

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE ANDREW ANG,  
CHAIRMAN, SINGAPORE MEDIATION CENTRE  
AT THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ASIAN MEDIATION ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE  
“MEDIATION DIVERSITY – ASIA & BEYOND”  
4 JUNE 2009, SINGAPORE**

President Martti Ahtisaari, former President of the Republic of Finland and 2008 Nobel Peace Prize Winner

The Honourable Minister for Law and Second Minister for Home Affairs, Mr K Shanmugam

The Honourable the Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong

Her Excellency Satu Mattila, Ambassador of Finland to Singapore

The Honourable Attorney-General Professor Walter Woon

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome all of you to the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Mediation Association (the “AMA”) Conference. To our friends in the audience who have come from Australia, Finland, France, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, the UK, the US and Venezuela, welcome to Singapore!

2 The AMA seeks to provide a framework for regional co-operation in the promotion and use of mediation for the resolution of disputes. It also seeks to facilitate the sharing of resources, best practices and local knowledge of different Asian jurisdictions in relation to conflict management.

3 The AMA currently comprises the respective mediation centres of Delhi, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore, and its Secretariat is based in Singapore. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the representatives from fellow member centres of AMA who are here today - Ms Sylvia Siu, JP from the Hong Kong Mediation Centre; Mr Denaldy M. Mauna from the Indonesian Mediation Center; Datuk Haji Kuthubul Zaman Bukhari from the Malaysian Mediation Centre; and Mr Dean Eduardo De Los Angeles from the Philippine Mediation Center.

4 This Conference seeks to broaden and deepen our understanding of Asian dispute management approaches and practices; strengthen the network of ADR practitioners in the region while building new relationships with others from other parts of the world; and advance the development and practice of mediation and ADR in Asia and beyond. The Singapore Mediation Centre is indeed honoured to be the host of this Conference. We hope that you will thoroughly enjoy the programme that has been planned for you, and that your time here will be well spent.

5 In a while, we will hear from our Guest-of-Honour, the Minister for Law and Second Minister for Home Affairs, Mr K Shanmugam. The Law Minister has been a staunch supporter of mediation and ADR. It is also a well-known fact that the Ministry of Law is one of the key buttresses supporting the ADR movement in Singapore. Indeed, the Singapore Mediation Centre is a beneficiary of such support. I wish to thank the Minister for the unstinting support and for agreeing to give the Opening Remarks today.

6 Next, we will hear from President Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland and 2008 Nobel Peace Prize Winner. We are very grateful to have the privilege of having President Ahtisaari grace the Conference as the Keynote Speaker. I am sure that like me, mediators and peacemakers in the audience must be waiting eagerly to hear from President Ahtisaari himself, and to learn from his vast experience in brokering peace deals around the world.

7 Time will not permit a more detailed introduction of the Conference and the programme. Suffice it to say that true to the Conference title – “Mediation Diversity – Asia & Beyond”, the Conference will have the benefit of the expertise and experience of more than 30 speakers and workshop leaders from around the world. All of them are distinguished in their own areas of specialty, and they will discuss wide-ranging issues, including those relating to the law and dispute resolution, to sector-specific and international mediation, and to dispute management skills and practice.

8 Outside of the Conference, many interesting opportunities for leisure await. I must say to our friends from overseas that this is a particularly good time to visit Singapore. For those who like to shop, the Great Singapore Sale is on. Other than retail therapy, you will probably be treated to witnessing vernacular conflict resolution at work in the shopping malls. The June school holidays have started, and parents are commonly seen to be bargaining with their children over their shopping lists. Unfortunately, the game is often zero-sum, with the score Parents 0, Children 1. The Singapore Arts Festival is also on. There is a wide-ranging programme catering to artistic tastes that run from the “exospheric” to the alternative. The Singapore Food

Festival is in July. But you don't have to wait till then - good food is aplenty in Singapore all year round.

9 I should not stand much further between you and the more interesting speakers you are about to hear. Let me conclude by thanking the people who have made this Conference possible. Members of the Organising Committee and Secretariat, thank you very much for your dedication and for the past many months of hard work. Sponsors of this Conference - the Ministry of Law, Drew & Napier LLC, Rajah & Tann LLP, Allen & Gledhill LLP, Harry Elias Partnership, KhattarWong, Lee & Lee, Rodyk & Davidson LLP, Tan Rajah & Cheah, Wee Swee Teow & Co, and Wong Partnership LLP, may I express our deep gratitude for your ready and generous support. Last but certainly not least, I thank each and every one of you for taking time to be a part of this event and for honouring it with your presence.

10 I extend my best wishes to all of you and hope that you go away with new and powerful insights, and with your networks renewed and extended.