

**Speech by Mr William Lim, Executive Director, Dun & Bradstreet (S) Pte Ltd, at the 4<sup>th</sup> SME Credit Bureau Conference on 28 March 2007**

Dr Amy Khor, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Environment and Water Resources,

Ms Jessica Tan, Member of Parliament, East Coast GRC,

Mr Bryan Teh, Executive Director, ASME,

Mr Howard Shaw, Executive Director, Singapore Environment Council,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning and a warm welcome to the 4th SME Credit Bureau Conference. I am pleased to see so many distinguished speakers and participants here today – many of whom have first hand experience running their own small and medium businesses. We also have representatives from the government and private sector agencies and their joint presence here clearly demonstrates that furthering the knowledge base and capabilities of SMEs are prerequisites for Singapore's continued growth.

This year marks the fourth series of this SME Conference. From the first conference in 2005, the organisers have consciously and systematically introduced topics aimed at benefiting SMEs such as access to financing and trade credit, sustainable risk and business management practices and on benchmarking credit worthiness as they expand overseas.

The key initiatives that have been introduced from past conferences include: the SME Credit Bureau, the Singapore SME Toolkit developed by the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group, and Dun & Bradstreet Asia

Pacific's Top 1000 companies, which introduced the concept of Return on Equity to rank the financial performance of a company.

Today's conference takes on the theme of helping SMEs to surf the wave of increasing competition. From staying competitive to building your competitive edge, and from managing risk to achieving greater profitability, these topics have been carefully put together to equip conference participants with the latest tools and resources for business readiness and staying ahead of market trends.

Another thing we are doing this year is to take an adventurous but we believe necessary, step. We are partnering with the Singapore Environment Council, the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises and IBM to introduce an award to recognise SMEs that engage in environmentally-friendly practices. The EDGE Award, the highest accolade for green SMEs, will identify environmentally conscious SMEs that have shown leadership in environmental protection and changed the way they are doing business. By recognising SMEs that are ahead of the curve in eco-friendliness, the EDGE Award aims to promote environmental awareness among the SME community and highlight the benefits of going green such as cost savings and brand enhancement.

With the green theme in mind, we have invited the National Environment Agency to impart strategies on being environmentally-friendly via its various schemes on energy efficiency, as well as the 2006 Singapore Environmental Achievement Award winner Origin Exterminators to share its secrets to going green.

Also to be introduced today is Version 2 of the Singapore SME Toolkit by the International Finance Corporation. While Version 1 provides all the information, tools and templates for users, Version 2 is an interactive portal that allows users to get connected globally, be informed of the latest business trends and to exchange ideas online. There are also new features like moderated forums and

business directory listings which will allow users to source for potential customers or partners globally.

Lastly, I would like to thank ASME for jointly organising this conference with Dun & Bradstreet Singapore and would also like to acknowledge the support of SPRING Singapore, the National Environment Agency, ACCA and the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

I am also grateful to our sponsors, ABN AMRO and IBM for their generous support, to the panel of distinguished speakers who have kindly set aside time for the conference, to the press corp for their coverage and to all of you for your participation. Thank you.

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