (ESG) and other regulatory requirements.

ESG elements such as environmental protection, ethics and data privacy are becoming significant indicators of the effectiveness of the risk management and the long-term sustainability of a company. A company with a comprehensive and well thought-through ESG strategy would attract investment, facilitate sustainable development and in turn improve the business environment in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's international status would also be enhanced if it can demonstrate its commitment to strict compliance with these requirements.

I would, therefore, encourage all of you to procure and ensure that your organisations would comply with fast-changing ESG and other regulatory requirements, which will be critical to maintain and enhance the reputation and competitiveness of the Hong Kong business environment as a whole.

### The third role as reformers

The third role requires you to be reformers. Unlike lawyers in private practice, in-house lawyers usually work very closely together with top management or perhaps the board of directors of the organisation to find solutions to business problems, manage growth, and plan for the future. In this sense, you have to be, and are in fact, directly involved in the business environment and hence, must be very sensitive to what changes to the existing law and regulations may be required in order to maintain the competitiveness of Hong Kong.

Speaking of proposed reforms, for example, very recently there have been proposals by the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited to amend the Corporate Governance Code and related Listing Rules about non-executive directors for creating a more diverse boardroom and strengthening risk management and internal controls.

Another example, the Intellectual Property Department is exploring different ways to improve the Copyright Ordinance in view of the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology. The rising use of AI gives rise to some tricky copyright issues. For instance, if your company

uses AI to create literary works, visual arts and music compositions, who would be the author of these AI-generated works?

In-house lawyers should be well-placed to put forward constructive and practical ideas to reform different areas of and to fill the lacuna in our law, for otherwise we will not be able to address complex legal issues, such as those that I have just mentioned.

The fourth role as teachers

Last but not least, the last T of the "PPRT" means acting as teachers. With your unique experiences, in-house lawyers may assist in capacity building for other lawyers, both within and outside Hong Kong.

As you would be aware, this year, the Department of Justice is committed to taking forward the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy with a view to providing foreign-related legal trainings and nurturing legal talents conversant with, for example, international legal practice, the common law, and our country's legal system. Capitalising on Hong Kong's bilingual common law system and international status, the Academy intends to organise practical training courses, seminars, international exchange programmes so on and so forth regularly, to promote exchanges among legal talents in Hong Kong, the Mainland and the Belt and Road region.

It is envisaged that the Academy will help to promote mutual understanding regarding international, regional and national legal systems. Upon commencement of the Academy, in appropriate circumstances, we would definitely like to invite you to take part as teachers in training courses to be organised by the Academy. I am very confident that you may make significant contributions by sharing your unique and invaluable experience as in-house lawyers not enjoyed by lawyers in private practice.

To conclude, ladies and gentlemen, as in-house lawyers, I would urge and encourage you to assist in maintaining and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre by performing the "PPRT" roles, i.e. being the promoters, protectors, reformers and teachers.

Last but not least, I would like to express once again my sincere thanks to the Law Society for organising this very special event, and I am also very confident that you all will have a successful, interesting and fruitful discussion in today's conference. I hope to see you again at lunch. Thank you very much.



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## InvestHK promotes Hong Kong's advantages as multinational supply chain management centre during CIFIT (with photos)

Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) hosted a seminar at the 24th China International Fair for Investment and Trade (CIFIT) in Xiamen, Fujian Province, yesterday (September 8), encouraging Mainland enterprises to make use of Hong Kong's advantages as a multinational supply chain management centre to expand overseas amid the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) development.

Entitled Hong Kong as a multinational supply chain management centre for Mainland enterprises, the seminar was organised by InvestHK, the Commercial Office of the Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government (LOCPG) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong, and the Department of Commerce of Fujian Province. It was co-organised by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Xiamen Committee, the Federation of Industry and Commerce of Xiamen (General Chamber of Commerce) and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Quanzhou Committee. The seminar began with remarks from Associate Director-General of Investment Promotion Dr Jimmy Chiang and the Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Department and Head of the Commercial Office of the LOCPG in the HKSAR, Mr Zhou Qiang, as well as Vice Chairman of the Xiamen Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Mr Huang Peiqiang.

Dr Chiang said, "Hong Kong is Fujian's largest source of foreign direct investment as well as its largest investment destination. It is also the key listing market for Fujian enterprises. Under the 'one country, two systems' principle, Hong Kong offers distinctive advantages as a springboard for

mainland companies to 'go global'. The HKSAR Government is committed to developing the city as a multinational supply chain management centre. Hong Kong, as Asia's preferred international financial and business centre, offers Mainland enterprises comprehensive and well-developed professional services, making it the best place for them to set up and manage offshore trade centres."

Mr Zhou said, "In the process of China's reform and opening up, Hong Kong serves as a main bridge for trade and investment, and an important channel for international capital to enter the Mainland market. One of the points emphasised at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China is about reinforcing international co-operation in industrial and supply chains. Hong Kong and Fujian can contribute a lot on this frontier. Hong Kong is a global financial and wealth centre, and a hub for high-calibre talent; the city has unrivalled advantages to become an important multinational supply chain centre". He also told the seminar about the function of the Commercial Office of the Economic Affairs Department of the LOCPG in the HKSAR. The Commercial Office is the representative of the Ministry of Commerce in Hong Kong, offering consultation and services to enhance the two-way investment and economic and trade communication between the Mainland and Hong Kong.

