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2026 COLLOQUIUM ON INTERNATIONAL LAW

CREATING NEW FRONTIERS: LAW, COMMERCE and ORDER IN OUTER SPACE

3 July

Closing Remarks for AAIL 2026 Colloquium on International Law

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Foreword

Common pattern among emerging tech industries:

- Emerging tech industries – commercial space, quantum technology, embodied intelligence, brain-computer interfaces share a common pattern: Economic value lies not just in the hardware itself, but also **downstream services, data, financing, insurance, and the legal infrastructure**

The central question for Hong Kong's role in emerging industries:

"Whose rules, courts, capital, and talent will shape how commercialization unfolds?"

Hong Kong's Role in Supporting the Building of Modern Industrial System

Governance

- Across emerging sectors of technology, **global benchmarks and international standards for them either do not yet exist or are still being contested**.
- A full **international framework** – **rules and regulations**, **governance structures**, and **international collaboration** – is needed. The same pattern can be found in other emerging industries.

Internationalization

For Chinese enterprises are operating at the frontier of these new technologies:

- How do they engage **international markets**?
- How do they navigate **unfamiliar regulatory environments**, access **international capital**, and manage **cross-border risk** and **legal exposure**?

Three Roles, Three Capabilities

The National 15th Five-Year Plan has assigned Hong Kong distinct roles that describe concrete capabilities that Hong Kong has already built, and which new technologies and new markets now give us the opportunity to deepen:

1. The High Value-Added Supply Chain Centre

- Hong Kong is a **trusted**, **internationally-connected** trade and logistics hub where enterprises can source, structure, and move across borders with international credibility.
- Through Hong Kong, Mainland space companies operate in a way that is **financially, legally and operationally acceptable** to international counterparties.
- Hong Kong's edge lies in **compliance, data flows, finance, insurance, and professional services** that turn new technologies into trusted cross-border solutions.

Three Roles, Three Capabilities

2. International Legal and Dispute Resolution Services Centre in the Asia-Pacific region

- The **absence of established global benchmarks** means that commercial contracts and arbitral awards effectively become the de facto rules of the industry.
- Hong Kong's common-law system and arbitration infrastructure are directly relevant.
- Whether the issue is orbital slots and spectrum interference in commercial space, IP and data in quantum technologies, or liability and safety standards in embodied intelligence, Hong Kong can help shape the emerging **international rulebook**.

Three Roles, Three Capabilities

3. International Risk Management Centre

- **Brand-new markets carry brand-new risks.** Whether it is orbital debris liability in space, or product liability in embodied intelligence, the **international insurance and reinsurance** frameworks to manage these risks are still being established.
- Emerging industries require **highly tailored coverage** for launch risk, in-orbit operations, cyber-physical systems, data and algorithmic behaviour.
- Hong Kong can add value: **translate new technologies into insurable, bankable risk structures**. Hong Kong would be apply its expertise in **law, finance, insurance**, and **professional services** – to a new frontiers.

Conclusion

- Space Economy is a new domain. The legal frameworks are still being negotiated; the market structures are still taking shape.
- The relevant regulatory questions are questions that **no single city, and no single government, can answer on its own**. Issues explored today is a work in progress.
- These questions deserve **continued, serious, high-level discussion**. Hong Kong is beginning to define its role in emerging tech industries, and that role will be refined through continued dialogue and practical experience.

Thank you