

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Asia Pacific Law Association Successfully Hosts Forum on “Legal and Professional Services Empowering Chinese Enterprises to Enter Kazakhstan”

Bringing Together Mainland China, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan to Unlock New Opportunities for Growth and Collaboration

Hong Kong, 7 August 2026 – The Asia Pacific Law Association (APLA) successfully hosted the “Legal and Professional Services Empowering Chinese Enterprises to Enter Kazakhstan Forum” today. The event brought together legal and professional service practitioners from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan to explore how their respective strengths can be leveraged to seize emerging opportunities arising from Chinese enterprises expanding into Kazakhstan and the wider Central Asian market.

The Forum emphasized on Kazakhstan’s continued market liberalization, the growing business opportunities in Central Asia, and how Hong Kong’s unique legal system and international professional services can serve as a strategic platform connecting Mainland China and Kazakhstan, creating a mutually beneficial partnership in which the combined value is far greater than the sum of its parts.

The Forum was honored to welcome **Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, SBS, JP, Deputy Secretary for Justice of the Hong Kong SAR Government**, as the keynote opening speaker. A keynote address from **Mr Bauyrzhan Dosmanbetov, Consul General of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Hong Kong**, and congratulatory remarks were also delivered by **Ms Liu Jianqing, Deputy Secretary-General of the China Overseas Development Association (CODA)**.

The event attracted more than **100 legal and professional practitioners from Hong Kong and Mainland China**, including representatives from the legal, arbitration, mediation and professional services sectors.

APLA: Professional Services Are Essential for Market Entry and Sustainable Development

In her opening remarks, **Ms Phyllis Kwong, Chairlady of the Asia Pacific Law Association**, expressed her delight that the Forum provided an important platform for Hong Kong and Mainland legal professionals to explore emerging opportunities in Kazakhstan together.

She noted that enterprises supported by reliable professional advice are better positioned to transform opportunities into successful projects and generate long-term value.

“Professional services are not simply supporting functions. They are essential pillars for successful market entry and sustainable business development,” Ms Kwong said.

“Legal professionals play an indispensable role in helping enterprises make informed decisions, avoid unnecessary risks, and ensure compliance with local laws and international standards.”

Deputy Secretary for Justice: Hong Kong is an Indispensable Partner for Mainland Enterprises Expand into Kazakhstan and Beyond

In his opening address, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, who also serves as Chairman of the Expert Committee on Professional Services for Going Global, emphasized that Hong Kong is an indispensable partner for Mainland enterprises seeking to expand into Kazakhstan and the wider Central Asian market.

With the advantages of “One Country, Two Systems” and Hong Kong’s quality professional services sector, the city is uniquely positioned to serve as a gateway for Mainland enterprises pursuing overseas opportunities.

As an international financial centre, the liquidity of Hong Kong’s financial market is matched by a deep and robust bond market. Behind every successful transaction lies a solid legal foundation, Dr Cheung said.

He highlighted that Hong Kong lawyers, leveraging their rich experience, are well equipped to navigate the intersection of common law, international regulations, and Chinese corporate governance, thereby supporting the sustainability of cross-border projects.

Dr Cheung added that the distinctive advantages of Hong Kong’s financial and legal infrastructures position us to play a pivotal role in supporting closer collaboration with Kazakhstan. He expressed the hope to work together to build better partnerships among Chinese Mainland enterprises, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan.

Consul General Dosmanbetov: Hong Kong is a Global “Super-Connector”

In his keynote address, **Mr Bauyrzhan Dosmanbetov**, Consul General of Kazakhstan in Hong Kong, noted that Kazakhstan and Hong Kong have officially entered a new golden era of cooperation.

He highlighted the historic visit by Hong Kong Chief Executive **Mr John Lee** to Kazakhstan in June this year, which significantly advanced bilateral relations. During the visit, the two sides signed **61 cooperation agreements** covering finance, logistics, investment, higher education and advanced technology.

“Entering any new market requires following strict rules, and this is exactly where Hong Kong’s professional services are incredibly helpful,” Mr Dosmanbetov said.

Kazakhstan’s Economic Transformation Creates New Opportunities for Hong Kong Professional Services

Mr Dosmanbetov emphasized that Kazakhstan is shifting from simple selling raw materials to developing high-tech manufacturing and processing resources deeply. For Hong Kong services, consulting, and financial companies, this change opens up many new, long-term opportunities.

He also stated that the **Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC)** offers attractive incentives for financial and professional services activities, including exemptions from corporate and personal income tax until 2066.

Furthermore, as Kazakhstan works towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2060, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards are becoming increasingly important. Hong Kong’s legal, auditing and consulting firms possess extensive ESG and compliance expertise and are well positioned to assist Chinese enterprises in meeting these requirements from the outset.

