

Standing Committee on External Affairs



THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF HONG KONG
香港律師會

2019

The Standing Committee on External Affairs (“SCEA”) oversees promotion of the objectives and overall image of The Law Society. It assists The Law Society in fostering a good relationship with stakeholders, including relevant institutions in the Mainland and Hong Kong as well as various international legal fraternities, and of course, also different sectors of the community in Hong Kong.

The Standing Committee works closely with its four Sub-Committees, namely, the Community Relations Committee, the Greater China Legal Affairs Committee, the International Legal Affairs Committee and the Public Policy Committee. During the year, a large number of successful events were organised, and some events have commanded very positive feedback.

In view of the rapid globalisation of the legal market, it is imperative that The Law Society should reach out to the international legal community in order to facilitate the profession to practise in collaboration with lawyers overseas. It is imperative for The Law Society to promote the understanding of and respect for the rule of law. Activities held have been directed towards serving such purposes.

It is also the duty of The Law Society to promote legal awareness within the community in Hong Kong. We provided support to many non-government organisations through giving seminars and organising members of The Law Society to participate in their events.

During the year, then-Council member Simon Lai retired from the Chair and joined as member together with Council member Mark Daly in August. Council member Robert Rhoda became Chair and Doreen Kong joined as Vice-Chair respectively in September. Ms. Carmen Kan resigned from the Standing Committee and Ms. Olivia Kung and Ms. Hin Han Shum joined in November.

Below are highlights of the events and activities coordinated by the Standing Committee during the year:

32nd LAWASIA Conference

Jointly organised by The Law Society and LAWASIA, the 32nd *LAWASIA Conference* was successfully held from 6 to 8 November in Hong Kong. Remarkably, it was the third time for Hong Kong to be chosen as the hosting jurisdiction of this international conference after 1989 and 2007.

Under the theme of “Harmonisation through Synergy”, this year’s Conference examined a wide range of topics, including alternative dispute resolution, the Belt and Road Initiative, cross-border issues and investment, technology and data protection, intellectual property, human rights, etc. The Conference attracted over 600 participants from 30 jurisdictions around the world.

The Opening Ceremony was held in the JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong on 6 November. We were honoured to be graced by the presence of The Hon Matthew Cheung, Acting Chief Executive of the HKSAR; The Hon Geoffrey Ma, Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal of the HKSAR; and The Hon Teresa Cheng SC, Secretary for Justice of the Government of the HKSAR.

With so much social upheaval around the world at present, from Brexit to Hong Kong's unrest, it is inevitable that legal systems thrown into the limelight. The legal system and even the concept of the rule of law have come under unprecedented scrutiny. In view of this, the Conference opened with a Plenary Session entitled "Upholding of or Pursuit for the Rule of Law in Challenging Times?" moderated by Vice-President C.M. Chan. Renowned speakers, including President Melissa Pang; The Hon. Justice Russell Coleman, Judge of Court of First Instance of the High Court of Hong Kong; Mr. Shyam Divan, Vice-President of LAWASIA; Mr. Abdul Fared Abdul Gafoor, President of The Malaysian Bar; and Mr. Simon Davis, President of The Law Society of England and Wales gathered and shared their invaluable experience and insights on this topic of growing interest.

One of the event highlights was the Welcome Reception & LAWASIA Cup at the Happy Valley Racecourse on 6 November. For the first time in the history of the LAWASIA Annual Conference that a horse race entitled "LAWASIA Cup" was held.

The Law Society would like to express our sincere gratitude for the valuable contribution and support of everyone involved with the organisation of the Conference including all members of the Conference Organising Committee and Sub-Committees, speakers, moderators, session chairs, sponsors, supporting organisations, guests and fellow legal practitioners from all over the world who made the Conference a huge success.

Council Visit to Beijing

The Law Society Council paid its annual courtesy visit to Beijing from 8 to 9 April to exchange views with Mainland officials on issues that concern the Hong Kong's legal profession. Led by President Melissa Pang, 15 Council members had meetings with representatives from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the National Supervisory Commission of the PRC, the Hong Kong Basic Law Committee, the Ministry of Justice, the All China Lawyers Association and the Supreme People's Court. The delegation also visited the Beijing Internet Court.

One of the major topics at the meetings was the enhancement of the role of Hong Kong lawyers in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area. Council members made a number of recommendations to relevant authorities, including a relaxation on the thresholds

governing the establishment of partnership associations between the Mainland and Hong Kong law firms, as well as the relaxation of the restriction allowing Hong Kong lawyers to be engaged as legal consultant by only one Mainland law firm. They also urged the authorities to consider setting up a special examination to incentivise more Hong Kong lawyers to sign up and acquire Mainland legal qualifications. This suggestion could strengthen the talent pool and meet the increasing demand for cross-jurisdictional legal services in the Mainland. In addition, the Council also reflected our members' views on issues, including the society's concerns over the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill and worries over the media coverage on the arrests of human rights lawyers in the Mainland.

