

News Release

Bumper number of mediation matters for Singapore Mediation Centre in 2016

Singapore, 26 January 2017 – Over the last 12 months, the Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC) recorded the highest number of new matters filed for mediation in its 20-year history. SMC, which led the way in Singapore in introducing private institutional mediation as a tool for dispute resolution, handled 499 matters in 2016, a 72% increase over 2015. The total quantum of disputed sums also reached a record high of \$775 million in 2016. The disputes were commercial in nature, with construction and company/shareholder disputes being most common.

The use of mediation has grown steadily over the years with greater awareness of its benefits. “SMC has played a key role in changing society’s mind-set to embrace mediation to amicably resolve disputes. We work closely with businesses and professional bodies to promote the use of mediation. Over the years, SMC has also trained numerous lawyers, judges and judicial officers to equip them with mediation skills,” says Mr Loong Seng Onn, Executive Director of SMC. “As mediation gains traction, the next phase of our work is to make mediation a viable full-time career. We are working to create specialist panels to meet the needs of users.”

The use of mediation has been given a boost by new judicial initiatives and the introduction of a legislative framework for mediation. From 1 October 2016, divorces (with no contested child issues) and contested estate proceedings with assets with gross value of \$3 million and above from the Family Justice Courts may be ordered for mediation to SMC unless parties have agreed on a mediator. An amendment to the Supreme Court Practice Directions in 2016 has also made it necessary for lawyers to advise their clients about the different ways disputes may be resolved using alternative dispute resolution (ADR), including mediation. The Mediation Bill which was passed recently also supports commercial mediation by, for instance, strengthening the enforceability of mediated settlements.

About the Singapore Mediation Centre

Established in 1997, the SMC pioneered the use of mediation as the mainstream mechanism for dispute resolution, as well as training in negotiation and conflict management. Today, SMC offers a suite of alternative dispute resolution services which brings clarity and objectivity to complex

situations. These services include mediation, neutral evaluation, collaborative family practice and domain name dispute resolution. Through our panel of professional mediators with legal and industry expertise, SMC is well-placed to manage difficult negotiations and unlock standstills for businesses by providing cost-effective and timely solutions. At SMC, our vision is to help all businesses fully appreciate the value of mediation as a strategic risk-management tool that they can count on in commercial dealings.

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