The Head of Mainland and GBA Business Development of InvestHK, Ms Loretta Lee, talked about Hong Kong's unique business advantages and the range of services that InvestHK offers to Mainland enterprises in assisting them to achieve high-quality development via Hong Kong. Assistant General Manager of the Business Divisions-Structured/Special Risk Solutions of the Hong Kong Expert Credit Insurance Corporation Mr Dennis Wong talked about the role of the Hong Kong Expert Credit Insurance Corporation. In the panel session under the theme of "Multinational supply chain management centre: application and practice", Executive Vice President and Head of Sales and Client Management, Global Trade Solutions of Hang Seng Bank Limited, Mr Matthew Lam; the Chairman of Pace Supply Chain International Limited, Mr Simon Pun; Deputy General Manager of the International Development Department of Xiamen ITG Group Corp Ltd Mr Allen Lian; as well as Mr Wong, shared practical experiences in investment in Hong Kong.

For photos of the seminar, please visit [www.flickr.com/photos/investhk/albums/72177720320193599](http://www.flickr.com/photos/investhk/albums/72177720320193599).








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## Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool reopened

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (September 9) that Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool in Tuen Mun District, closed earlier due to urgent maintenance works, will reopen at 1pm today.

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## Red flag hoisted at Stanley Main Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (September 9) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

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## [Speech by CE at Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum 2024 \(English only\)](#)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum 2024 today (September 9):

Mr Michael Lee (Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club), Mr Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges (Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Jockey Club), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. A warm welcome to the Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum 2024, the fourth edition.

I'm pleased to be joining you virtually today, in the opening of this year's Forum. The Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum was created to inspire impactful giving – in Hong Kong, throughout Asia and around the world.

This forum is testament to Hong Kong's commitment to philanthropy. It is proudly presented by the Hong Kong Jockey Club and its Charities Trust, a long-standing leader in championing our philanthropic endeavours.

This year's theme, "Delivering Impactful Philanthropy in the Real World", underscores that unwavering commitment. Indeed, the Forum will include the launch of a Commission on Asian Philanthropy. The pioneering initiative will bring together experts from across the region to help realise Asian philanthropy's full potential.

I'm glad that more than 2 000 philanthropists, thought leaders, social entrepreneurs, policy-makers, academics and NGOs from around the world are taking part in this two-day Forum. You will surely help kick-start that welcome venture. So, too, will the nearly 100 prominent forum speakers and representatives of more than 200 local and international foundations.

Together, ladies and gentlemen, we have the potential to create positive



change, to make a meaningful and far-reaching impact on society.

And Hong Kong is the ideal place to realise your ambition and passion in giving to society. Under the "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong is the only world city that enjoys both the China advantage and the global advantage. We are an international financial, shipping and trading centre. Thanks to our world-class professional services, we top the world in international trade and business legislation, according to the latest World Competitiveness Yearbook.

And Hong Kong, I'm pleased to say, has a rich tradition of giving. In that regard, it enjoys the complete support of the Hong Kong SAR Government. Our city is home to more than 10 000 tax-exempt charities, a reflection of the thriving philanthropic spirit that permeates our community. Approved charitable donations allowed under our profits and salaries tax amount to some HK\$7 billion a year, respectively.

Those impressive numbers reflect the remarkable commitment of Hong Kong's private donors to welfare and other social causes. They speak, too, of our efforts to attract global family offices and asset owners to Hong Kong.

These families may be focused on maximising investment returns. But they're also committed to making a positive impact on society, I'm pleased to say. In integrating philanthropy into their wealth-management strategies, they drive social change, contributing to the betterment of our communities.

The Hong Kong SAR Government is committed to Hong Kong's rise as a global centre for philanthropy. That goal was formalised in our Policy Statement on Developing Family Office Businesses in Hong Kong.

Our vision is to provide philanthropists with the tools they need to manage their wealth, while channelling their resources into social initiatives that create tangible impact. We are determined to realise Hong Kong as a go-to destination for global family offices passionate about making a difference.

Hong Kong today is home to some 2 700 single family offices, with more than half of them established by individuals whose wealth exceeds US\$50 million. And we expect our family office businesses to grow, attracting even more philanthropic investment and capital to Hong Kong. That will certainly boost our status as a global philanthropic centre.

Building on those efforts, we announced, in March, the launch of Impact Link, or iLink, a charity depository under the Hong Kong Academy for Wealth Legacy. iLink will connect donors with charity projects, enabling family offices and asset owners to ensure that their contributions have the maximum possible impact.

The Academy and the Hong Kong Jockey Club, I'm pleased to note, will collaborate at the Forum, bringing together experienced family offices to share best practices on creating lasting legacies through philanthropy.

My thanks to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for organising the Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a productive and inspiring conference. And I invite our guests from abroad to enjoy your good time in our world city, an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, and a whole lot more.

Thank you.