Law Week 2019

The Law Society has been organising the *Law Week* since 1991, which embodies the aspiration of The Law Society to provide fuller legal knowledge and to promote legal services in the community. Under the theme "Knowing and Abiding by the Law Together" this year, Law Week Organising Committee ("OC") promoted legal knowledge to the public through videos and social media channels including Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Council members were invited to participate in the production of short videos on legal topics, featuring "Employees' compensation claims and personal injuries", "Mediation", "Wills and enduring power of attorney", "Ill-treatment of neglect by those in charge of child or young person", and "Mainland-Hong Kong cross-boundary marriages".

The Law Society would like to express its sincere thanks for the sponsorship from the Legal Aid Department and the tireless effort of the OC and the staunch support of the Council.

Spring Reception

The Law Society Spring Reception was held on 21 February. Over 300 guests and members joined this delightful event, including The Hon Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma and the Hon Secretary for Justice Teresa Cheng.

The festive event represents a gesture of appreciation by The Law Society for the support rendered by government officials, practitioners and other working partners and friends towards the work of The Law Society.

Ceremonial Opening of Legal Year 2019

The Law Society was honoured to receive over 70 leaders in the legal profession from 20 jurisdictions including Australia, Brunei, Canada, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Mainland China, Malaysia, Mongolia, South Africa, Taiwan, United Kingdom among others at the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year in Hong Kong on 14 January. Jointly with the Hong Kong Bar Association (“HKBA”), a series of activities were organised for the overseas guests, including a Presidents’ Roundtable on the topic of “Legal Profession as a Talent Platform”, a luncheon and a dinner reception graced by the presence of the Secretary for Justice.

Law Society Annual Cocktail

Over 400 guests and Law Society members gathered at The Law Society Annual Cocktail Reception on 19 November held at the Hong Kong Club, including Guests of Honour, The Hon Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma and Solicitor General Wesley Wong, SC.

The Law Society of Hong Kong and Bloomsbury Books Prizes Presentation Ceremony

The Law Society of Hong Kong and Bloomsbury Book Prizes Presentation Ceremony is an annual event, jointly organised by the Law Society of Hong Kong and Bloomsbury Books Limited, where law students from the University of Hong Kong (“HKU”), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (“CUHK”), and the City University of Hong Kong (“CityU”) received their prizes. This year the ceremony was held on 15 July and President Melissa Pang presented the prizes to the winners.

Mr. Wilson Chow, Head and Associate Professor of Department of Professional Legal Education of HKU; Mr. Christopher Knight, PCLL Programme Director of Faculty of Law of CUHK; Ms. Theresa Low, PCLL Programme Director and Ms. Stella Leung, Senior Teaching Consultant of School of Law of CityU attended the ceremony and shared the joyful moment with the students and their family members.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Community Relations Committee (“CRC”) is responsible for fostering relations between The Law Society and various organisations in the local community, with a view to encouraging participation in community activities, organising talks and mentorship programmes for schools to promote knowledge about the legal profession and projecting the corporate image of The Law Society as a Caring Organisation.

The membership of CRC underwent some changes. One member retired and four members newly joined. The size of CRC membership now is 19 persons.

During the year under review, members of the CRC continued its work with schools, local communities and non-government organisations. Below are highlights of their work:

CRC Christmas Gathering

On 12 December, CRC hosted a Christmas Gathering for its Committee Members, Working Group Members, writers, speakers, volunteers, mentors, and guests who have rendered significant support towards the work of the CRC and its four working groups.

WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNITY TALKS AND SERVICES

In view of the growing aging population and high demand of services for the elderly, the Working Group continued their efforts to care for the elderly and organised “Lawesome Fun Day - Harmony across generations” in collaboration with Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited on 31 August. A total of 40 Law Society volunteers and their family members paired up with 80 elderly to attend the talk on “Wills and Probate and Enduring Power of Attorney”. Riding on the Mid-Autumn Festival, they also played riddle games and made paper lanterns to celebrate the festival. Besides, a home visit to the elderly was organised in March.

To support the children who live under the poverty line and provide opportunity for them to know more about basic legal knowledge, the Working Group organised a half-day programme for the underprivileged children in collaboration with the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals. With the support of Po Leung Kuk (“PLK”), around 70 volunteer members also visited PLK children in

August. They had a wonderful time with 30 PLK children, reading stories, playing games and making handicrafts together.

WORKING GROUP ON “LEGAL PIONEER” MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Since the facelift of the former “Path Building” Mentorship Programme in 2013 to the current “Legal Pioneer” Mentorship Programme, over 1,000 students from 110 schools have already benefited from the Programme.

This year, in its 10th Anniversary, the “Legal Pioneer” Mentorship Programme promoted legal knowledge to the youngsters in a brand-new format. The highlight of the Phase 10 Mentorship Programme was a day camp event held in Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village on 6 July, where 60 student mentees and teachers from 13 schools and 26 mentors joined the event. A series of activities were conducted including checkpoints game of a basic law quiz, a talk on the topic of “Legal issues related to becoming a KOL” and group discussions about the criteria of being a “Legal Pioneer”. Mentors comprising solicitors and trainee solicitors provided guidance and advice to the students and shared legal knowledge throughout the day.

Apart from the day camp, a number of organisation visits were organised for the participants of the Mentorship Programme from May to July 2019, including the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal and Sha Tsui Correctional Institution. More than 100 student mentees, teachers and mentors joined the visits.

