

**Minor Dispute Mediation Pilot Scheme launched to promote use of mediation and build social harmony**

Funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and independently administered by the Joint Mediation Helpline Office ("JMHO"), the Minor Dispute Mediation Pilot Scheme ("MDMPS") is officially launched on 28th January 2016, marking a significant step of introducing mediation to the general public for resolving minor disputes, for the purposes of preserving social harmony and promoting wider use of mediation in Hong Kong

The ceremony for the official launch of the scheme was held at the Club House, The Law Society of Hong Kong and was attended by Master Daniel Tang (District Court of the Hong Kong SAR), Ms. Jenny Fung (Senior Assistant Law Officer (Civil Law) of Department of Justice), Miss Kitty Liu (Charities Manager of Hong Kong Jockey Club), Mr. Antony Man (Chairman of JMHO) and Mr. Chan Bing Woon, SBS, JP (Honorary Advisor and Founding Chairman of JMHO).

The MDMPS aims at resolving civil disputes arising from a social or legal relationship, with or without a monetary element. These can be disputes among neighbours, landlord and tenant, etc. Where a monetary sum is involved, it shall not exceed HK\$100,000 in order to be an eligible dispute under the MDMPS.

"By resolving these disputes via mediation, which is a process much more flexible, informal, cost effective and less confrontational than litigation, it is expected that the best interest of the parties in disputes can be served, and a wider social harmony may also be achieved as a result," said Mr. Antony Man.

Mr Chan Bing Woon, SBS, JP, added, "the successful launching of the MDMPS relied upon the generosity and funding granted by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, and the support offered by the mediators who joined the pilot scheme and other relevant organisations. This has not only acknowledged the contribution of mediation services towards building a harmonious society, but also marked an unprecedented move of having a charitable trust funding a mediation pilot scheme in Hong Kong."

Before the official launch of the MDMPS, JMHO has already received 9 enquiries of the scheme, out of which 5 cases may potentially proceed to the process of mediation. This is an encouraging sign for the pilot scheme and is indicative of the public's needs for having a specific mediation scheme to handle the various kinds of "minor disputes".

Under the MDMPS, the JMHO provides free consultation services and the administration for the scheme. It also plans to promote the general public's awareness and understanding of the scheme through radio broadcasting and monthly talks to be organized.

Potential applicants of the MDMPs need to satisfy the eligible criteria, for details, please visit the website <http://www.jointmediationhelpline.org.hk/mdmps.html>.

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