

Forum of Chief Legal Advisors 2024

Welcome Address by Attorney-General, Mr Lucien Wong, S.C.

26 July 2024

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to Singapore for the inaugural Forum of Chief Legal Advisors.
2. Today we have here Chief Legal Advisors and representatives from more than 20 jurisdictions, with some of you travelling from places as far as South America. We are also honoured to have with us the Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (“PCA”), the Secretary-General of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (“ICSID”), as well as eminent legal scholars and legal practitioners.
3. We come from diverse legal backgrounds, but we have much in common. As Chief Legal Advisors, we perform a key role in the process of peaceful settlement of disputes for our countries. The subject matter of disputes is becoming more diverse and complex. For example, in the area of climate change, lawsuits typically involve material issues of climate change science, policy, and law. The possible means of dispute resolution is also becoming increasingly varied. Besides arbitration, there are options such as mediation, conciliation, and expert procedures. Different types of dispute resolution methods and hybrid approaches serve different needs and situations. The choice of dispute resolution method matters, because the manner in which we resolve disputes can significantly impact relationships and communities. Whilst the range of options of dispute resolution provides States with greater choice and discretion, it also poses greater challenges in terms of navigating an increasingly complex landscape.
4. For this reason, Singapore has decided to establish this international Forum. The Forum is for us to share experiences, to exchange ideas, and to collaborate on legal

issues that impact all of us. We will have the privilege of hearing perspectives from esteemed institutions devoted to the settlement of international disputes, and from distinguished legal practitioners on current issues. The Forum will allow us to further foster our mutual understanding and to achieve greater clarity in the evolving operating environment.

5. The focus of the Forum today is on international dispute settlement. The panels this morning will discuss recent trends in international dispute settlement, particularly in investment disputes and strategies for tackling them. We will examine issues such as the suitability of the different forms of dispute resolution, innovations in investor-State dispute settlement, as well as challenges faced by Governments, such as the regulatory space available to them.
6. Looking ahead, I hope that this Forum can serve as a repository of information and as a resource, which can provide valuable assistance as we discharge our functions as Chief Legal Advisors.
7. We have much to learn from each other. I look forward to the lively exchange of experiences and ideas. With this, I wish everyone a very fruitful and enriching inaugural Forum and I also hope you will have some time to enjoy Singapore. Thank you.