WORKING GROUP ON LAW AND NEW GENERATION PROGRAMME AND SCHOOL TALKS

This has been a regular programme coordinated by CRC since 2003, aiming to enriching secondary school students’ legal knowledge. Apart from talks for secondary students, the Working Group also offered talks to school principals, teachers and administrators on legal matters that they may encounter in their work as well as government organisation such as Education Bureau.

The Working Group has adopted a pro-active approach by reaching out to secondary schools in Hong Kong, which received positive feedbacks from schools.

To encourage Law Society members to act as speakers and share their knowledge with students and teaching staff, the Working Group hosted a Speakers’ Gathering on 5 September at the Law Society.

Over 30 members participated in the Gathering and many showed interest in joining the panel to speak at school talks.

At the end of each year, all speakers would receive a certificate of appreciation in recognition of their contribution.

WORKING GROUP ON “SING TAO LEGAL MAILBOX”

CRC also assumed another important task of coordinating contribution of articles amongst Law Society members for publication in the “Legal Mailbox”, a weekly column in a local newspaper, Sing Tao Daily, every Monday throughout the year.

A Working Group formed under CRC is responsible for reviewing articles submitted to ensure relevancy of the subject matter and accuracy of the factual information cited by the authors.

To enhance the works in the publication of the column, the Working Group hosted a Writer’s Gathering on 11 November at the Law Society for potential writers and vetting group members. Over 30 Law Society members participated in the event and showed interest in joining the panel to help write and review the articles. At the end of each year, all writers would receive a certificate of appreciation in recognition of their contribution.

An updated 2019 version of the Smart Book was published in September, comprising 76 selected articles published in Sing Tao Daily from 2015 to 2018. A total of 3,000 copies were printed for the public and university libraries, and distributed during different activities to promote the solicitor’s profession and enrich the public’s legal knowledge.

GREATER CHINA LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

As a sub-committee of the SCEA, the Greater China Legal Affairs Committee (“GCLAC”) is dedicated in promoting the image of Hong Kong legal industry in the Greater China region. Throughout the year, the GCLAC actively organised and participated in various events and visits to create a platform for lawyers in Hong Kong to explore and navigate new opportunities in Mainland China, Taiwan and Macau.

During 2019, the GCLAC engaged in a number of conferences and seminars in Greater China, and made continuous effort to exchange with lawyers associations and other legal professional bodies in the region. To help nurture the next generation of lawyers and provide learning and networking

platform for up-and-coming young lawyers, the GCLAC also held lectures for Mainland lawyers and law students, as well as the annual Cross Strait Four Regions Young Lawyers Forum.

Lectures for Peking University Law Students and Guangzhou Trainee Solicitors

From March to June, the Law Society offered an 8-session programme entitled “An Introduction to Legal Services and Risk Management for Cross-border Transactions” for undergraduate and postgraduate law students in Peking University in Beijing. The well-received courses were taught by various Law Society members, including Vice-President and Chairman of the GCLAC C.M. Chan, Council Members Cecilia Wong, Careen Wong, as well as Past President Ambrose Lam and former Council Member Nick Chan. Moreover, on behalf of the Law Society, President Melissa Pang signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Law School at Peking University on 10 April to promote exchanges and cooperation between the two parties.

In addition, at the invitation of the Guangdong Lawyers Association, the Law Society arranged two training courses in Guangzhou for Guangdong trainee lawyers in 2019. In the first training course, Lawrence Yeung, member of the GCLAC, introduced the legal system in Hong Kong and legal protection issues for Mainland companies investing overseas. The second round of training was hosted in July by Vice-President and Chairman of the GCLAC C.M. Chan, who shared his insights on Hong Kong’s legal system and legal protection for Mainland enterprises’ overseas businesses.

Exchange Session with Chinese Enterprises in Hong Kong

In order to promote the relationship between lawyers and Chinese enterprises in Hong Kong, the Law Society and the Legal Affairs Steering Committee of the Hong Kong Chinese Enterprises Association jointly organised the “Exchange Session with Chinese enterprises in Hong Kong” on 10 May, which gathered around 150 lawyers and business representatives. President Melissa Pang kicked off the event with a welcome speech. In the presentation session, Vice-President and Chairman of the GCLAC C.M. Chan discussed compliance issues for Chinese enterprises in Hong Kong investing overseas. Participants also made exchanges with others at the reception after the event.

SmartHK in Guangzhou

As a “Hong Kong Partner”, the Law Society participated in the Hong Kong Trade Development Council’s *SmartHK* in Guangzhou on 27 August. Mr. Alan Lau, member of the GCLAC, shared the roles of Hong Kong lawyers in intellectual property at the session titled “Creating a New Innovative Ecology through Cooperation and Win-Win Situations”. The Law Society also set up an exhibition

booth to promote Hong Kong's professional legal services and explain how Hong Kong lawyers could help Mainland enterprises in expanding their businesses.

