

**ADDRESS BY MR HAN KOK JUAN,  
DEPUTY SECRETARY, SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF LAW,  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION SUMMIT RECEPTION DINNER,  
ON 18 SEP 2017 AT HANGZHOU MARRIOTT HOTEL QIANJIANG,  
HANGZHOU, CHINA**

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

Mr Xie Shuangcheng, Vice Mayor, Hangzhou Municipal Government

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

Mr George Varughese, President, Malaysian Bar Association

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

1. I am happy to be in Hangzhou to attend the International Mediation Summit and to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between China Council for Promotion of International Trade/China Chamber of International Commerce (CCPIT/CCOIC) Mediation Center and the Singapore International Mediation Centre (SIMC).
2. I was in Hangzhou 10 years ago, while doing my Masters in Public Administration at Peking University under the Singapore-China Premier Scholarship. I remember taking a boat down the West Lake as the sun was setting; the boatman was humming a little tune. I took a photograph of the Long Bridge. That photo was my desktop wallpaper for many years. It captured for me my very fond memories of Hangzhou.
3. I thank CCPIT and the Hangzhou Municipal Government for giving me the opportunity to come back to Hangzhou. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you what Singapore is doing to support dispute resolution.
4. The economic centre of gravity of the world is shifting to Asia. As this happens, the centre of gravity for legal activities will follow also. There will be a lag in this shift because of habits and established practices. Nonetheless, we will see Asia's magnetic pull on business having a similar knock-on effect for legal activities.

5. Between 2014 and 2019, legal services is projected to grow at 3.3% a year globally. Over the same period, legal services in the Asia-Pacific region is expected to grow at 5.5% annually. There is a 2.2 percentage point difference in growth rate. This is compounded each year. The gap is widening very quickly.
6. Take infrastructure as an example. Asia's rapid urbanisation, development and population growth create an urgent need: US\$20 trillion of additional infrastructure investments from now till 2030. These infrastructure projects need financing and project structuring. They will also need legal services to bring the projects into being. The nature of infrastructure projects is such that delays and variations are common. Demand for infrastructure in Asia will translate to demand for dispute resolution services.
7. The Singapore Government, Courts and legal profession are working together to look into how we can better serve the legal needs of businesses. We are doing so in four ways:
  - i. First, we build a trusted legal system that delivers high quality jurisprudence and is neutral and stable. Based on a recent survey, more than 90% of Singaporeans have trust and confidence in our legal system. This is also why overseas businesses, even those that have no connection with Singapore, choose Singapore as the seat of arbitration in their business contracts.
  - ii. Second, we proactively review legislation to make sure that they stay up-to-date and support businesses. For example, we recently amended legislation to allow third party funding in relation to international commercial arbitration. This offers businesses an additional financing and risk management tool, where businesses can finance valid claims, which they might not have otherwise pursued due to financial constraints. This adds to our arbitration regime that is completely open and our pro-arbitration judiciary that reliably upholds parties' agreement to arbitrate. We have also introduced a new legislative framework to strengthen the enforceability of mediated settlements.
  - iii. Third, we offer a complete suite of dispute resolution services, including international commercial arbitration, mediation and litigation. Chinese parties are Singapore International Arbitration Centre's (SIAC) number 2 foreign users in 2016. SIAC can serve as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party institution for businesses whose counter-party cannot agree to a dispute resolution institution from their home country.
  - iv. Fourth, we adopt an open and inclusive approach. We understand that businesses want choice of institution, arbitrator and counsel they are

familiar with. We set up Maxwell Chambers, the world's first integrated dispute resolution complex. The International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) will set up their physical offices here within the next six months. We welcome other institutions, chambers and law firms to also do so.

8. The Singapore Government also believes it is important for countries to work across borders to support businesses. On 22 August this year, the President of the Supreme People's Court of China, H.E. Zhou Qiang and the Chief Justice of Singapore, H.E. Sundaresh Menon initiated an annual bilateral roundtable on legal and judicial cooperation.
9. Tomorrow, the SIMC will sign an MOU with the CCPIT/CCOIC Mediation Centre. I am confident that this MOU will provide the foundation for SIMC and CCPIT to deepen their collaboration, and will add depth to the already strong bilateral relationship between Singapore and China.
10. I wish all of you an enjoyable dinner and hope to get to know many of you better over the course of the Summit.
11. Thank you.

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