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PRESS RELEASE

Third SME Credit Bureau Conference Focuses on Micro Financing and Accessing Middle East Markets

Singapore companies that rank among the Asia Pacific's 1,000 most profitable firms will also be honoured at Conference.

Singapore, 9 March 2007 — What do Singapore companies StarHub Mobile Pte Ltd and APL Co Pte Ltd have in common? They are the two most profitable Singapore companies that have been ranked among the Asia Pacific's best-performing firms in terms of Return on Equity (ROE) in a Dun & Bradstreet report that will be launched at the forthcoming SME Credit Bureau Conference organised by the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME) and Dun & Bradstreet (Singapore) Pte Ltd (D&B Singapore).

The Dun & Bradstreet report, which lists the 1,000 most profitable companies in 12 Asia Pacific countries shortlisted from 14,000 listed and 430,000 non-listed entities across various industries, raises the curtain for the annual SME Credit Bureau Conference – the third since its inception in 2005 – which this year takes on a globalisation theme: “Navigating Globalisation: The Opportunities, Risks and Challenges”. The conference will be held at the Raffles City Convention Centre on 13 April 2007.

The globalisation theme for this year's SME Credit Bureau Conference reinforces the government's call for SMEs to venture abroad for sustained growth in the long term and aims to give SMEs a leg up in penetrating international markets. Says Mr Gary Law, Executive Director of ASME: “The theme of this year's Conference reflects the need for Singapore companies to expand abroad for sustainable and profitable growth, as growing markets around the world offer abundant opportunities and even better margins. However, internationalising a business is not an easy process and comes with risks. This conference allows companies to tap on the knowledge and expertise of the distinguished speakers who have been invited to share their experiences in the global market.”

Says Mr William Lim, Executive Director of D&B Singapore: “The Dun & Bradstreet Report, in line with the theme of this year's SME Credit Bureau Conference, helps globalising companies check their readiness for overseas expansion and benchmark against the top performers in the 12 overseas markets surveyed. We are proud to be honouring at the Conference some of these companies out of the 150 Singapore companies that are ranked in the report.”

Conference Highlights

Business opportunities in the Middle East will take the spotlight during the one-day Conference, underscoring the growing importance of this lucrative market for Singapore businesses. Recent surveys have also shown that SMEs still have problems raising loans from banks to realise their dreams of overseas expansion – another topic that will be addressed at the Conference.

The speaker line-up includes:

- Dun & Bradstreet South Asia & Middle East CEO Rajesh Mirchandani, who has established Dun & Bradstreet's presence and credit bureaus in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa and has been involved in promoting SMEs across the region particularly in the cross-border arena.
- World Bank micro finance specialist Vincent Akue, who has developed innovative financial schemes to facilitate access to finance to SMEs and worked with supporting banks in developing new financial instruments to respond to SME financial needs.
- Benny Pua, managing director of United Texmac Pte Ltd, who will share his company's vision for international growth to China, India and the U.S.

Says Mr William Lim: "The Middle East has recently emerged as a hotspot and an area of huge opportunity and promise for Singapore companies as it is witnessing an unprecedented development phase fuelled by the rise in oil prices. While there are opportunities that await Singapore companies, there are also bumps and minefields. We hope that this Conference will help Singapore companies identify and pursue the opportunities that are suitable and avoid the pitfalls, in order to get a more significant slice of the pie and stay in for the long haul."

Other eminent speakers in the programme line-up include:

- David Yong, Head, Regional Business Banking, ABN Amro
- Stephan H Wissel, Lotus Technology & Productivity Advisor, IBM Singapore
- Yap Lee Yee, Senior Manager, Market Place Development, eBay Southeast Asia

The Conference is supported by IE Singapore and the International Finance Corporation. ABN Amro and IBM are the platinum sponsors.