Visits to Hainan

In October 2018, the State Council unveiled the blueprint to establish Hainan province as a free trade zone in its latest move to open up the economy. In view of the province's market potential, President Melissa Pang led a 20-member delegation to Hainan Free Trade Zone ("FTZ"), of whom 2 are junior members under Law Society sponsorship, from 28 to 30 August.

Apart from meeting with the representatives from the Hainan Department of Justice and Hainan Lawyers Association, the Law Society also co-organised a full-day seminar with Hainan Lawyers Association. At the seminar, President Melissa Pang delivered a speech and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Hainan Lawyers Association to foster closer ties between the legal profession in Hong Kong and Hainan.

Law Society representatives including Vice-President and Chairman of the GCLAC C.M. Chan and Past President Stephen Hung spoke to 300 Hainan business representatives and lawyers at the event and shared their insights on topics such as Hong Kong's legal and judicial review system, international arbitration, anti-money laundering, and Hong Kong lawyer's roles under the development of the Greater Bay Area.

The delegation also attended the "Hainan FTZ Seminar" hosted by the Hainan International Arbitration Court and Hainan Lawyers Association. At the event, GCLAC member Wilfred Tsui introduced Hong Kong's legal system and its advantages on behalf of the Law Society.

Visit to Kaohsiung and Nantou

Vice-President and Chairman of the GCLAC C.M. Chan, as well as Past President and member of the GCLAC Ambrose Lam visited Taiwan from 6 to 8 September to attend the Celebration Ceremony of Kaohsiung Bar Association and the Taiwan Lawyers Gathering organised by the Taiwan Bar Association in Kaohsiung and Nantou respectively. The delegation made valuable exchanges with local lawyers and Mr. Chan was invited to give a speech at both events.

Cross Strait Four Regions Young Lawyers Forum 2019

The *Cross Strait Four Regions Young Lawyers Forum* is an annual flagship event organised by The Law Society for lawyers from the Mainland, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong. The 9th edition was successfully held on 20 September, attracting more than 160 lawyers from the region to attend.

The theme of this year's forum was "Retrospect and Prospect - A New Legal Generation in Greater China". The event featured a plenary session and three breakout sessions, spotlighting wealth management and trust, intellectual property in innovative technology, as well as international dispute resolution as session highlights. Against the backdrop of the development of the Greater Bay Area, the forum also featured a keynote speech by Mr. Tommy Yuen, Director for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (Special Duties), HKSAR, on the development prospects of the area.

On the day before the forum, representatives from various lawyers associations held a round-table meeting to share ideas on the latest developments in the legal profession, the needs of young lawyers and cross-border business possibilities. In addition, the Law Society also arranged visits and welcome receptions for the participants.

The Second China (Guangdong) "Belt and Road" Legal Services Forum

As a supporting organisation, the Law Society sent a delegation to participate in the Second China (Guangdong) "Belt and Road" Legal Services Forum as moderators, speakers and commentators of different sessions. Under the theme "Cooperation in Legal Services between the Greater Bay Area and the ASEAN", the Forum was organised by the Guangdong Lawyers Association on 23 and 24 August in Guangzhou.

Global Lawyers Forum in Guangzhou

On behalf of the Law Society, President Melissa Pang and Vice-President and Chairman of the GCLAC C.M. Chan, attended the Global Lawyers Forum, a flagship event organised by the All China Lawyers Association in Guangzhou from 9 to 10 December. At the invitation of the organiser, President spoke on the topic "The 'Belt and Road Initiative' and Legal Services" at the Forum and participated in the roundtable meeting to exchange views with presidents of lawyer associations from all over the world.

WORKING GROUP ON THE GREATER BAY AREA

The development plan of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area ("Greater Bay Area"), which comprises the two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau, and

the nine municipalities of Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing in Guangdong Province, is one of the most notable urbanisation initiatives in China. To tap the potential of one of the country's most productive geographical areas and explore new opportunities for lawyers in Hong Kong, a working group was set up to focus on topics related to the development.

Joint Meetings for Lawyers Associations in the Greater Bay Area

To strengthen the cooperation within the legal services industry in the Greater Bay Area, the Law Society and the lawyers associations in the Greater Bay Area established a joint meeting system in December 2018 to be chaired by participating associations on a rotational basis. The Law Society held the second joint meeting on 11 May and invited over 30 legal practitioners from the area to attend the meeting. Attendees shared the latest industry updates in their cities and exchanged views on achieving maximum synergy through cooperation, as well as ways to enhance the level of practice in the region through training and internship programmes. President Melissa Pang also signed cooperation agreements on behalf of the Law Society with Huizhou Lawyers Association, Jiangmen Lawyers Association and Zhaoqing Lawyers Association respectively to seal the cities' collaborative effort in promoting exchanges and cooperation among legal profession in the regions.

Meanwhile, the third joint meeting was held in Macau on 12 October. Close to 30 representatives from lawyers associations in the Greater Bay Area attended the meeting. Representatives of the Law Society included President Melissa Pang, Vice-President and Chairman of the GCLAC C.M. Chan, Past President and Chairman of the Working Group on the Greater Bay Area Thomas So, and Law Society Secretary General Heidi Chu. Participants provided a number of cooperation proposals including joint activities and cross-border trainings in different regions.

