

PRESS RELEASE**MORE THAN 50 COUNTRIES IN SINGAPORE ON AUG 7
TO SUPPORT NEW MEDIATION TREATY**

1. Ministers and senior officials from more than 50 countries will gather in Singapore to support a new international treaty on mediation when it opens for signature on 7 August 2019. The United Nations (UN) Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation, also known as the Singapore Convention on Mediation, will provide for the cross-border enforcement of mediated settlement agreements, give businesses greater certainty and assurance, and facilitate international trade and commerce. The Convention was adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly on 20 December 2018. It will be the first UN treaty to be named after Singapore.
2. The Singapore Ministry of Law (MinLaw) and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) will be organising the signing ceremony and a conference in conjunction with it. To mark the historic signing of the new international treaty, Singapore Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law K Shanmugam and the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs Stephen Mathias will jointly name an orchid. This will be the first international treaty to have a flower named after it. MinLaw today also launched the logo for the Singapore Convention: an orchid in vibrant colours brought together by a little red dot connecting conversations.
3. The Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference will be part of a series of related events which will take place during the Singapore Convention Week from 2 to 8 August 2019, including the official launch of the INSOL Asia Hub in Singapore, the inaugural International Bar Association (IBA) Asia Pacific Arbitration Conference and the grand opening of Maxwell Chambers Suites. Together with the Singapore Convention on Mediation, these initiatives will give a further boost to Singapore's position as a leading international legal hub in Asia, and the world.

Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference

4. MinLaw and UNCITRAL will be holding the Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference at the Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore on 6 – 7 August 2019. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Stephen Mathias, Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, United Nations, will deliver the formal addresses at the conference. Topics to be discussed include emerging issues relating to business, international trade law and dispute resolution, the rise of mediation as an alternative way to resolve dispute resolution and the future of international dispute resolution. Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Heng Swee Keat will deliver the keynote address at the gala dinner that evening.
5. On the side of the conference, the Ministers and senior officials will participate in a Singapore Convention Roundtable chaired by Minister Shanmugam on the topic

“Building Trust, Enabling International Trade”. They will discuss what governments can do to build and strengthen trust in order to sustain growth amidst global uncertainties, the importance of multilateralism and the international rule of law, and the contribution of the Singapore Convention on Mediation.

6. The Ministers and senior officials will meet PM Lee and DPM Heng respectively. They have also been invited to the launch of the INSOL Asia Hub and the opening of Maxwell Chambers Suites, and to visit the Singapore Bicentennial Experience and the Singapore City Gallery. The Ministers will also attend the National Day Parade at the Padang, hosted by Singapore Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean.
7. Over 1,500 delegates are expected to attend the Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference and related events during Singapore Convention Week. They include prominent judges, senior partners of major law firms, other senior practitioners, scholars, Presidents of Law Associations, Courts and Boards of top dispute resolution institutions, General Counsel of large MNCs and business leaders. A series of Experience Singapore programmes will be organised for the foreign delegates to introduce them to Singapore. They will be hosted by some 50 Junior College students from some 13 schools who will serve as Singapore Convention Youth Ambassadors as part of a youth involvement programme. More than 40% of the foreign delegates have signed up for these programmes, extending their stay in Singapore.

Official Opening of INSOL Asia Hub

8. On 5 August 2019, INSOL will be opening its Asia Hub in Singapore. More than 100 insolvency professionals, including legal practitioners, accountants, consultants, banks, distressed debt funders, third party funders, judges, and government officials are expected to attend the event.
9. INSOL is a worldwide federation of 44 member associations, with over 10,500 restructuring and insolvency professionals as members. It is at the forefront of education and technical training for practitioners, and assists in the development of countries' restructuring and insolvency systems. INSOL's Asia Hub in Singapore will be its first overseas office since it was established in London in 1982.
10. With recent legislative reforms Singapore now has one of the most forward-looking, balanced and flexible debt restructuring regimes in Asia. The enhanced regime strikes an appropriate balance between stakeholders' interests – enabling companies to restructure successfully while protecting creditors' rights. Singapore also won the “Most Improved Jurisdiction” at the inaugural Global Restructuring Review Awards in 2017. INSOL's presence will add to the vibrancy and development of this sector in Singapore and in the region.

Inaugural IBA Asia Pacific Arbitration Conference

11. On 6 August 2019, the International Bar Association will hold in Singapore its inaugural Asia Pacific Arbitration Conference. Established in 1947, the IBA is a leading professional organisation with a reach of more than 80,000 international lawyers and 190 bar associations from some 170 countries. It provides assistance to the global legal community, and through its global membership, influences the

development of international law reform and shapes the future of the legal profession throughout the world.

