

Joint Mediation Helpline Office

Press Release

Grand Opening of the West Kowloon Mediation Centre

The West Kowloon Mediation Centre (“WKMC”), the first mediation centre earmarked for serving mediation needs in Hong Kong, is officially launched today, symbolising more accessible mediation facilities and a wider use of mediation as a preferred dispute resolution method in Hong Kong.

The operation of WKMC is accompanied by the running of a new pilot mediation scheme for small claims cases. Both the WKMC and the pilot scheme are independently coordinated and operated by the Joint Mediation Helpline Office (“JMHO”).

As an initiative to promote the status of Hong Kong as a legal and dispute resolution centre in the Asia Pacific region, WKMC is established with the support from the Department of Justice and the Judiciary with a view to promoting more extensive use of mediation to resolve disputes and enhancing public awareness of mediation as a means of dispute resolution.

The grand opening ceremony today announced the full launch of the services of WKMC, and was attended by Ms. Teresa Cheng, GBS, SC, JP (Secretary for Justice of the Hong Kong SAR), the Honourable Mr Justice Johnson Lam, V-P (the Vice-President of the Court of Appeal of the High Court), Mr. Thomas Kwong, JP (Director of Legal Aid), Mrs. Sylvia Lam, JP (Director of Architectural Services), Ms. Christina Cheung, JP (Law Officer (Civil Law) of the Department of Justice) and other guests.

The pilot mediation scheme to be operated in WKMC aims at providing more accessible and affordable mediation services to disputants of Small Claims Tribunal cases and other cases with an amount in dispute not exceeding the jurisdictional limit of the Small Claims Tribunal, and hopefully can alleviate the busy caseload of the Tribunal. The scheme will provide free mediation consultation, and help the parties to appoint mediator, book venue, etc. The scheme also features pairing of mediators with different experiences to co-mediate cases, in order to provide trainings and promote industry standards for mediators.

"Small claims cases are often about disputes of smaller scale. We envisage that the pilot mediation scheme will provide more affordable and accessible mediation services to the public, to alleviate their pressure and cost involved in settling a dispute," said Mr. Antony Man, Chairman of JMHO.

Located in the newly built, modern red huts adjacent to the West Kowloon Law Courts Building, which houses the Small Claims Tribunal, WKMC has four meeting rooms, two mediation rooms and one multi-purpose room for mediation and related use. The beautiful garden courtyard of Japanese style is also a signature of the centre, designed for fostering a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere to facilitate better discussions during mediation meetings.

Parties interested in using the pilot mediation scheme may now contact the JMHO by visiting its WKMC office at West Kowloon Mediation Centre, 2 Ying Wa Street, Shum Shui Po, Kowloon, at office hours, or contact JMHO by phone at 2901 1224 or 3893 9069 or by e-mail to mediation@jointmediationhelpline.org.hk.

JMHO is a non-profit-making, charitable organisation founded in 2010 by the Hong Kong Mediation Council, the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Law Society of Hong Kong, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (East Asia Branch), the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators, the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors and the Hong Kong Mediation Centre.

For media enquiries, please contact Ms. Au of Joint Mediation Helpline Office, at (tel.) 2901 1224 or 3893 9069.

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