Participation in Conferences and Other Events in the Greater China Region

In 2019, the GCLAC organised or participated in more than 20 outbound events in the Greater China region. The following list outlines the events with involvement of Law Society delegates:

Date	Event	Location
9 - 10 March	Opening Ceremony of Taichung Bar Association's New Office	Taichung, Taiwan
20 March	Exchange Meeting for Presidents of Business Chambers in Hong Kong	Shenzhen
30 March, 20 April, 25 May,	Lectures for the Peking University Law School	Beijing

8 June		
8 May, 1 July	Lectures for Trainee Lawyers in Guangzhou	Guangzhou
9 May	IAPH World Ports Conference	Guangzhou
18 August	Straits Law Forum	Xiamen
23-24 August	The Second China (Guangdong) “Belt and Road” Legal Services Forum	Guangzhou
27 August	SmartHK	Guangzhou
28-30 August	Visit to Hainan	Hainan
6 September	The 70 th Establishment Anniversary of Kaohsiung Bar Association	Kaohsiung, Taiwan
7-8 September	The 19 th Taiwan Lawyers Gathering cum the 72 nd Annual Celebration Ceremony for Taiwan Lawyers	Nantou, Taiwan
20-21 September	Macau Lawyers Forum	Macau
12 October	The Third Joint Meeting for Lawyers Association in the Greater Bay Area	Macau
25 October	The Second China Guangzhou Legal Services Fair	Guangzhou
9 - 11 November	The 11 th Mainland, Hong Kong and Macau Legal Seminar	Guangzhou
8 December	Forum on Case Law	Beijing
9-10 December	Global Lawyers From 2019	Guangzhou

Visitors from the Greater China Region

In 2019, the GCLAC received nearly 30 groups of visitors with over 400 guests from the Greater China region for meetings and networking activities. Distinguished guests included senior judges, government officials, as well as representatives from various provincial and municipal lawyers associations. Visiting delegations are listed as below:

Month	Visiting Organisation
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law students from Hunan University • Mainland judges
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hainan Department of Justice • Guangzhou Lawyers Association
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sichuan Lawyers Association • Qingdao Lawyers Association • Vice Minister of the Ministry of Justice

April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hainan Lawyers Association • Qingdao Lawyers Association • Beijing Investment Promotion Bureau
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wenzhou Bankruptcy Administrators Association • Fujian NPC Standing Committee • Hainan Department of Justice • Shaanxi Delegation • Mainland officials • Chinese senior judges
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainland young lawyers • Zhuhai Lawyers Association • Guangdong young lawyers
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainland law students • Peking University law students
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guangdong lawyers • Shenzhen Legal Aid Department
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chongqing Lawyers Association • Peking University School of Transnational Law
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese senior judges • China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission Delegation
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Bay Area Fintech Promotion Association
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China International Trade Promotion Committee - Shandong Committee

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The International Legal Affairs Committee (“ILAC”) is a committee established under the SCEA and is responsible for coordinating activities in the international arena so as to develop, maintain and establish relations with bar associations, law societies and other law-related associations overseas for the purpose of promoting The Law Society as a professional association for solicitors in Hong Kong.

The Law Society actively participated in international conferences/ seminars and reached out to other legal professional bodies around the world throughout the year.

Korean and Japanese Internship Programmes

One or two-week internship programmes were launched under the Korean and Japanese internship programmes during 9 to 22 January (Korean), 15 to 26 April (outbound, Japanese) and 22 May to 5 June (inbound, Japanese) to strengthen the relationship between the legal professions in Korea, Japan and Hong Kong. With the support of the Korean Bar Association (“KBA”), Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea (“MOJ”) and Japan Federation of Bar Associations (“JFBA”), The Law Society received one Korean lawyer, five Korean law students as well as six Japanese lawyers to participate in the internship programmes in Hong Kong in 2019. Interns from Korea and Japan were able to work in Hong Kong law firms with the generous support of our members and their firms. In addition, three Hong Kong lawyers worked as interns in Korea and two in Japanese law firms for two weeks.

During these programmes, the interns visited the High Court, Legislative Council, Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, Hong Kong Branch Office and the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong to enhance their understanding of the Hong Kong’s legal system and services and doing business in Hong Kong. The Korean interns also joined the Ceremonial Opening of Legal Year 2019 at the City Hall on 14 January, where they were able to mingle with the local legal practitioners as well as heads of overseas bar associations and law societies.

1st LAWASIA Human Rights Conference, New Delhi

At the invitation of LAWASIA, President Melissa Pang, Vice-President Amirali Nasir and Mr. Mark Daly, Member of the Constitutional Affairs and Human Rights Committee attended and spoke at the 1st LAWASIA Human Rights Conference in New Delhi, India from 9 to 10 February.

During the Conference, President discussed the nature of protection granted to privacy rights by Hong Kong laws with the participants, while Mr. Nasir and Mr. Daly shared their views on the independence and threats of the human rights lawyers, and cross-border migration respectively to the participants. This was a valuable opportunity for participants to exchange insights and expertise on topics of significant importance to the legal profession.

