

The HKIE Seminar -

Resolving International Disputes in the Greater Bay Area (Part I)

22 November 2022

Welcome Speech by President Ir Aaron BOK Kwok-ming

Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. Welcome to the Seminar organized by the Construction Dispute Resolution Committee (CDRC) of HKIE. Apart from making ourselves proud to be engineers, it is also one of HKIE's missions to assist our members in developing their careers and to play their full role in contributing to society.

In coherence with one of HKIE "Time to Change" objectives – Boosting Professionalism, CDRC timely organize this series of events in response to the escalating awareness and demand for dispute resolution in engineering and construction industry in recent years. In fact, engineers with our technical knowledge and professional experience, are in the best positions to serve as the facilitators for handling construction disputes by different mechanisms in both civil works and building projects.

Back in 2017, the Executive of HKIE realized the increasing importance of dispute resolution in Hong Kong, and invited a task group to review and recommend the development in this area within the Institution. The submitted recommendations featured the proposed organization structure for HKIE to equip ourselves as an Adjudicator Nominating Body in response to the proposed Security of Payment Legislation.

Subsequently, we set up the CDRC in mid-2018, supported by a group of passionate and dedicated members with legal and engineering background, to devise strategies for the development of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including adjudication, arbitration, mediation and more.

After some persistent hard work and coordination by CDRC with government officials for years, HKIE has become one of the four professional organizations admitted to the Register of Adjudicator Nominating Body in 2021, to support the policy of the Development Bureau for implementing the Security of Payment Provisions for public works contracts. Adjudication is relatively new in Hong Kong, but has become an

effective and common dispute resolution process in the construction industry in many other countries. This long-awaited change would certainly bring positive impact to the construction and engineering industry, aiming to assist in the timely processing of contract payments and providing an interim mechanism for speedy resolution of payment disputes.

CDRC has recently launched a new website to make relevant information of HKIE's Adjudicator Nominating Body available to the public, including the adjudication rules and fee structures. I encourage all our fellow members with the necessary professional qualifications to get registered in the lists and panels maintained by CDRC to strengthen our pool of professionals in this spectrum, in order to cope with the increasing demand for services following the expected rise in capital expenditures by the government in coming years. According to the forecast of Construction Industry Council made in last year, the total annual expenditure in construction related works in HK would increase from the current level to about \$330B in 5 to 10 years time. Just a very small percentages of these entering into dispute would represent a great sum of money. There are thus huge opportunity in this adjudication field in years ahead.

Apart from forming the Adjudicator Nominating Body, wide variety of dispute resolution trainings, including arbitration, mediation, adjudication, expert witness and NEC, were organized by CDRC for HKIE members in recent years. The HKIE is dedicated to keep running from time to time allowing our members to equip with the right gears to face the challenges and opportunities ahead, especially for the role of Hong Kong and Hong Kong professionals in the Greater Bay Area development.

I'm glad to see that the invited guest speakers for the Seminar today are all renowned not just in local, but also in mainland China and Europe. Their presentations cover a wide range of topics in construction dispute resolution in their respective regions. May I express my gratitude to the Organizing Committee members for making this meaningful event a successful one. May I also ask for the continual support from you all in the upcoming events organized by CDRC. Your presence and participation would be a driving force for HKIE to reach another level for our industry and our society.

Thank you.

Ir Aaron BOK Kwok-ming
President
The HKIE