

**ADDRESS BY MR HAN KOK JUAN,
DEPUTY SECRETARY, SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF LAW,
AT THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION SUMMIT OPENING CEREMONY,
ON 19 SEP 2017 AT HANGZHOU MARRIOTT HOTEL QIANJIANG,
HANGZHOU, CHINA**

Dr Lu Pengqi, Vice Chairman, China Council for Promotion of International Trade

Mr Dai Jianping, Executive Vice Mayor, Hangzhou Municipal Government

Mr Zhang Jingzhong, Vice Chairman, China National Lawyers' Association

Ms Chen Kit Yi, Ada, Commissioner, Joint Dispute Resolution Strategy Office, Hong Kong Department of Justice

Mr Li Jianning, Director-General, CCPIT Commercial Legal Services Centre

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good morning.
2. Let me begin by thanking CCPIT and the Hangzhou Municipal Government for organising today's International Mediation Summit and bringing us to Hangzhou. Hangzhou is a city steeped in history and natural beauty. I visited Hangzhou 10 years ago. This present visit has not only brought back many fond memories but has also impressed upon me Hangzhou's spectacular development and growth over the last 10 years.
3. Today, the China Council for Promotion of International Trade/China Chamber of International Commerce (CCPIT/CCOIC) Mediation Center and the Singapore International Mediation Centre (SIMC) will sign a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate to promote international commercial mediation and each other's mediators, services and facilities. The SIMC was launched in 2014 by the Chief Justice of Singapore Sundaresh Menon and Singapore's Minister for Law K. Shanmugam SC. It has a panel of over 70 renowned mediators from all over the world. Many of its users are Chinese parties.
4. The MOU between CCPIT/CCOIC and SIMC has great significance for businesses, as they embark on cross-border commercial transactions under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

5. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by China has united governments and energised businesses. BRI has the potential to redefine the world we know and improve the lives of billions. It is bridging civilisations and bringing together governments, businesses and people to realise the vision of a BRI built on mutual trust and benefit.
6. BRI covers over 60 countries and many civilisations. As BRI projects involve cross-border, high value and long-term investments, there will inevitably be some political and financing risks, operational challenges and differences in systems and practices. While businesses seek cooperation, they need to also plan for disputes. Agreeing in advance on how disputes will be resolved should they arise can strengthen trust and further co-operation.
7. Today's seminar is especially important in this context. Let me take this opportunity to share my views on the key features of a dispute resolution mechanism that can help build trust and further cooperation under the BRI.
 - i. First, the dispute resolution mechanism should have rule of law as its foundation. Disputes should be resolved based on well established, fair and transparent rules and procedures.
 - ii. Second, the administration of the mechanism should be independent and neutral. It should instil in parties trust that the administration of the agreed rules will be fair and consistent, regardless of who the parties are.
 - iii. Third, the system should be stable. It should give parties the confidence that if and when disputes arise 10, 20 years down the road, the system earlier agreed upon will still apply and remain robust and sustainable.
 - iv. Fourth, it should cover all dispute resolution instruments, including litigation, arbitration or mediation, to cater to the varying needs of parties.
8. CCPIT/CCOIC Mediation Center's and SIMC's MOU is a building block for such a mechanism. It also opens a new chapter in closer legal services cooperation between China and Singapore.
9. The MOU is also testament to the long-term friendship between China and Singapore. As we speak, the Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong is now in Beijing meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang to discuss ways to deepen bilateral cooperation.
10. I thank CCPIT for organising today's Summit and for their vision and contribution to the BRI which will benefit us all. I wish everyone a fruitful and productive discussion.

11. Thank you.

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