ICCA Hong Kong 2024: “International Arbitration: A Human Endeavour”
Stanimir Alexandrov (International Council for Commercial Arbitration) · Sunday, May 5th, 2024

ICCA is delighted to open its 26th biennial Congress in Hong Kong today. The Congress, taking place from 5 to 8 May 2024, consists of today’s opening ceremony, followed by three full days of engaging sessions for participants and speakers.

For over 60 years, ICCA has been bringing the international arbitration community together to discuss pressing issues in the field. This year, the event is hosted by the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, marking the second event held by ICCA here.

In a discipline traditionally centered on procedural exactitude, objectivity, and rational thought, this year’s theme, “International Arbitration: A Human Endeavour”, offers a unique view of the field. Over three days, the participants will explore the ways in which arbitration reflects and influences human behavior, and affects individual lives and wider societal dynamics alike. Through a series of discussions and presentations, attendees will gain insight into the human elements that are often overshadowed by the technical aspects of arbitration.

Throughout these sessions, ICCA’s team of correspondents will provide daily reporting on the discussions, ensuring that even those who cannot join us in Hong Kong can be part of them.

Day One: Unpacking the ‘Human’ in Arbitration

The Congress begins with a keynote address by Professor Bryant G. Garth, titled “Unveiling the Human Dimensions of International Arbitration: Dealing in Virtue Then and Now”. Professor Garth’s talk will offer a rigorous exploration of the ethical and moral foundations that have influenced international arbitration throughout its history.

This presentation sets the tone for a sequence of panels in which experts will examine the roles and expectations of the various participants in the field. The discussions will probe into the essence of the so-called ‘international arbitration community’ and what it means to be a part of it.

The programme of the day includes sessions debating the role of an arbitrator and the principles that should guide conduct and decision making in arbitration. Additionally, the day’s programme will delve into the broader and complex sociological and cultural fabric of arbitration, which has played a critical role in shaping arbitration methods, interpretations, and practices.
Day Two: Advocacy, Procedures, and Ethics in Focus

Our second day shifts focus towards how people shape international arbitration. Sessions will explore how human qualities such as creativity and fallibility influence advocacy, how procedural norms model participant behavior, and the significant impact of language on arbitration outcomes.

Speakers will investigate how to harness human qualities and behaviors within the realm of international arbitration. This includes discussing ethical standards of arbitral practice and management strategies in adversarial settings. Additionally, the discussions will address the evolving cultural, geopolitical, and economic diversity within the arbitration community. Our experts will explore how arbitration proceedings can adapt to nurture and support this diversity effectively.

Day Three: Technological Horizons

The final day of the Congress will feature forward-looking sessions, with a particular focus on the role of artificial intelligence (“AI”) in arbitration. As AI continues to integrate into our social and professional spheres, it raises critical questions about its potential impact on human behavior and the future conduct of arbitration.

#ICCAHongKong2024

As we embark on the next days, we invite you to engage with us—to comment, question, and discuss. Your insights and interactions will enrich our coverage and, we hope, extend the dialogue beyond the confines of the Congress halls.

Stay tuned and join our debate on how deeply human elements are interwoven with the fabric of international arbitration.

Follow along and see all of Kluwer Arbitration Blog’s coverage of ICCA Hong Kong 2024 here.

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