Hong Kong Business and Professional Delegation to Georgia and Hungary

At the invitation of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau of the HKSAR Government, President Melissa Pang joined the Hong Kong Business and Professional Delegation to Georgia and Hungary together with more than 30 head delegates from various businesses and professional sectors as well as representatives of start-ups from 18 to 23 March to explore and capitalise on the opportunities in these two countries arising from the Belt and Road Initiative.

The seminar cum networking dinner entitled “Hong Kong IN: Exploring New Business Opportunities” jointly organised by the HKSAR Government and HKTDC in Tbilisi, Georgia on 18 March was one of the highlights of the trip. President was invited to be one of the speakers to share with the delegates the core competencies of and how Hong Kong legal profession can assist the Georgian enterprises in their business investments.

Apart from meeting relevant government officials, local business leaders and chambers of commerce, visits to local development projects for business exchanges and to receive updates on the current economic and investment environments of the two countries/ regions were also arranged. Riding on this opportunity, meetings with Georgian Bar Association and Hungarian Bar Association were also arranged to renew friendship and discuss the possibility of future collaboration.

Study Tour with Mongolian Bar Association

The Law Society signed a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with the Mongolian Bar Association (“MBA”) in 2017. To foster collaboration and strengthen exchange between our respective members in the two jurisdictions, the first reciprocal study tour was launched this year.

To kick-off this programme, The Law Society received the MBA delegation and organised a half-day joint seminar in Hong Kong for the delegation and our members on 29 March. Focusing on law firm management and the use of technology in the legal sector, the joint seminar attracted around 50 participants. President Melissa Pang, Vice-President Amirali Nasir and then-Council Member Nick Chan spoke at the seminar to share Hong Kong’s legal system, risk management and technology courses with the Mongolian delegates and our members. Meanwhile, two speakers from the MBA introduced the legal system and the use of technology in Mongolia to the seminar participants.

Visits to the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre and Independent Commission Against Corruption were also arranged for the delegates to understand more about the arbitration, mediation and anti-corruption practices in Hong Kong which received positive feedback.

To reciprocate, President Melissa Pang led a delegation, including Vice-President C.M. Chan, Mr Thomas So, Immediate Past President and Chairman of Belt and Road Committee and members of the SCEA and its Sub-committees, to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia during 13 to 16 June. A meeting with the representatives of the Member of the State Great Khural (Parliament) of Mongolia and a visit to the Administrative Cases Court were arranged for the delegates to understand more about the local legal system and court structure.

Taking this opportunity, The Law Society organised a half-day joint seminar on 14 June to introduce to the local legal practitioners the unique features of the Hong Kong legal system; the legal services Hong Kong solicitors can offer to clients when exploring new markets and business opportunities along the Belt and Road countries; and The Law Society's work on the Belt and Road Initiative. Last but not least, The Law Society introduced the importance of risk management for law firms.

A fruitful meeting with the MBA was held to evaluate the MOU signed in 2017 and discussed possible collaborations between the two associations. Apart from inviting The Law Society to participate in their upcoming events, the MBA expressed great interest to work with The Law Society by organising training courses on selected topics such as risk management in Mongolia for their members.

21st Commonwealth Law Conference, Livingstone

On behalf of The Law Society, Council Member Robert Rhoda attended the 21st Commonwealth Law Conference in Livingstone, Zambia from 8 to 12 April. Mr. Rhoda spoke at The Law Society's organised session entitled "One Belt, One Road' – the legal implications" on 11 April and discussed the possibility of the Belt and Road Initiative being the dawn of a new era for international arbitration. Riding on this opportunity, a meeting was arranged with The Law Society of England and Wales to renew friendship and receive updates on both jurisdictions.

Hong Kong-Mainland Joint Investment and Partnership Mission to Spain, Serbia and UAE

At the invitation of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau of the HKSAR Government, Vice-President Amirali Nasir joined the Hong Kong-Mainland Joint Investment and Partnership Mission to Spain, Serbia and UAE from 9 to 18 June with more than 80 delegates from Hong Kong and Mainland to facilitate the Hong Kong enterprises and professional bodies and Mainland enterprises "going global", en-bloc to explore and capitalise on the Belt and Road opportunities in these three economies.

Vice-President also took the opportunity to meet with the Madrid Bar Association and the Bar Association of Serbia to renew friendship and discuss possible collaborations, in which the Bar Association of Serbia expressed interest to sign a MOU with The Law Society.

30th Presidents of Law Associations in Asia (“POLA”) Conference, Kunming

The 30th POLA Conference was held from 31 July to 2 August in Kunming, China. On behalf of The Law Society which has been a long standing member of POLA, President Melissa Pang and Secretary General Heidi Chu attended the Conference. President was also invited by the organiser to talk about the Belt and Road Initiative from the Hong Kong’s perspective, and to moderate two other sessions entitled “Alternative Dispute Resolution in International Trade” and “Legal Aid and Public Legal Service System”.

POLA provides a valuable forum for law society and bar association leaders across Asia to exchange ideas and facilitate regional cooperation. During the Conference, the participating Presidents raised concerns regarding reports of violence associated with the recent public order events in Hong Kong and urged all sides to engage in a peaceful process to resolve their differences.