12. This inaugural conference is presented by the IBA Arbitration Committee and the Asia Pacific Arbitration Group, supported by the IBA Asia Pacific Regional Forum. Singapore was chosen as the first stop for this new annual event on IBA's calendar. The conference will feature 17 prominent speakers from 8 cities around the world. About 100 legal and arbitration practitioners, arbitrators, in-house counsel, and government officials are expected to attend the event at Maxwell Chambers.

Grand Opening of Maxwell Chambers Suites

13. On 8 August 2019, Maxwell Chambers Suites, an extension of Maxwell Chambers, will officially open. Established in 2010, Maxwell Chambers was the world's first integrated dispute resolution complex, housing both purpose-built hearing facilities for arbitration and mediation, as well as offices for dispute resolution institutions and firms. Its extension, Maxwell Chambers Suites, was constructed to meet growing demand for dispute resolution work, and further expand the eco-system of legal service providers that use Singapore as a base to service the region. Dedicated to housing dispute resolution institutions and firms, the beautifully conserved building will add 120,000 square feet of floor space and triple the complex's capacity. Over 300 foreign ministers, chief justices, attorney-generals and heads of delegation, as well as local and international legal and dispute resolution practitioners, in-house counsel, C-suite executives and government officials are also expected to attend the event.
14. At its launch, Maxwell Chambers Suites will house 20 dispute firms and 11 international institutions. Five of the 11 international institutions, including the International Chamber of Commerce's International Court of Arbitration and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, will have their case management offices in the building, giving Maxwell Chambers Suites the highest concentration of case management offices in the world.

Annex A: List of countries attending the Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference (subject to change; as of 28 July 2019)

Annex B: Programme of the Singapore Convention Week

Annex C – Launch of the INSOL Asia Hub, Grand Opening of Maxwell Chambers Suites and inaugural IBA Asia Pacific Arbitration Conference

Annex D – Singapore Convention on Mediation

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Annex A: List of countries attending the Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference (subject to change; as of 28 July 2019)

S/N	Country	S/N	Country
1.	Afghanistan	28.	Myanmar
2.	Angola	29.	Namibia
3.	Australia	30.	North Macedonia
4.	Bahrain	31.	Palau
5.	Belarus	32.	Qatar
6.	Brunei	33.	Republic of Korea
7.	Burkina Faso	34.	Samoa
8.	China	35.	Serbia
9.	Congo	36.	Sierra Leone
10.	Democratic Republic of the Congo	37.	Singapore
11.	Dominican Republic	38.	Solomon Islands
12.	Eswatini	39.	South Sudan
13.	Fiji	40.	Sri Lanka
14.	Georgia	41.	Suriname
15.	Grenada	42.	Switzerland
16.	Haiti	43.	Timor-Leste
17.	Hungary	44.	Turkey
18.	Iran	45.	Turkmenistan
19.	Israel	46.	Uganda
20.	Jamaica	47.	Ukraine
21.	Japan	48.	United States of America
22.	Jordan	49.	Uruguay
23.	Kazakhstan	50.	Uzbekistan
24.	Maldives	51.	Vanuatu
25.	Mauritius	52.	Venezuela
26.	Mongolia	53.	Vietnam
27.	Montenegro	54.	Yemen

Annex C – Launch of the INSOL Asia Hub, Grand Opening of Maxwell Chambers Suites and inaugural IBA Asia Pacific Arbitration Conference

LAUNCH OF THE INSOL ASIA HUB

- On 3 April 2019, INSOL International and the Ministry of Law announced that INSOL will locate its Asia hub in Singapore. The INSOL Asia Hub in Singapore will be its first overseas office since it was established in London in 1982. The new office will be located at Maxwell Chambers Suites.
- INSOL is a worldwide federation of national associations of accountants and lawyers who specialise in turnaround and insolvency. There are currently over 44 member associations, with over 10,500 restructuring and insolvency professionals participating as INSOL members. INSOL also has ancillary groups that represent that judiciary, regulators, lenders and academics.
- Since its formation in 1982, INSOL has become one of the world's foremost insolvency associations. It is at the forefront of education and technical training for practitioners, and assists in the development of countries' insolvency regimes.
- INSOL's decision to locate here is testament to Singapore's growing profile as an influential restructuring and insolvency jurisdiction and complements our efforts in this area. This has not occurred by happenstance; being part of Singapore's long-term and broad efforts to strengthen Singapore as an international centre for cross-border debt restructuring.
- With recent legislative reforms Singapore now has one of the most forward-looking, balanced and flexible debt restructuring regimes in Asia. The enhanced regime strikes an appropriate balance between stakeholders' interests – enabling companies to restructure successfully while protecting creditors' rights. Singapore also won the "Most Improved Jurisdiction" at the inaugural Global Restructuring Review Awards in 2017.
- Since the reforms in May 2017, our courts have seen more than 100 applications under the new provisions. The legislative reforms form part of the wider concerted efforts to enhance Singapore's ecosystem. For instance, Singapore's Supreme Court is a founder member of the Judicial Insolvency Network ("**JIN**"), and hosted the inaugural conference in Singapore (Oct 2016). The JIN serves as a platform for insolvency judges to share experiences, exchange ideas, identify areas for cooperation and develop best practices. In addition, the JIN Guidelines for Communication and Cooperation between Courts in Cross-Border Matters won the "Most Important Overall Development" Award at the inaugural Global Restructuring Review Awards in 2017.
- INSOL's presence will add to the vibrancy and development of this sector in Singapore and in the region. INSOL will officially launch its Asia hub in Singapore on 5 August 2019. More than 100 insolvency professionals, including legal practitioners, accountants, consultants, banks, distressed debt funders, third party funders, judges, and government officials are expected to attend the event.

