



*Fátima's advice to aspiring lawyers ".... I would say stay humble and available. This is what a mentor told me when I was a trainee lawyer, and I found it so wise and fitting."*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW PARTNER FÁTIMA DERMAWAN

Being MdME's first homegrown partner, Fátima Dermawan shares her thoughts and experiences in her specialized field working in the firm.

The promotion of Fátima Dermawan to MdME's global partnership took effect on 15 July 2022.

MdME's managing partner Rui Pinto Proença commented:

"We are proud to invite Fátima into our partnership. Her journey and achievements with MdME reflect our strong commitment to investing in our people. Fátima is an outstanding lawyer who has proved that she's a litigator worth her salt. She enhances not only our traditional

strengths in dispute resolution but her international experiences and exposure, coupled with her linguistic capabilities, also help our firm expand our client base and cross-border credentials significantly. Her promotion signifies the firm's steadfast commitment to its litigation and arbitration practice and determination to further strengthen the team's footprint in developing alternative dispute resolution in Macau."

## **“Don’t be afraid to overprepare, that is what makes us good lawyers.”**

**- Fátima Dermawan**

Triple-qualified in Macau, New York, and Portugal, Fátima represents domestic and multinational companies as both plaintiffs and defendants in a broad range of litigation matters, with a focus on high-stakes civil and commercial disputes and arbitration. She acts at various court levels in a wide variety of matters, including general commercial and contractual disputes, securities and regulatory matters, property, construction matters, and land resumption litigation. Aside from litigation work, Fátima has been actively developing her practice in arbitration, having handled a range of commercial arbitration cases.

Fátima has particular interest and strength in handling cross-border commercial arbitration disputes, an area of advocacy in which she believes has exponential potential to grow.

Fátima commented:

“Arbitration has really grown in Macau over the past few years given its new legal framework that was put in place in 2020 as well as global travel restrictions due to the pandemic. Clients now see arbitration as a much more attractive option. We have seen a marked increase in clients actively seeking advice around resolving disputes through arbitration as well as including arbitration clauses in their contracts. There is a lot of potential in this space. So as a new partner, one of my key goals is not just to help our clients understand and utilise arbitration more but also to build out an even stronger alternative dispute resolution practice for MdME.”

Fluent in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Portuguese, Fátima’s language skills stand her in good stead when acting for clients on complex cross-border disputes, particularly those involving multilingual and multijurisdictional issues.

“We are seeing an increase in the usage of Chinese language in disputes, judges and opposing counsel are using Chinese legal terms more, and important court decisions are often issued in both Portuguese and Chinese languages. There’s also a need to understand the Chinese culture particularly if Chinese parties are involved, so it’s

incredibly important for our clients, many of whom are based in mainland China, that I’m able to leverage my language skills effectively for them.”



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**- Fátima Dermawan**

Born and raised in Macau, Fátima has lived and studied in Lisbon and Boston. She completed her LL.B. degree at Nova Law School, obtained her LL.M. degree at Católica Global School of Law, as well as an LL.M. from Harvard Law School.

Fátima joined MdME in 2015. Prior to that, she worked at a first-tier law firm in Lisbon, Portugal, which operated in association with MdME.

Entering partnership, as part of her management role at the firm as head of the Talent Management Committee, one of her goals is to help nurture and empower young talents.

“I am immensely proud and honoured to be the first homegrown partner at MdME, where I started and developed my career. I have been fortunate to be able to spend some time living, studying, and working abroad, so it was important for me upon returning to Macau to work in an environment that is international and multicultural in

nature. I've certainly found that in MdME. The support that the firm has afforded me as I took some time away to pursue further studies in the U.S. is also the strongest reflection of how the firm believes and invests in its people. The culture of promotion here is transparent and, as a female lawyer, it's something I truly advocate for. In partnership, I hope my journey at the firm inspires our younger colleagues to continue developing their careers at MdME.

As a piece of advice that I would give to aspiring lawyers, I would say stay humble and available. This is what a mentor told me when I was a trainee lawyer, and I found it so wise and fitting. Being humble and available is so important for us lawyers in this fast-paced and ever-changing industry, we must be ready to engage in continuous learning, irrespective of our years of experience, as well as learning

from our peers, opposing counsel, and clients. Don't be afraid to overprepare, that is what makes us good lawyers."

Fátima's highlight matters include:

- Representing a Hong Kong-based land concessionaire in a damages claim against the Macau Government; the sum in dispute exceeded USD 10.6 billion.
- Assisted a Macau gaming concessionaire in a legal action involving a breach of contract claim; the sum in dispute exceeded USD 12 billion.
- Advised a governmental entity of a Middle East country in a multinational civil fraud case involving Macau banks; the sum in dispute exceeded USD 57.7 million.

## ABOUT THE FIRM

Since its establishment in 2006, MdME has put its brand of excellence, responsiveness and innovation at the service of major local and international Clients, assisting them in some of the largest and most complex transactions, financings and disputes in Macau.

The Firm has since expanded its footprint to include presences in Hong Kong and Lisbon. This presence in key markets, together with our membership of the Lex Mundi Network, allows us to extend our reach globally.

With its team of professionals qualified to practice in multiple jurisdictions and positioned at the heart of key initiatives of the People's Republic of China such as the Greater Bay Area, One Belt, One Road, and the Chinese investment in Portuguese-speaking countries, MdME is uniquely poised to take a relevant role in assisting Clients in the context of both their inbound and outbound investments.



Fátima Dermawan  
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