

<b>Title</b>	Regional Offices: Report on the activities of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) (1 January – 31 December 2025)
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# Regional Offices: Report on the activities of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) (1 January – 31 December 2025)

## I. Introduction and Strategic Objectives

- 1 The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) is one of the three current Regional Offices (ROs) of the Permanent Bureau (PB) of the HCCH.<sup>1</sup> ROs are established to strengthen the HCCH's universality and inclusiveness and to increase the HCCH's visibility, capability, and relevance within a region.<sup>2</sup> In addition to its broad-spectrum work in Asia and the Pacific<sup>3</sup>, ROAP provides substantive support to the Transnational Litigation and Apostille Division.
- 2 ROAP's work programme is tailored to contribute to the strategic objectives of the HCCH:
  - a. promoting the universality of the Organisation by increasing awareness of the HCCH, the HCCH instruments and their benefits, as well as of private international law (PIL), among States and other stakeholders in the region;
  - b. promoting the inclusiveness of the HCCH by supporting the active involvement of States and other stakeholders in the region in its normative, post-Convention, and governance work;
  - c. assisting States in the region in the proper implementation and operation of HCCH instruments, including through the delivery of efficient, tailored post-Convention services and assistance.
- 3 ROAP is headed by a Representative for Asia and the Pacific, who works part-time and who is supported by a Legal Officer and an Office Manager. Professor Yun Zhao became the fourth ROAP Representative in August 2020. Mr Junbo Song joined ROAP in October 2024 as Legal Officer seconded from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. ROAP's Office Manager, Ms Shelby Chan, joined the office in November 2024. Throughout 2025, ROAP's work was supported by 15 legal interns.
- 4 All costs for ROAP, including rental, salaries, and travel, are covered exclusively through the support provided by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), under the instruction of the central government of China.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), please consult "Report on the activities of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) (1 January – 31 December 2025)", Prel. Doc. No 17A for CGAP 2026. For more information on the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), please consult "Report on the activities of the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF) in 2025", Prel. Doc. No 17C for CGAP 2026. Both are available on the website of the HCCH ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Governance" => "Council on General Affairs and Policy".

<sup>2</sup> See the HCCH's [Rules for the Establishment of Regional Offices](#) ("Rules"), adopted in 2020. The Rules "do not apply retrospectively to already existing Regional Offices" (see para. 2) and so do not apply to ROAP, established in 2012, or ROLAC, established in 2005. However, para. 3(a) of the Rules provides a list of characteristic objectives and outcomes of future ROs, which is inspired by, and is reflective of, the work currently being undertaken by ROAP and ROLAC.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the specific objectives assigned to ROAP upon its establishment, please consult the "Proposal to Establish an Asia Pacific Regional Office for the Hague Conference on Private International Law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China", Info. Doc. No 2 of CGAP 2012, available on the website of the HCCH at [www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net) under "Governance" => "Council on General Affairs and Policy" => "Council on General Affairs and Policy Archive (2000-2015)".

<sup>4</sup> Financing of ROAP differs from that of ROLAC, see Prel. Doc. No 17A for CGAP 2026. While the PB is grateful for China's continued financial support of ROAP, it nonetheless considers that, from a good governance perspective, the existence of differing approaches between these two ROs is inadequate and hopes that the matter will be addressed in the near future.

## II. Work and progress in achieving the strategic objectives

### A. Promoting the universality of the HCCH by increasing awareness of the HCCH, the HCCH instruments and their benefits among States and other stakeholders in the region

