

Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Legal Forum - Conflict of Laws, Legal Cooperation, & Connection of Rules

Christine Wu

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The construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) is a major strategic move for China's national development. On 18 February 2019, the Central Government issued the *Outline of Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area* which marks a new page for the construction of the GBA. The success of the GBA Project largely depends on the interoperability of legal systems and the connection of legal rules and regulations across the three regions. Under the "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions" framework, the conflict of laws within the area requires both theoretical and pragmatic solutions from academics, practitioners and policymakers. On 21 January 2022, The Public Law and Human Right Forum (CPLR) of CityU School of Law held its first legal forum, addressing the conflicts of law, legal cooperation and connection of rules within the GBA. The forum was conducted in hybrid model. The response was overwhelming.



From Left to Right: Prof. WANG Jiangyu, Ms. Eunice YUNG, Prof. Christian WAGNER, Dr. Simon LEE, Prof. ZHU Guobin

At the opening ceremony, **Prof. Christian WAGNER** (Provost of CityU) and **Prof. TAN Cheng Han** (Dean and Chair Professor of Commercial Law at School of Law, CityU) first delivered their welcoming speeches on behalf of CityU and CityU School of Law. We were honored to have **Mr. LIU Chunhua** (Director of Law Department, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR), **Mr. LIU Dexue** (Director of Legal Affairs Bureau of Macao SAR Government), **Prof. HUANG Jin** (Professor of China University of Political Science and Law, President of Chinese Society of International Law and President of China Society of Private International Law) and **Dr. SI Xiao** (Director Tencent Research Institute, Tencent Holdings Limited.) to deliver opening remarks. Legislative Council Members **Ms. Eunice YUNG** and **Dr. Simon LEE** were invited to be honorable guests.

In his opening speech, **Prof. Christian WAGNER** was very pleased to see that CityU Law School has always been a pioneer in conducting research of Chinese and comparative law, provide high quality legal education of Chinese law, and offered joint programmes to train Chinese judges. **Mr. LIU Chunhua** stated that the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government will continue to serve as the bridge for legal cooperation and communication of the GBA. **Mr. LIU Dexue** emphasized that the convergence of legal rules and mechanisms should adhere to the "one country" principle and utilize comparative advantages of

different legal systems. **Prof. HUANG Jin** raised that the conflict of laws within the area requires both theoretical and pragmatic solutions from both academics and policymakers. **Dr. SI Xiao** said that many hi-tech companies have been exploring new paths for the integration of the economy, society and people's livelihood and the rule of law in the GBA. On behalf of CityU School of Law, **Prof. TAN Cheng Han** thanked all the guests and speakers for participating in the forum. He stated that the convening of this forum is very timely and highly relevant. As the only city that practices common law in China, he believed that Hong Kong with its unique legal system can make great contribution to the GBA.



Frist Row from Left to Right:
 Prof. Christian WAGNER, Mr.
 LIU Chunhua Mr. LIU Dexue,
 Prof. HUANG Jin
 Second Row: Dr. SI Xiao, Prof.
 TAN Cheng Han

CPLR was very pleased to have **Ms. Teresa CHENG** (Secretary for Justice, the Government of the HKSAR) as the keynote speaker of the forum.



Ms. Teresa CHENG

To deepen the connection between regional legal cooperation, she put forward the following five suggestions: Firstly, ensuring effective mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters is in place between the three areas. Secondly, under the “one country, two systems, three jurisdictions” framework, the area may make reference to the international law of conflict to formulate GBA’s own conflict of laws system. Thirdly, expediting the development of the legal services industry and nourish legal professionals that are able to practice across the three areas. Fourthly, expanding the free trade pilot area. Fifthly, fully leveraging the advantage and experience of Hong Kong in ADR, and developing a center for international legal and ADR service in the GBA.



From Left to Right:
 Prof. ZHU Guobin
 Dr. Witman HUNG

Prof. ZHU Guobin observed that so far, most researches have been focusing on the macro aspects of central government policies and they present always very optimistic views. The goal of this legal forum is to provide a platform for scholars, experts and governmental officials to offer their valuable practical opinions and solutions to the legal issues facing the GBA.

The first session focused on the “Legal Response to the Construction of the GBA: Status Quo, Problems and Theoretical Reconstruction” and was chaired by **Prof. WANG Jiangyu** (Director of CCCL, School of Law, CityU). Session two focused on the “Connection of Rules and Innovation of Intergovernmental Cooperation in the GBA”, chaired by **Prof. ZHAO Yun** (Head of Department of Law, Faculty of Law, the University of Hong Kong). The third was chaired by **Prof. DU Chengming** (Vice President of Guangdong University of Technology) which concerned the “Judicial and Other Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms and Innovations in GBA”. The fourth was chaired by **Dr. Witman HUNG** (Deputy of the 13th National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China) and focused on the topic “Legal Service Industry Cooperation and Other Legal Collaborative Scenarios in the GBA”.

At the closing ceremony, on behalf of CPLR, **Prof. ZHU Guobin** stated the forum was a great success viewed from the quality of papers and the participation of leading figures representing academia, legal service industry as well as government officials. He sincerely thanked all scholars, guests and hosts, and audience online and in room, for their constructive contribution and participation.