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Press Release

**The Law Society of Hong Kong organises the 7th Belt and Road Conference
and initiates Manifesto on
“The Legal Ethical Code of Conduct Regarding the Deployment of AI”**

The Law Society of Hong Kong’s 7th Belt and Road Conference was held at the Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel today (21 November 2024) in a hybrid format. Themed “Legal Professionals Joining Efforts in Advancing Eight Major Steps to Build High Quality Belt and Road Cooperation”, the event scrutinised, from various professional perspectives, how the implementation of the eight major steps announced by President Xi Jinping can pragmatically incarnate multi-dimensional connectivity and bolster high quality cooperation among the Belt and Road nations. It attracted registration by over 500 participants from various sectors from 32 jurisdictions, including around 23 representatives of the Consulates-General, Honorary Consulates and Officially Recognised Bodies.

In his welcome remarks, the President of The Law Society of Hong Kong, Mr Roden Tong, said that the rule of law can form the cornerstone of our shared prosperity, where it becomes the pivotal mechanism in smoothening the exchange process by providing a common legal framework for participants from diverse backgrounds. As ambassadors of Hong Kong’s robust rule of law system, Hong Kong’s legal professionals can serve as key links between Belt and Road jurisdictions by establishing a legal infrastructure of clear rules of engagement, transparent regulatory mechanisms, and efficient dispute resolution systems that can transcend borders.

Mr Tong emphasised the unique position of Hong Kong as being the only common law jurisdiction within China and the only Chinese-English bilingual common law system in the world. He stated that it is an ongoing initiative of the Law Society to facilitate its members in bolstering the country’s construction of foreign-related rule of law, which could modestly contribute to the development of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Mr Paul Lam, SC, the Secretary for Justice, gave an opening address at the Opening Ceremony. In his address, Mr Lam pointed out that Hong Kong’s distinction is attributable to our “One Country, Two Systems” principle. “Hong Kong is renowned for having a sound and mature legal system, supported by the independent exercise of judicial power by our courts and a strong rule of law tradition. Hong Kong is uniquely positioned to bridge the gaps between different jurisdictions along the Belt and Road. As a ‘super connector’ and ‘super value-adder’, Hong Kong provides world-class legal services that facilitate businesses between China and the rest of the world,” he said.

Mr Liu Guangyuan, Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government

in the Hong Kong SAR said Belt and Road cooperation is an inclusive major initiative that leads all countries to common prosperity, a road to hope open to all, and the right path forward promoting mutual learning between cultures. He shared three viewpoints with legal professionals from around the world: (1) to safeguard national security and cement the foundation of Hong Kong's rule of law to contribute to Belt and Road cooperation; (2) to give full play to Hong Kong's unique common law system in facilitating Belt and Road cooperation; and (3) to provide quality legal public goods and nurture a broader network of friends along the Belt and Road.

Mr Fang Jianming, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong SAR ("OCMFA"), pointed out in his speech that the legal sector in Hong Kong can make significant contributions to the high-quality development of the "Belt and Road" Initiative. He proposed three suggestions for the sector: (1) to establish green development as the foundation and jointly build a clean and beautiful "Belt and Road"; (2) to seize the opportunity of the digital economy to jointly build an open and shared "Belt and Road"; and (3) to treat anti-corruption and integrity as the cornerstone to jointly build a clean and law-abiding "Belt and Road". He stated that the OCMFA will continue to fully support Hong Kong in consolidating and enhancing its unique position and advantages to increase its international competitiveness and influence, to provide a platform and assistance for the industry to expand globally, and to offer diplomatic support for Hong Kong's involvement in the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

We were also honoured to have invited Ms Mengyang Yang, Executive Director and Head of Hong Kong PE Business of CICC Capital Management Department, China International Capital Corporation Hong Kong Asset Management Limited, and Mr Nicholas Ho, Commissioner for Belt and Road, The Government of the Hong Kong SAR of the People's Republic of China, to deliver keynote speeches at the Opening Ceremony and the Luncheon respectively.

Over the years, the Law Society's Belt and Road Conferences have been immensely successful in fostering collaboration and synergy among lawyers' associations from various jurisdictions. In May 2017, the Law Society initiated the "Hong Kong Manifesto" to promote synergy, strategic partnership and collaboration amongst the signatories. In September 2018, we initiated the signing of "LawTech Alliance" to pursue common goals to ensure the ethical, professional and responsible use of law technology by the industry.

This year, in keeping with the spirit of these two documents, we are honoured to have 17 lawyers' associations from 10 jurisdictions to sign a Manifesto on "The Legal Ethical Code of Conduct Regarding the Deployment of AI" (*Annexure*). It emphasises the importance of responsible and ethical AI practices in the legal profession and outlines guiding principles for the development and deployment of AI technologies in this field. The signatories to the Manifesto (in alphabetical order) are:

- AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre
- Dalian Lawyers Association
- Dongguan Lawyer Association
- eBRAM International Online Dispute Resolution Centre
- Gdańsk Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law
- Hainan Lawyers Association
- Kazakhstan Bar Association

- Macau Lawyers Association
- Malaysian Bar
- Myanmar Bar Association
- Sabah Law Society
- Seoul Bar Association
- Shenzhen Lawyers Association
- The Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia
- The Law Society of Hong Kong
- Zhuhai Lawyers Association
- Zhejiang Lawyer Association

The Law Society specially thanks eBRAM for offering the e-signing service of this meaningful Manifesto.

About the Law Society's Belt and Road Conferences

The Belt and Road Conference is the first and foremost conference of its kind launched by The Law Society of Hong Kong in 2017, dedicated to exploring opportunities and discussing solutions for challenges brought about by the Belt and Road Initiative for the legal profession.

Manifesto
“The Legal Ethical Code of Conduct Regarding the Deployment of AI”

Recognising the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Legal Profession, we hereby declare our commitment to the responsible, sustainable and ethical development, deployment and utilisations of legal AI technologies. We affirm that AI should serve as a tool to assist and enhance legal expertise and to empower legal professionals, not to replace them. We should together facilitate the use of AI in a way that aids, not hindering fair administration of justice while serving the Legal Profession and the society at large to advance world peace and prosperity.

In regard to the ethical deployment of legal AI, we declare that we will promote, support the development and deployment of LawTech AI systems in accordance with the following ethical AI principles for the Legal Profession: (1) the use of legal AI technologies should be lawful, transparent, traceable and interpretable; (2) the legal AI systems should be reliable, robust, secure and fair; (3) an appropriate degree of human involvement should be maintained in AI-augmented decision-making process; and (4) applicable laws, legislations and regulations should always be complied with.

《關於採用人工智能的法律道德的行為標準》宣言(中文譯本)

有鑑於人工智能可為法律界帶來的革新潛力，我們聲明將致力於作出負責任、可持續和合乎道德的模式以發展、採用和使用法律人工智能技術。我們明確指出，人工智能應作為一種工具，用於協助和增強法律專業知識，以及提高法律專業人員的能力，而並非取代他們。我們應共同促進使用人工智能以幫助而非阻礙維持司法公正，同時為法律界和整個社會服務，以推動世界和平與繁榮。

就符合道德地採用法律人工智能，以下為法律專業界別而訂定的人工智能道德原則，我們聲明將以之為根據以促進及支持法律科技和人工智能系統的發展和採用：

(1) 法律人工智能技術的使用應該是合法、透明、可追溯和可被理解的；(2) 法律人工智能系統應該是可靠、穩健、安全和公平的；(3) 在以人工智能輔助而作出的決策過程中應保持適當程度的人為參與；(4) 應貫徹遵守適用的法律和法規。

特此聲明。