

ADDRESS BY PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF MANPOWER AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD, MR. LEO YIP, AT AON CONSULTING'S PRESS CONFERENCE, 24 OCTOBER 2008, 1500 HRS, HIBISCUS ROOM, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

Mr Edouard Merette, CEO Asia Pacific, Aon Consulting

Mr Na Boon Chong, Director Southeast Asia, Aon Consulting

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. Let me just say a few words as Aon Consulting unveils its growth plans for Singapore. Aon's plans are especially exciting against the backdrop of human capital trends, challenges and opportunities in Asia discussed at the Singapore Human Capital Summit.

2. Human capital issues will be increasingly important in Asia as its major economies continue on the path of economic transformation. Companies in Asia will need to tackle more complex human capital challenges. As more global and Asian companies expand their businesses in the region, they will need to develop their own people strategies that are suited for the operating context in different countries. Talent management, leadership succession, workforce branding and trans-cultural management are imperatives that need to be addressed by corporations at the strategic level. The human capital business in Asia is therefore poised for strong growth.

Singapore as location for human capital research

3. Singapore wants to tap on this growth. We have plans to develop Singapore as a location where high end research activities on human capital can be carried out. The new knowledge created from this research can be converted into consulting and

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executive development tools, and harnessed to deliver innovative solutions for Asia and the global market.

4. This is part of the EDB's strategy to grow the professional services sector. Many of the 7,000 MNCs in Singapore have key decision-makers based here who aggregate regional demand for professional services. Our talent pool and Pan-Asian reach will allow Singapore to create knowledge and solutions that can meet this demand. We therefore encourage players in the accounting, market research, human resource and management consulting sectors to anchor R&D and best practices development in Singapore. With our geographical and business connectivity, Singapore is a good location for professional services firms to cover the region.

Significance of Aon's Plans

5. We are excited that Aon Consulting has chosen Singapore as its International Headquarters, which will include a Global IT Development Centre and a Regional Research Centre for Asia Pacific.

6. The Global IT Development Centre will create HR platforms for Aon Consulting's worldwide business. For example, the IT team will engineer web portals for companies to benchmark HR schemes against international standards. This will help their HR planning. IT developers will also design pension-related applications that will help companies structure employee retirement programmes. The work that will be done in Aon's Global IT Development Centre is an example of the high end research and solution development that we want to anchor in Singapore.

7. The Regional Research Centre will generate new insights and solutions on human capital issues that are important to boards of directors and executive management. These solutions and best practices will be helpful to Asian companies in attaining global standards of board governance.

8. With these new investments, Aon Consulting has plans to hire more than 80 professionals over the next 5 years. In recognition of Aon's significant expansion of its global innovation efforts in Singapore, the Economic Development Board is pleased to present it with the International Headquarters Award.

Conclusion

9. I would like to congratulate Aon on the launch of its two R&D Centres. I wish Aon every success in its new ventures.

10. Thank you.

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