China Overseas Development Association: Growing Interest in Central Asia Among Chinese Enterprises

Ms Liu Jianqing, Deputy Secretary-General of the China Overseas Development Association (CODA), shared insights into the growing trend of Chinese enterprises expanding into Central Asia.

She noted that CODA currently represents approximately **1,200 member enterprises**. According to a special survey conducted during the first half of 2026, **63% of member companies have already developed clear overseas expansion plans**, while **37% have completed field visits and business negotiations in Kazakhstan**.

Enquiries related to investment opportunities in Central Asia increased by more than **120% year-on-year**, reflecting unprecedented momentum among Mainland enterprises exploring opportunities in the region.

Hong Kong Professional Services Can Reduce Expansion Costs by Up to 35%

Ms Liu further stated that Kazakhstan is often the first destination for Chinese enterprises entering the Central Asian market.

Based on practical project comparisons conducted by CODA, Chinese enterprises that use Hong Kong as a strategic intermediary platform for Central Asian expansion can achieve significant efficiencies.

“Leveraging Hong Kong’s professional services ecosystem can reduce overall operating costs by between 25% and 35%, while improving project implementation efficiency by nearly 50%,” she said.

She added that CODA intends to strengthen cooperation with Hong Kong professional service providers and Kazakhstan-based business associations to establish a long-term and regular business-matching platform.

Forum Discussion Highlights

Strong Market Demand and Growth Potential in Central Asia

Kazakhstan’s Legal Services Market Exceeds US\$400 Million

During the panel discussion, **Mr Pan Chuanping, Vice Chairman of the Asia Pacific Law Association**, highlighted the significant growth potential of Kazakhstan’s legal services sector.

According to Mr Pan, Kazakhstan’s legal services market is valued at over **US\$400 million**, while legal work relating to Chinese enterprises is growing at a compound annual rate of between **15% and 18%**.

He noted that Hong Kong, as an international legal hub, possesses unique strengths to bridge legal gaps and establish an integrated legal services framework connecting Mainland China, Hong Kong and Central Asia, helping enterprises manage increasingly complex cross-border projects.

Hong Kong Lawyers as “Project Commanders” for Chinese Enterprises Going Global

Drawing on more than a decade of experience in Central Asian projects, Mr Pan observed that many Chinese enterprises entering Central Asia for the first time mistakenly assume that local lawyers alone can solve all legal challenges.

However, he pointed out that local legal advisers are often less familiar with Mainland Chinese regulatory requirements and may not be able to provide comprehensive, investor-focused risk management solutions.

In addition, Russian remains the dominant business language across much of Central Asia, which can result in communication gaps and translation risks.

Hong Kong lawyers, by contrast, are uniquely positioned to act as “project commanders,” coordinating different jurisdictions and professional disciplines while helping enterprises overcome these challenges.

Expert Presentations

The Forum also featured several specialist presentations, including:

Mr Shaimerden Chikanayev, Partner at GRATA International / Admitted Bar of Kazakhstan GRATA International, on “Legal Aspects of Investing in Energy and Infrastructure in Kazakhstan”

Ms Queenie Lau, Senior Counsel, on “*Hong Kong as a Dispute Resolution Centre: Arbitration, Mediation and Beyond*”;

Ms Julianne Doe, President of Hong Kong Women Professionals and Entrepreneurs Association, on “*Structuring and Contract Design: How Mainland Enterprises Can Manage Contractual Risks*”; and

Ms Xie Yuanxiang, Deputy Secretary-General of the Asia Pacific Law Association, on “*How to Become a Lawyer of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) Court?*”

Looking Ahead

In her closing remarks, **Ms Phyllis Kwong, Chairlady of the Asia Pacific Law Association**, emphasized that the Association will continue strengthening ties between Mainland enterprises and Hong Kong’s legal and professional services sector.

She expressed hope that Hong Kong lawyers will play an increasingly important role in supporting Mainland enterprises “sailing together” to international markets and helping create a new era of mutually beneficial cooperation and shared success.

Ends

Event Photos:



The Asia Pacific Law Association successfully hosted the “Legal and Professional Services Empowering Chinese Enterprises to Enter Kazakhstan Forum” on 7 August 2026.



The event attracted approximate 120 legal and professional practitioners from Hong Kong and Mainland China, including representatives from the legal and professional services sectors.



Dr. Cheung Kwok-kwan, Deputy Secretary for Justice delivered the opening speech.



Mr Bauyrzhan Dosmanbetov, Consul General of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Hong Kong delivered keynote speech at the event.



Ms. Liu Jianqing, Deputy Secretary-General of the China Overseas Development Association delivered opening speech.



Ms. Phyllis Kwong, Chairlady of the Asia Pacific Law Association delivered welcome speech.



The forum brought together legal and professional service practitioners from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan to seize emerging opportunities arising from Chinese enterprises expanding into Kazakhstan and the wider Central Asian market.