GRAND OPENING OF MAXWELL CHAMBERS SUITES

- On 8 August 2019, Maxwell Chambers Suites, an extension of Maxwell Chambers, will officially open, as part of a series of related events alongside the Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference that will be held in Singapore on 7 August 2019. Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law Mr K Shanmugam will be the Guest of Honour. Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Finance and Education Ms Indranee Rajah and Senior Minister of State for Law and Health Mr Edwin Tong will also grace the event. Over 300 foreign ministers, chief justices, attorney-generals and heads of delegation, as well as local and international legal and dispute resolution practitioners, in-house counsel, C-suite executives and government officials are also expected to attend the event.
- Established in 2010, Maxwell Chambers was the world's first integrated dispute resolution complex, housing both purpose-built hearing facilities for arbitration and mediation, as well as offices for dispute resolution institutions and firms. When it first opened, it was nominated by the Global Arbitration Review as one of the "Best Developments" in the arbitration industry. Since then, it has quickly become one of the most preferred hearing facilities in the world, handling about 200 cases a year.
- Its extension, Maxwell Chambers Suites, was constructed to meet growing demand for dispute resolution work, and further expand the eco-system of legal service providers that use Singapore as a base to service the region. Dedicated to housing dispute resolution institutions and firms, the beautifully conserved building will add 120,000 square feet of floor space and triple the complex's capacity.
- At its launch, Maxwell Chambers Suites will house 20 dispute firms and 11 international institutions. Five of the 11 international institutions, including the International Chamber of Commerce's International Court of Arbitration and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, will have their case management offices in the building, giving Maxwell Chambers Suites the highest concentration of case management offices in the world.
- Maxwell Chambers Suites will also have six specially-designed executive suites for short-term rental to cater to arbitrators, mediators and counsel who are based overseas but fly in and out of Singapore for dispute resolution. This provides a secure office space staffed by a secretariat that is familiar with the needs of dispute resolution work.
- The expansion of Maxwell Chambers is part of a slew of progressive measures taken by Singapore in response to changing business needs, alongside other innovations and reforms including legislative updates, to enhance Singapore's dispute resolution framework. It has built up an eco-system with the following features:
 - A trusted legal system that delivers quality jurisprudence, undergirded by Singapore's neutrality, stability and strong commitment to the rule of law;

- A comprehensive suite of international commercial dispute resolution services, including international commercial arbitration, international commercial mediation and international commercial litigation;
 - A strong pool of dispute resolution firms – about 40 of the top 100 international law firms by revenue are based in Singapore;
 - An open regime for the practice of international commercial arbitration, including the freedom for parties involved in arbitration in Singapore to engage lawyers of any nationality and use any governing law; and
 - World-class infrastructure for dispute resolution hearings at Maxwell Chambers.
- Based on the 2018 International Arbitration Survey by Queen Mary University of London and White and Case LLP, Singapore was ranked as the top arbitration seat in Asia and third in the world. It is the only Asian jurisdiction to be ranked within the top four in all regions except Latin America.