IBA-PERADI Corporate Counsel Conference, Bali

At the invitation of the Indonesian Advocates Association (“PERADI”), Vice-President C.M. Chan attended the IBA-PERADI Corporate Counsel Conference in Bali, Indonesia on 8 August.

As one of the speakers on the topic “GDPR and the urgency of data protection law in Indonesia”, Mr. Chan gave a brief introduction to Hong Kong’s data privacy regime from an in-house lawyer’s perspective. He also took the opportunity to reassure the international community that Hong Kong’s judiciary remains independent against the backdrop of recent protests.

“East-West Economic Partnership: Tbilisi Legal Forum”, Tbilisi

Jointly organised by The Law Society, Georgian Bar Association and European Association of Lawyers (“AEA-EAL”), a legal forum entitled “East-West Economic Partnership: Tbilisi Legal Forum” was held in Tbilisi, Georgia from 6 to 7 September.

President Melissa Pang and Mr. Stephen Hung, Past President and Council Member, attended and spoke on various topics at the forum, including “The Belt & Road Initiative”, “Business Climate and Investment Regulations in Hong Kong”, “Doing Business in Hong Kong and China”, and lastly,

“The Importance and the Ways of Cross-border Legal Cooperation among Legal Professionals and Bar Associations/ Law Societies”. It was well-attended by around 100 participants from Georgia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and China.

HKTDC “Think Asia, Think Hong Kong”, Los Angeles

The HKTDC’s mega promotion event “Think Asia, Think Hong Kong” was held in Los Angeles, USA from 19 to 20 September. At the invitation of Department of Justice (“DoJ”), Vice-President Amirali Nasir spoke at the thematic seminar entitled “From Deal Making to Dispute Resolution: What Hong Kong can offer to US Enterprises” co-organised by the DoJ and HKTDC on 20 September to share his insights and experience on some of the latest developments in LawTech, such as the use of blockchain and smart contracts.

International Bar Association (“IBA”) Annual Conference, Seoul

Representing The Law Society, President Melissa Pang, Vice-President Amirali Nasir and Council Member Robert Rhoda attended the IBA Annual Conference in Seoul, South Korea from 22 to 27 September.

Co-organised with the Hong Kong Bar Association (“HKBA”), a breakfast session entitled ‘Hong Kong’s Unique Role as an Asian International Legal Hub under “One Country, Two Systems” ’ was held at the Conference on 26 September. This breakfast focused on how the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” support the cross border and international practice of Hong Kong-based lawyers in capital markets, finance, intellectual property, M&A, investment and trade and dispute resolution in Mainland China, Asia and globally. Apart from The Law Society and HKBA’s representatives, The Hon Teresa Cheng SC, Secretary for Justice, was also invited to join the panel. It was well-attended by over 100 conference participants.

Riding on the occasion, The Law Society signed a MOU with the Seoul Bar Association. Fruitful meetings with the overseas lawyers associations and legal organisations, including German Bar Association, German Federal Bar, JFBA, KBA, IBA and Inter-Pacific Bar Association (“IPBA”), were also arranged to renew friendships and discuss possible future collaborations.

63rd International Association of Lawyers (“UIA”) Congress, Luxembourg

On behalf of The Law Society, Vice-President Amirali Nasir, Council Members Denis Brock and Robert Rhoda attended the 63rd UIA Congress in Luxembourg from 6 to 10 November.

A session entitled “Mediation and Arbitration for Businesses along the Belt and Road” was held at the Congress on 8 November. In order to emphasize the key role of Hong Kong in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area, this session focused on various means for resolution of local and cross-border disputes and new initiatives for the enforcement of awards locally and internationally. Meetings with the Luxembourg Bar Association and UIA were also arranged on this occasion to discuss possible future collaborations.

Agreement with Overseas Lawyers Associations and Legal Organisations

As part of the ongoing mission of the ILAC to develop and further relationships with overseas lawyers associations and international legal organisations, The Law Society signed a total of four MOUs on the occasion of international events this year. Please refer to the table below for the signing occasion details.

	Date	Name of organisation	Event and location
1	23 May	International Association of Young Lawyers (“AIJA”)	AIJA Half-Year Conference in Hong Kong
2	23 May	Florida Bar International Law Section	AIJA Half-Year Conference in Hong Kong
3	27 September	Seoul Bar Association	IBA Annual Conference in Seoul
4	7 November	Hyogo-Ken Bar Association	32 nd LAWASIA Conference in Hong Kong

Participation in International Conferences and Meetings

In 2019, the following visits and attendance of various international conferences and meetings by The Law Society representatives were coordinated under ILAC:

- Attendance by The Law Society delegates including young lawyers to conferences hosted by the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, IPBA, AIJA, IBA, UIA and LAWASIA.
- Attendance to the LAWASIA Executive Committee (“ExCo”) meetings by President Melissa Pang who is The Law Society’s official representative in the ExCo and also elected as the President-Elect of LAWASIA for the term of 2019/20.
- Attendance to the UIA ExCo meetings by Vice-President Amirali Nasir who is The Law Society’s official representative in the ExCo and also appointed as the Counselor to the President for the term of 2019/20.