- 5 Through its outreach efforts, ROAP contributes to increasing awareness and understanding of the importance of the HCCH and its instruments among States and other stakeholders in the region.
- 6 Its role in this regard has proven vital towards building and sustaining the momentum required to drive forward the adoption of key HCCH Conventions in the light of the many competing priorities faced by national legislatures. In 2025, three States from Asia and the Pacific became Contracting Parties to one or more HCCH Conventions: Bahrain acceded to the 1970 Evidence and 2005 Choice of Court Conventions, the Philippines acceded to the 1970 Evidence Convention, and the Republic of Korea ratified the 1993 Adoption Convention. In addition, Indonesia and Qatar applied to become Members of the HCCH. ROAP endeavours to provide tailored information and to offer support to States in the process of becoming a Member of the HCCH or becoming a Contracting Party to an HCCH Convention. Over the past year, it has had fruitful contacts with government officials, diplomats, and judges from various States in Asia and the Pacific who have expressed interest and / or submitted enquiries in this regard. For example, in 2025 ROAP met with the Ministry of Law and Justice of Pakistan to discuss the HCCH Conventions in the area of family and child protection law and with the Supreme People's Court of China to discuss the 2005 Choice of Court Convention.
- 7 The participation in and / or organisation of meetings, seminars, workshops, and other events is leveraged by ROAP to engage with relevant stakeholders and reach out to new audiences. In 2025, ROAP raised awareness of the 2015 Principles on Choice of Law among business and legal professionals during China Arbitration Week in Kyrgyzstan; organised a lecture on the HCCH Conventions supporting dispute resolution, with a focus on the 2005 Choice of Court and 2019 Judgments Conventions, for legal professionals, academics, and government representatives in Japan; organised an event for legal professionals to solicit their views on the feasibility, challenges, and strategies for promoting China's accession to the 2019 Judgments Convention; and held meetings with the Malaysia Bar Association, to discuss Malaysia's possible accession to the 1961 Apostille Convention, and the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators, to increase awareness of relevant HCCH Conventions. ROAP also engaged with relevant stakeholders at the Annual Conference of the Chinese Society of Private International Law and at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event of the Xiamen Academy of International Law. To optimise its limited resources, ROAP also seeks out opportunities to organise sessions or be given a platform within larger events hosted by partners, such as China Arbitration Week.
- 8 ROAP continues to assist in the organisation of Hong Kong Legal Week, recognised in the region as a major international legal event. Through this role, ROAP seeks to promote the HCCH's work, strengthen its cooperation with relevant partners, and expand its network of contacts in the region. During Hong Kong Legal Week 2025, ROAP co-hosted the Symposium "Transnational Litigation & Apostille: Innovating Practices under the HCCH Conventions", which sought to promote a deeper understanding of the HCCH Apostille, Service and Evidence Conventions among legal practitioners and experts across the region. ROAP also participated in a number of side events, including by moderating the panel discussion, "Practising Multilateralism and Upholding the International Rule of Law".
- 9 Throughout 2025, ROAP actively fostered partnerships with other intergovernmental organisations and leveraged these partnerships to expand outreach to governments, legal practitioners, and other stakeholders. In 2025, ROAP continued to build upon its nascent cooperation with the

International Organization for Mediation (IOMed), attending both the signing ceremony of the Convention on the Establishment of the IOMed and, later in the year, the inauguration of the IOMed. The IOMed is a new international organisation based in Hong Kong SAR that aims to provide a standing platform for the mediation of international disputes, complementing the work of the HCCH and other intergovernmental organisations. ROAP has also continued to collaborate with the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), which serves as an advisory body and forum for Asian-African cooperation in legal matters, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which serves as a regional economic forum to foster economic growth and integration in the region. Among other activities, as part of its efforts to strengthen its regional network ROAP attended the ceremony marking the third anniversary of the AALCO Hong Kong Regional Arbitration Centre. It also participated in the workshop “Enhancing the APEC Collaborative Framework and Use of ODR”, where ROAP representatives discussed effective approaches to the implementation of the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Convention in the region. ROAP will continue to explore relevant avenues for cooperation with other intergovernmental organisations active in Asia and the Pacific.

- 10 In 2025, ROAP has continued to engage with law professors and students, in particular through the organisation of seminars and workshops at the Central Southern China University of Political Science and Law, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Northwest University of Political Science and Law, Peking University, Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, Sichuan University, Xiamen University, Xi’an Jiaotong University, and Xiangtan University. ROAP has also engaged directly with university representatives to explore future cooperation initiatives, including academic exchanges, student engagement, joint research projects, internships, and visiting scholar programs. In 2025, ROAP also engaged with training programmes for legal professionals, for example by hosting a dialogue session on the 2019 Judgments Convention and the Jurisdiction Project during the Hong Kong Common Law Practical Training Course, co-organised by the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy and the Supreme People’s Court of China, and organising a lecture on the 2019 Judgments Convention within the Hong Kong Training Programme on International Law Practice, organised by the Asian Academy of International Law.

## **B. Promoting the inclusiveness of the HCCH by supporting the active involvement of States and other stakeholders in the region in its normative, post-Convention and governance work**

- 11 In relation to the HCCH’s normative work, ROAP continued to promote the active involvement of Asia and the Pacific by raising awareness of ongoing projects, by engaging regional stakeholders in discussions on ongoing projects, by conducting research on relevant regional needs and initiatives, and by facilitating the direct participation of experts from the region. For example, in 2025 ROAP hosted a webinar for the exchange of regional perspectives on Parentage / Surrogacy (incl. current status of the HCCH project) and engaged with experts at the China-Korea Private International Law Annual Conference on the HCCH’s normative work on CBDCs, digital tokens, and the digital economy.
- 12 In terms of post-Convention work, ROAP continued to support the engagement of States from the region, for example, China, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore, including by holding meetings with government representatives to update them on the HCCH’s work in this area and to facilitate their participation in related HCCH activities. ROAP also met with government representatives from States outside Asia and the Pacific, namely the Netherlands and Uruguay, to support their cooperation with States within the region in the operation of HCCH Conventions, including the 1961 Apostille Convention. ROAP also supported regional engagement in post-Convention discussions through two important gatherings. In May 2025, ROAP hosted the webinar “HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention: Bridging Global Justice”. Attended by over 100 participants, the webinar gathered expert speakers from various jurisdictions in the region to discuss the

