

Joint Mediation Helpline Office
Report on the Feedbacks of the Visitors and Exhibitors at the
Belt and Road Summit 2019 on 11 & 12 September 2019

1. Background

- 1.1 For the purpose of enhancing overseas corporate's awareness on the use of Hong Kong's mediation services, the Joint Mediation Helpline Office ("JMHO") has obtained funding from the Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme administered by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau of the Hong Kong Government to carry out a project with this goal.
- 1.2 The Project title is "Promoting Hong Kong as a leading centre for international trade dispute mediation". One of the deliverables of the project is to set up booth at the Belt and Road Summit 2019 on 11 and 12 September 2019 for the purposes of introducing Hong Kong's mediation services to the visitors and exhibitors and gathering views from them on the use of mediation for resolving disputes and Hong Kong mediation services through one-on-one interaction and feedback survey.
- 1.3 Feedbacks resulted from the survey are now summarized in this report.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 On 11 and 12 September 2019, JMHO set up a booth at the Belt and Road Summit 2019 to promote Hong Kong's mediation. Approximately 5,000 distinguished government officials and business leaders, covering 67 countries and regions, attended the event. 110 organisations/ enterprises from different countries and regions exhibited at the event. By interacting with visitors and exhibitors, giving speech at the open forum and carrying out a survey, views from visitors and exhibitors on JMHO's booth and Hong Kong's mediation services were gathered.
- 2.2 13 feedback forms were collected.
- 2.3 These feedback forms were collected from 7 local companies, 3 foreign companies outside Hong Kong, and 3 international enterprises. 11 of them conduct international business while the rest of 2 conduct local business only.

3. Findings

3.1 Major findings are summarized below.

3.1.1 Mediation as a means of commercial dispute resolution

- i. None of the respondents held negative attitude towards the idea of using mediation as a means of commercial dispute resolution.
- ii. While 3 of the respondents held neutral attitude towards the idea, the rest of 10 stated that they would use mediation if their companies encounter disputes, including 6 of them strongly agreed to the idea.

3.1.2 Embodying a pre-agreed mediation clause in companies' commercial contract

- i. None of the respondents held negative attitude towards the idea of embodying a pre-agreed mediation clause in companies' commercial contract.
- ii. While 3 of the respondents held neutral attitude towards the idea, the rest of 10 stated that they would consider embodying a pre-agreed mediation clause in companies' commercial contract, including 4 of them strongly agreed to the idea.

3.1.3 Choosing Hong Kong as a mediation venue if disputes are encountered

- iii. 2 of the respondents held negative attitude towards the idea of choosing Hong Kong as a mediation venue.
- iv. 1 of the respondents held neutral attitude towards the idea. The rest of 10 agreed that they would choose Hong Kong as a mediation venue, including 4 of them strongly agreed to the idea.

3.2 The findings show that government officials and business leaders from the Belt and Road countries understand the benefits of mediation and would consider mediation should they encounter disputes. Most of the respondents would choose Hong Kong as a mediation venue because of the reputation of Hong Kong's legal system. The 2 respondents who held negative attitude towards the idea of choosing Hong Kong as a mediation venue stated that they would choose their cities instead.

4. Feedbacks on JMHO's booth

4.1 All respondents agreed that visiting JMHO's booths is helpful to their companies.

4.1.1 *12 of the respondents agreed that they learnt more about how to access to mediation service for resolving disputes at JMHO's booth.*

4.1.2 *12 of the respondents agreed that they learnt more about Hong Kong's mediation services at JMHO's booth.*

4.2 In short, all respondents agreed that the set-up of booth at the exhibition was an effective way to promote mediation and Hong Kong mediation services.

5. Closing

5.1 The findings show that mediation, as an alternative dispute resolution, has become a well-known, popular and trusted means for resolving disputes in the Belt and Road countries and regions.

5.2 Although Hong Kong enjoys some unique advantages, such as “good reputation of its legal system”, “institutionalized mediation services”, “cultural diversity” and “abundant supply of international and multilingual talents”, some business leaders refused to choose Hong Kong as a mediation venue due to geographical factor.

5.3 In fact, Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city geographically well-connected to different parts of the world. It is believed that as the globalization continues to grow and the Belt and Road Initiative develops, people from different countries would be more confident on the connectivity among the Belt and Road countries and regions, and the geographical concerns shall then be addressed.