- Attendance to the AIJA ExCo meetings by Ms Louise Wong, Member of the SCEA and ILAC, who is The Law Society's official representative for AIJA. Apart from her current role as the Contact Person representing AIJA in Hong Kong and AIJA's Asia-Pacific Regional Co-ordinator, Ms Wong was also elected by General Assembly as an ExCo Member for a term of three years until the Annual Congress in Q3 2022. The ExCo assists in the management process of AIJA and she was currently one of only two lawyers based in Asia elected to be AIJA's ExCo.
- Attendance to the Opening of the Legal Year of Singapore, Malaysia, England and Wales, and Paris by President Melissa Pang and Vice-President Amirali Nasir.
- Please refer to the following table for the location of the international events that the delegates from The Law Society attended:

Date	Event	Location
9 – 10 February	1 st LAWASIA Human Rights Conference	New Delhi
14 – 16 March	LAWASIA Business Law Conference	Manila
18 – 23 March	Hong Kong Business and Professional Delegation to Georgia and Hungary	Tbilisi and Budapest
4 – 5 April	Seminar on Special Lawyers Mailbox and 4 th International Lawyers' Forum	Berlin
8 – 12 April	21 st Commonwealth Law Conference	Livingstone
25 – 26 April	29 th IPBA Annual Meeting and Conference	Singapore
14 – 18 May	St. Petersburg International Legal Forum	St. Petersburg
22 – 25 May	AIJA Half-Year Conference	Hong Kong
9 – 18 June	Hong Kong-Mainland Joint Investment and Partnership Mission to Spain, Serbia and UAE	Madrid, Belgrade and Dubai
13 – 16 June	Study Tour With MBA (outbound)	Ulaanbaatar
20 – 21 June	International Women in Law Symposium	London
24 – 26 July	Hong Kong Business Mission to Thailand	Bangkok
31 July – 2 August	30 th POLA Conference	Kunming
8 August	IBA-PERADI Corporate Counsel Conference	Bali
3 – 7 September	57 th AIJA Annual Congress	Rome
5 – 6 September	International Conference of Legal Regulators	Edinburgh
6 – 7 September	East-West Economic Partnership: Tbilisi Legal Forum	Tbilisi

18 – 21 September	IILACE Conference	Tokyo
20 September	HKTDC “Think Asia, Think Hong Kong”	Los Angeles
22 – 27 September	IBA Annual Conference	Seoul
4 – 5 October	LAWASIA Constitutional & Rule of Law Conference	Petaling Jaya
17 – 19 October	AEA- EAL Business Legal Forum	Łódź
6 – 8 November	32 nd LAWASIA Conference	Hong Kong
6 – 10 November	63 rd UIA Congress	Luxembourg
25 – 29 November	Hong Kong Business and Professional Delegation to Malaysia and Thailand	Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok

- Riding on the opportunities of attending international activities, meetings were arranged to strengthen The Law Society’s relationship with other overseas organisations. Table below is a list of organisations that The Law Society delegates met:

Month	Organisations
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgian Bar Association • Hungarian Bar Association
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law Society of England and Wales • Seoul Bar Association
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madrid Bar Association • Bar Association of Serbia • Member of the State Great Khural (Parliament) of Mongolia • Administrative Cases Court • MBA
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German Bar Association • JFBA • German Federal Bar • KBA • IBA • IPBA • Seoul Bar Association
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxembourg Bar Association • UIA

Overseas Visitors

Throughout the year The Law Society received a number of overseas visitors. Constructive and fruitful exchanges of ideas were made with overseas visitors from different jurisdictions. Below is a list of overseas visitors.

Month	Visiting Organisations
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Bar Association• Australian Consulate-General, Hong Kong• UIA• The Law Society of England and Wales• MBA• Canadian Bar Association• Hyogo-Ken Bar Association• Judge of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, United Nations
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delegation from Sri Lanka and Maldives
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trade Commission of the Consulate General of Spain in Hong Kong
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asia Pacific of the BARBRI
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Bar Foundation
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bar Association of Sri Lanka• Daini Tokyo Bar Association• Hyogo-Ken Bar Association• KBA• Seoul Bar Association• MBA• JFBA• The Law Society of England and Wales• IBA• Russian Federal Bar

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Public Policy Committee (“PPC”) aims to investigate, identify and make recommendations on public policy and socio-legal issues that might be of interest to members of the Law Society by conducting research and facilitating dialogue among members and public policy-makers.

The PPC also procures opportunities for members to enhance their awareness of and to express their opinions on social and political issues relevant to the legal profession, and meets with leading stakeholders of different sectors to learn their views on major contemporary issues.

Seminar on China's Foreign Affairs

The PPC organised a seminar at the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC in the HKSAR on 7 March to equip our members with more awareness on the nation's foreign affairs. Titled "China's Diplomacy – Peaceful Development, Cooperation, Mutual Benefits", the seminar attracted more than 60 members in attending the event. Commissioner Xie Feng gave a detailed introduction to China's diplomatic strategy, China's latest diplomatic situation, relevant opportunities and challenges, and the roles Hong Kong lawyers can play in international development initiatives, such as the 'Belt and Road Initiative'. The event was well-received by the attended members.