



WELCOME REMARKS

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

**TAN SRI DATUK AMAR ABANG ISKANDAR BIN ABANG
HASHIM**

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL OF
MALAYSIA**

**CO-CHAIR OF JUDICIAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION
NETWORK (JDRN)**

AT THE

**THIRD MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL
DISPUTE RESOLUTION NETWORK (JDRN)**

MONDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2024

The Honourable Chief Judge Laura Taylor Swain, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, Co-Chair for the Third Judicial Dispute Resolution Network Meeting

Head of Delegations and Founding Members of the JDRN

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum, Good Morning to all.

- [1] First and foremost, I would like to bid '*Selamat Datang ke Malaysia*' which means 'Welcome to Malaysia' in English to everyone here. On behalf of the Right Honourable the Chief Justice of Malaysia and the Malaysian Judiciary, it is my great pleasure to welcome all of you to the Third Meeting of the International Judicial Dispute Resolution Network (JDRN) here in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I am deeply honoured to be in the presence of such an illustrious group of judicial leaders and professionals who share the common goal of advancing the practice of judicial dispute resolution (JDR).
- [2] I am pleased to note the presence of the international delegations at this meeting, both in person and virtually. A warm welcome to our members from the Federal Court of Australia, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Supreme Court of

the Philippines; participating both in person and remotely are our esteemed colleagues from the Judiciary of Singapore, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (SDNY) and the Judiciary of England and Wales; and joining us remotely are the delegation from the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China and the Judiciary of Ireland, High Court will only able to join us on Day 2, as they are observing their October Bank Holiday today.

[3] We are further honoured to have, in person, the observers' delegations with us; the Honourable Chief Justice Bryan Sykes from the Supreme Court of Jamaica; judges from the Supreme Court of India, the Honourable Mr. Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and the Honourable Mr. Justice R Mahadevan representing the Judiciary of India; delegation from the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Washington, County Court of Victoria and the District Court of Auckland. I am also pleased to welcome, joining us via video-link, the Judiciary of Rwanda.

[4] I would also like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our members and observers whom diverse perspectives and expertise are invaluable to this forum. Your participation today is a testament to the global commitment towards improving dispute resolution systems. I am confident that the breadth of perspectives and legal traditions represented here will foster rich discussions and offer us many

more opportunities to exchange valuable insights and learn from one another.

- [5] The JDRN, since its inception, has served as a vital platform for judicial institutions around the world to come together and explore best practices in alternative dispute resolution (ADR). As we all know, the legal landscape is continuously evolving, and the challenges that arise within our respective jurisdictions require creative and efficient methods of resolution. The work of this network has highlighted the importance of integrating mediation and other forms of ADR into our judicial processes to enhance the administration of justice.
- [6] The JDRN modalities are not only focused in providing timely and cost-effective dispute resolution for court users but also aims to deliver people-centred justice. As the need for accessible and equitable resolution mechanisms continues to grow, it is incumbent upon us to explore innovative avenues for resolving disputes both expeditiously and fairly. A clear manifestation of JDRN commitment to enhance individuals' justice journeys are the publication of the two Best Practices Guide on 1 June 2024, the Practice Guide on Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) and Practice Guide on Mediation. This underscores our dedication to refining judicial processes and addressing the evolving demands of justice.

- [7] Since our modest beginnings in 2022, we have experienced significant growth. What began as a small gathering of like-minded individuals, united by the shared belief that greater judicial cooperation and dialogue would strengthen our national legal systems and promote the rule of law, has evolved into a robust network. Our collaboration has been instrumental in fostering effective judicial dispute resolution across our respective jurisdictions.
- [8] I believe that this Third Meeting marks a pivotal moment for us, offering the opportunity to define the trajectory of our progress and development in the coming years. In keeping with the JDRN objectives, I propose that perhaps it is apt for us to consider establishing a structured development framework that extends beyond the success of our Best Practices Guides. Strategic initiatives focusing on capacity building of ADR in courts, such as creation of comprehensive JDR Toolkits and establishing JDRN Court Mentorship Programme, could significantly enhance our contributions in the realm of ADR—not only to JDRN members but to jurisdictions beyond our network as well.
- [9] The toolkits would function as a foundational JDR resource, a JDR starter pack, providing comprehensive guides outlining step-by-step processes for introducing mediation, arbitration, and ENE into court procedures. Additionally, training materials

for judges, mediators, and court staff, as well as standardised templates and forms for initiating and managing mediation or arbitration would be included as well. The toolkits will serve as practical resources to streamline the implementation of JDR mechanisms within courts.

[10] The JDRN Court Mentorship Programme would be an ideal proposal for us to further foster judicial cooperation and enhance dispute resolution mechanisms across jurisdictions. Under this proposed programme, advanced court systems with established ADR frameworks will serve as mentors to jurisdictions seeking to develop or improve their JDR processes. Mentor courts will be selected based on their expertise in ADR, best practices, and willingness to share resources, offering guidance on integrating mediation, arbitration, and ENE, as well as supporting capacity building and technology integration. Mentee courts, typically in earlier stages of JDR development, will create formal plans with clear milestones, consult regularly with their mentors, and provide feedback to refine the process. This collaborative approach aims to ensure the effective implementation and sustainable growth of JDR.

[11] Furthermore, capacity building of JDR ought to be prioritised through structured training programmes for judges and court administrators such as JDRN masterclasses. These masterclasses will focus on best practices in managing JDR

processes, integrating technology for streamlined case management and any other common issues of dispute resolution faced by courts. Once everything is in place, we could even move forward to having cross-jurisdictional secondments by giving opportunities for judges, court administrators and judicial officers of JDRN members to have the opportunity to observe and learn from JDR practices of advance court system jurisdictions.

[12] It is my ardent hope that we will play a more active role in advancing JDR within our domestic courts, building on our collaborative synergy and collective efforts through JDRN as the primary platform for fostering cooperation across our jurisdictions. By leveraging these shared endeavours and implementing a structured expansion framework, we will not only strengthen our current cooperation but also fortify JDRN's position in the years to come, ensuring its continued relevance and impact in enhancing dispute resolution systems globally.

[13] As we embark on these two days of discussions, I encourage all of you to engage fully in the sessions and share your insights freely. This meeting is a chance to explore innovative solutions, discuss best practices, and deepen our mutual understanding of the challenges we face in judicial dispute resolution. Together, we can chart a course for the future that is guided by fairness, efficiency, and the rule of law.

[14] In conclusion, let me once again extend my warmest welcome to all of you. I am confident that the insights we share and the partnerships we strengthen during this meeting will have a lasting impact on the administration of justice in all our jurisdictions. I look forward to productive discussions and the continued advancement of judicial dispute resolution across the globe.

Thank you.