

OPENING REMARKS BY HAN KOK JUAN
DEPUTY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF LAW
AT THE SINGAPORE—SHAANXI STUDY VISIT PROGRAMME
OPENING CEREMONY ON 19 NOVEMBER 2018 AT MAXWELL CHAMBERS

Mr Edwin Tong, Senior Minister of State for Law and Health

Mr Ng How Yue, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Law

Mr Han Yongan, President, Shaanxi Lawyers' Association

Mr Gregory Vijayendran, President, Law Society of Singapore

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to welcome our friends from Shaanxi in Singapore today.
2. I made two visits to Xi'an, the provincial capital of Shaanxi, this year.
 - a. The first was in May. I attended and delivered the keynote speech at the "Belt and Road Forum on Commercial Legal Environment". When in Xi'an, I met the Vice-Governor of the Shaanxi Province, Mr Hu Minglang. We had a good discussion, and realised there was much that Singapore and Shaanxi could learn from each other in the area of legal services. I think Vice-Governor Hu shared the same sentiments. He invited me to visit Xi'an again this year.
 - b. I made my second visit to Xi'an in September. Besides meeting Vice-Governor Hu, I also had the pleasure to get to know Mr Han Yongan, President of the Shaanxi Lawyers' Association. We share the same surname, Han, which is not a very common surname. Perhaps that is why we hit it off right away. We discussed having Shaanxi lawyers come to Singapore for a study visit, as a good way to start collaboration between Singapore and Shaanxi. In less than two months, we got this going.
3. Having visited Shaanxi twice this year, I have great fondness for Shaanxi. A Confucius saying best describes my feelings this morning: "Is it not a delight to have friends come from afar!" So, welcome to Singapore!
4. The Singapore Minister for Law Mr K Shanmugam and Senior Minister of State for Law Mr Edwin Tong both highly value this visit. We have arranged for Deputy

Director of the Legal Industry Division, Ms Ellis See, to oversee the programme over the next month. If anyone has suggestions or encounter any difficulties, please contact her anytime.

5. Over the next one month, you will discover that in the area of legal services, while Singapore and Shaanxi share many similarities, there are also big differences. Differences in legal practice are inevitable, because of differences in language, legal systems and business environment. Differences are not problems, but business opportunities. If Singapore and Shaanxi lawyers can understand and bridge these differences, together we can open up new possibilities, including for the Belt and Road Initiative.
6. Lastly, I would like to once again welcome everyone to Singapore. I hope that you will all have an enjoyable time in the next one month and gain from the visit.
7. Thank you.