Convention's key features, application, and practical relevance. Then, in June 2025, ROAP contributed to the organisation of the latest edition of HCCH Asia Pacific Week, which brought together over 400 experts from the region and beyond for wide-ranging discussions on the most recent developments relating to the HCCH's key Conventions and instruments, as well as to its ongoing normative projects. During the conference, participants attended the launch ceremony for the fifth editions of the Practical Handbooks on the Operation of the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions, two essential HCCH publications designed to assist users with the operation of these Conventions. ROAP contributed to the organisation of this ceremony and, upon release of the publication, reached out via email to over 200 stakeholders in the region, including Central Authorities, law firms, and other entities, to encourage their use of these important post-Convention resources.

- 13 Finally, ROAP continues to support the active involvement of States in Asia and the Pacific in governance matters, including those relating to HCCH Membership, attendance at the meetings of the Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP) and the Council for Diplomatic Representatives (CDR), and participation in governance-related initiatives. Prior to the annual CGAP meeting, ROAP organised an online preparatory meeting for States in the region, with the purpose of exchanging views on the topics to be discussed at CGAP, and engaged in formal and informal communications with the aim of responding to enquiries and addressing or transmitting concerns.

### **C. Assisting States in the region in the proper implementation and operation of HCCH instruments, including through the delivery of efficient, tailored post-Convention services and assistance**

- 14 ROAP contributes to the proper implementation and operation of HCCH instruments in Asia and the Pacific by providing various forms of post-Convention services and assistance. These include, for instance, acting as a direct point of contact for States seeking information and tailored advice on best practices or specific issues encountered; assisting States which have recently joined HCCH Conventions with the preparations for their entry into force; and facilitating the organisation of trainings or seminars aimed at judges, practitioners, government officials, and other professionals involved in the day-to-day operation of the HCCH Conventions and instruments. In 2025, for example, ROAP met with the Government of the Republic of Korea to discuss the operation of the 1961 Apostille Convention, to which the Republic of Korea is a Contracting Party. It also met with the Government of China to discuss its advances in the use of technology to enhance the operation of the HCCH Service, Evidence, and Apostille Conventions, including the launch of its e-Apostille system.
- 15 While assistance is most often requested by States which are already Contracting Parties to the relevant instrument, the receipt of tailored guidance during the preparatory period prior to joining a Convention can facilitate its smooth implementation and prevent challenges in its operation later on. In 2025, for example, ROAP assisted Viet Nam in its preparations for its accession to the 1961 Apostille Convention. To ensure that guidance on the proper implementation and operation of HCCH Conventions is available to a wide range of actors, ROAP complements the provision of post-Convention services to individual States with activities open to multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders. For example, in 2025 ROAP contributed to the organisation of a regional workshop on good practices in the implementation and operation of the 1993 Adoption Convention which took place in the Philippines in March 2025. Through the workshop, over 70 participants, representing eight Contracting Parties to the 1993 Adoption Convention, two non-Contracting Parties, one intergovernmental organisation, and one non-governmental organisation, strengthened their knowledge of the Convention and built ties with their counterparts in the region.
- 16 Current or prospective Contracting Parties from the region interested in benefitting from the PB's assistance in this regard are encouraged to contact ROAP to discuss the various possibilities.

### **III. Key upcoming projects and initiatives**

- 17 In addition to its regular support of the work of the PB across all its divisions, ROAP intends to undertake the following specific activities in 2026:
- a. organising a webinar on CBDCs and digital tokens;
  - b. co-hosting an event with APEC on the use of international legal instruments in cross-border commercial disputes and use of digital tokens.
  - c. delivering a presentation on the HCCH Conventions at the 2026 APEC ODR Workshop; and
  - d. delivering a presentation on the HCCH Conventions at the Annual Conference of the Chinese Society of Private International Law.

### **IV. Proposal for CGAP**

- 18 The PB proposes the following Conclusions and Decision, covering all three ROs, for CGAP's consideration:

CGAP welcomed the reports of the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), and recognised the services they provide to HCCH Members. CGAP further:

- a. encouraged Members to offer concrete support towards the implementation of the activities and objectives of the ROs, including in the form of voluntary contributions, secondments, information, translations, and networking;
- b. invited States from the relevant regions that are currently considering the possibility of joining one or more HCCH Conventions, or of becoming HCCH Members, to contact their respective RO;
- c. invited National Organs, Central Authorities, and Competent Authorities to contact their relevant RO, where experience sharing with authorities of other Contracting Parties, or the academic sector, would be helpful to the effective implementation and operation of HCCH Conventions;
- d. invited States to facilitate, to the extent possible, the participation of their representatives to meetings and events organised by the ROs.