

**PRESS RELEASE****PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION LAUNCHES OFFICE IN SINGAPORE**

SINGAPORE, 11 DECEMBER 2019

On 19 November 2019, Singapore's Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Health Mr. Edwin Tong SC together with PCA Secretary-General Hugo Siblesz launched the Singapore office of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).

The PCA Singapore Office is located in the newly opened Maxwell Chambers Suites, where it is housed alongside other international dispute resolution institutions, including the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC Court). The PCA Singapore office will allow the PCA and Singapore to better serve the dispute resolution needs of States and businesses in Asia and to meet growing demand in coming years.

The PCA Singapore office was set up under the Host Country Agreement signed by the Singapore Ministry of Law and the PCA in July 2017, which stepped up cooperation from the 2007 PCA-Singapore "Facility Agreement", signed 10 years earlier. The 2007 Agreement allowed the PCA to hold dispute resolution hearings in Singapore on an ad-hoc basis without a staffed office.

Since the PCA set up its office in Singapore in January 2018, it has administered 28 proceedings and concluded nine hearings. The head of the PCA Singapore Office is Fedelma C. Smith. The Singapore office is the PCA's first office in Asia, and the second outside its Hague headquarters.

Speaking at the launch as the Guest of Honour, Senior Minister of State Mr Edwin Tong SC said, "The PCA occupies the centerpiece in many of the world's largest disputes. It has achieved much in its short time in Singapore. Apart from administering and hosting cases, the PCA has embraced and integrated with the dispute resolution landscape in the region by reaching out to the local stakeholders as well as participated in many international and local events to promote Singapore as a venue for international arbitration. The PCA's growth in Singapore is testament to these efforts. We congratulate the PCA and we look forward to working more closely, to continually enhance, refine reform and promote Singapore as the choice for international dispute resolution."

In his speech at the launch, PCA Secretary-General Mr. Hugo H. Siblesz commemorated the 120th anniversary of the PCA's creation at The Hague in 1899. Mr. Siblesz said that "while the founders of the PCA may not have imagined the PCA opening an office in Singapore 120 years later, it was precisely their intention to create a ***Permanent*** Court of Arbitration - serving the international community as it was to become: dynamic, evolving, and truly global." Mr. Siblesz said that "[t]he relationship with Singapore is a welcome partnership for the PCA, as our case load involving Asian parties continues to

grow,” and “our cooperation with Singapore will serve to illustrate and strengthen the PCA’s character as a global institution”.

The launch ceremony concluded with a panel discussion between Justice Steven Chong, Judge of Appeal, Supreme Court and Ms. Danielle Yeow, Deputy Director-General, International Affairs Department of the Attorney-General’s Chambers, who offered reflections on Singapore’s contributions to the peaceful settlement of international disputes through arbitration and mediation.

On 20 November 2019, the PCA hosted an international conference at Maxwell Chambers, the 2019 Energy Charter Treaty Forum, which was supported by the Ministry of Law and SIAC, and accredited by the Singapore Institute of Legal Education.

Background

The PCA is an intergovernmental organisation which provides dispute resolution services for disputes involving states, state entities, international organisations, and private parties. It administers arbitration, mediation, conciliation and fact- finding commissions of inquiry. There are presently 122 Contracting Parties, including the US, the UK, China, India, Cambodia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Singapore became a Contracting Party to the 1907 Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International disputes on 11 September 1993. As a Contracting Party to the founding Convention of the PCA, Singapore is represented on the PCA’s panel of independent arbitrators known as Members of the Court. These Members may be called upon to serve as arbitrators in PCA-administered disputes. Singapore’s Members of the Court are Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, Justice Chan Sek Keong, Deputy Attorney General Lionel Yee SC, and Ambassador-at- Large Tommy Koh.

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