INAUGURAL INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION (IBA) ASIA PACIFIC ARBITRATION CONFERENCE

- The International Bar Association (IBA) will hold its Inaugural IBA Asia Pacific Arbitration Conference in Singapore on 6 August 2019, as part of a series of related events alongside the Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference that will be held in Singapore on 7 August 2019.
- Established in 1947, the IBA is a leading professional organisation with a reach of more than 80,000 international lawyers and 190 bar associations from some 170 countries. It provides assistance to the global legal community, and through its global membership, influences the development of international law reform and shapes the future of the legal profession throughout the world.
- This inaugural conference is presented by the IBA Arbitration Committee and the Asia Pacific Arbitration Group, supported by the IBA Asia Pacific Regional Forum. Singapore was chosen as the first stop for this new annual event on IBA's calendar.
- The conference will feature 17 prominent speakers from 8 cities around the world, including:
 - Ms Sheila Ahuja, Co-Chair, Asia Pacific Arbitration Group
 - Ms Chiann Bao, Arbitrator, Arbitration Chambers
 - Mr Lijun Cao, Partner, Zhong Lun
 - Ms Sarah Grimmer, Secretary-General, Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre
 - Ms Delphine Ho, Registrar, Singapore International Arbitration Centre
 - Ms Anna Joubin-Bret, Secretary, UNCITRAL
 - Mr Sanjeev Kapoor, Partner, Khaitan & Co
 - Prof Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler, President, International Council for Commercial Arbitration
 - Mr Kevin Kim, Partner, Bae, Kim & Lee
 - Ms Koh Swee Yen, Vice-Chair, IBA Arbitration Committee
 - Mr Neerav Merchant, Partner, Majmudar & Partners
 - Prof Dr Colin Ong, QC, Managing Partner, Dr Colin Ong Legal Services
 - Mr Kent Philips, Partner, Hogan Lovells
 - Mr Alvin Yeo, SC, Chairman and Senior Partner, WongPartnership
- They will speak on the following:
 - a. The rise of Asia Pacific: Trends and developments
 - b. Innovation and change: Going beyond boundaries
 - c. What remains to be done: Gazing into the future
- About 100 legal and arbitration practitioners, arbitrators, in-house counsel, and government officials are expected to attend the event at Maxwell Chambers.

Annex D – Singapore Convention on Mediation

Background to the Convention

- The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (“UNCITRAL”) is the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law. UNCITRAL’s Working Group II (“WGII”) on Dispute Settlement has been working on instruments to provide for the cross-border enforcement of international commercial settlement agreements reached through mediation.
- In February 2018, WGII finalised (i) the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Agreement (“the Convention”); as well as (ii) amendments to the Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation (2002).
- On 20 December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly (i) adopted the Convention; (ii) authorised the signing ceremony of the Convention to be held in Singapore; and (iii) authorised the nomenclature of the “Singapore Convention on Mediation”.

Benefits of the Convention

- Mediation is rising in popularity as a means to resolve cross-border commercial disputes. Mediation results in significant benefits, such as reducing the instances where a dispute leads to termination of commercial relationships, facilitating the administration of international transactions by commercial parties and producing savings in the administration of justice by States. Mediation complements other modes of dispute resolution as it can be used in conjunction with litigation or arbitration.
- However, its growth has been hindered by a long-standing obstacle – the difficulty that a party faces in ensuring that the other party complies with their mediated settlement agreement. This is because a mediated settlement agreement, unlike a court judgment or an arbitral award, is only binding contractually and, therefore, not directly enforceable in the courts. The lack of an efficient and harmonised framework for cross-border enforcement of settlement agreements resulting from mediation was often cited as a challenge to the use of mediation.
- The Convention therefore addresses the lack of an effective means to enforce cross-border commercial mediated settlement agreements. Businesses can have greater assurance that mediation can be relied on to settle cross-border commercial disputes, because mediated settlement agreements can be enforced more readily by the Courts of contracting parties to the Convention and may also be invoked by a party as a defence against a claim.
- This will facilitate the growth of international commerce and promote the use of mediation around the world.

Key Features of the Convention

- The Convention will apply to international commercial settlement agreements resulting from mediation.
 - It will not apply to international settlement agreements that are concluded in the course of judicial or arbitral proceedings and which are enforceable as a court judgment or arbitral award.
 - It will not apply to settlement agreements concluded for personal, family or household purposes by one of the parties (a consumer), as well as settlement agreements relating to family, inheritance or employment law.
- The courts of a contracting party will be expected to handle applications either to enforce an international settlement agreement which falls within the scope of the Convention or to allow a party to invoke the settlement agreement in order to prove that the matter has already been resolved, in accordance with its rules of procedure, and under the conditions laid down in the Convention.
- The courts of a contracting party may refuse to grant relief on the grounds laid down in the Convention, including:
 - If a party to the settlement agreement was under incapacity;
 - If the settlement agreement is not binding, null and void, inoperative or incapable of being performed under the law which it is subjected to;
 - If there was a serious breach by the conciliator of standards applicable to the conciliator, without which breach that party would not have entered into the settlement agreement;
 - If granting relief would be contrary to the public policy of the contracting party.