

MEDIA RELEASE
For immediate release



SINGAPORE BUSINESSES ENCOURAGED TO TAP ON OPPORTUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

IE Singapore and SBF organise mission for Singapore business leaders to network with top Latin America businessmen and explore business opportunities

MR.: 062/08
Singapore, Thursday, 20 November 2008

1. In conjunction with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's visit to Latin America, International Enterprise (IE) Singapore and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) are organising a high-level CEO business mission to Peru, Brazil and Chile from 20 – 29 November 2008.

2. Led by Mr Chong Lit Cheong, Chief Executive Officer, IE Singapore; Mr Tony Chew, Chairman, SBF and Mr Teng Theng Dar, Chief Executive Officer, SBF; the delegation comprises 11 senior businessmen from nine Singapore companies, and officials from IE Singapore, Singapore Economic Development Board and SBF. (For list of companies participating, please refer to [Annex A](#))

Latin America business prospects remain bright

3. Despite the current global economic slowdown, growth prospects for Latin America¹ remain positive. The World Bank² has forecast that Latin America and Caribbean's real GDP will grow by 4.5% for 2008 and 2.1% for 2009. This outstrips the world's real GDP growth rates of 2.6% and 1% respectively. The Consensus Economics³ expects Peru to post real GDP growth rates above 5% in 2009 while Brazil and Chile are expected to grow at about 3%.

4. Says Mr Chong Lit Cheong, "The current economic situation encourages Singapore companies to adopt a long term view and tap on new opportunities for growth. Regions such as Latin America are relatively less affected by the crisis and present many diverse opportunities for Singapore-based companies. For instance, Brazil, with its abundant natural resources, and the largest economy⁴ in Latin America, offers long-term opportunities for Singapore infrastructure, consumer and info-communications players. Chile's externally oriented economy and wide network of free trade agreements also make it an ideal soft launching pad for Singapore companies looking to set up a presence in South America."

¹ Including the Caribbean

² Background paper prepared by the World Bank Group G20 Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy Washington, D.C., November 15, 2008

³ October 2008

⁴ in terms of GDP

Key Singapore Projects in Latin America

5. To date, there are close to 60 Singapore companies which have operations across 30 Latin American countries. (For snapshot of Singapore companies' presence in Latin America, please refer to Annex B).

6. Notable Singapore projects in Latin America include SembCorp Marine and Keppel Offshore & Marine who have been active in Brazil's oil & gas sector for several years. Together they employ over 10,000 workers in Brazil and provide services in jack-up and offshore rigs, as well as conversion of tankers into floating, production, storage and offloading vessels.

7. Keppel Seghers is another good example of a company that has done well in Latin America. They have developed water treatment projects, at both municipal and industrial levels in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.⁵ More recently, Jurong Consultants was appointed the master-planner for a refinery & petrochemical park in Panama.

Singapore projects across a diverse range of sectors and countries in Latin America

8. Singapore companies have been involved in a diverse range of sectors and countries in Latin America, from logistics to agri-commodities to info-communication technology. Inter-Roller, one of the world's leading engineering companies in the design and manufacture of airport logistics systems, has completed projects in Panama and Curacao. In July this year, it was awarded a baggage handling systems contract in Quito, Ecuador.

9. Singapore companies have also established operations to tap on Latin America's rich natural resources. Tri Marine is one of the world's largest tuna supply companies, with focus on supply of tuna and tuna products to the leading brands of tuna. It has offices in 14 countries and processing activities in plants located around the world. In Latin America, the company has commercial operations in Ensenada (Mexico), Barranquilla (Colombia), Panama and Manta (Ecuador).

10. Smaller companies such as smartBridges, a home-grown technology company, are also making their mark in the region. Their carrier-class, high performance wireless connectivity solutions empower communication service providers to establish cost effective, wireless rural broadband networks. smartBridges' solutions are deployed in over 80 countries including Peru, Brazil and Chile. In Peru, they are working with local partners ProInversion and Rural Telecom to establish a countrywide wireless broadband network that provides Internet access and telephone services to the villagers.

11. To help more Singapore-based companies expand into Latin America, IE Singapore has offices in Mexico City and Sao Paulo. It also recently announced the appointment of its fourth Honorary Business Representative (HBR) in Latin America, Dr Alejandro Ferrer, who will be based in Panama. IE Singapore's three other HBRs are based in Chile, Miami and Mexico. This year, its flagship Latin Asia Business Forum which promotes stronger trade and investment linkages between the two regions attracted 420 participants, including Latin America participants from 12 countries. It was also attended by Ministers from Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago.

12. Says Mr Teng Theng Dar, "In such turbulent times and the expected slowdown in growth, it is of even greater importance that businesses continue to pursue internationalisation efforts and opportune themselves to markets beyond the domestic

⁵ Keppel Seghers website, <http://www.keppelseghers.com>

shores or to look for alternative markets for growth. Singapore Business Federation, as the apex business chamber of Singapore, is committed to facilitate, promote and support trade and investment leads to Singapore businesses.”

Singapore CEO Business Mission to Latin America (20-27 November 2008)

13. As part of the programme, the delegation will attend the APEC CEO Summit in Lima, Peru from 20-23 November 2008. The annual APEC CEO Summit has been a key platform for senior business people to engage political leaders, policymakers, influential academics and media representatives, and other CEOs from the Asia Pacific and the Americas.

14. Additionally, SBF, as the national secretariat for the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Singapore, will be actively promoting the interests of the private sector to leaders of the 21 economies attending the November ABAC meeting. ABAC is held in conjunction with the APEC CEO Summit 2008 and the Dialogue Session with the APEC Leaders.

12. During the mission, the delegation will meet principal business organizations such as the Federation of Industries of the State of Sao Paulo (FIESP), APEX Brasil and the Santiago Chamber of Commerce (CCS) to discuss business opportunities between the two communities. They will also attend the ENADE, one of the most significant business conferences in Chile which will be graced by Chilean President, Michelle Bachelet and where Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will be delivering a speech.

13. Apart from a full business agenda, cultural events such as the Singapore Food Festival jointly organised by Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to Chile, Mr Philip Ng, and the Santiago Chamber of Commerce, will also help foster a deeper appreciation of Singapore among the Chilean community through Singapore cuisine. The Singapore Food Festival will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 26 November 2008.

Singapore's trade with Latin America

15. Singapore is Latin America's largest Southeast Asian trading partner. In 2007, total trade between Singapore and Latin America grew 13.7% to reach S\$13.4 billion. (For 2007's Singapore-Latin American trade, please refer to [Annex C](#)) Total trade for the first 10 months of 2008 has already exceeded the total trade for 2007 at S\$18.6 billion.

16. Singapore has three existing Free Trade Agreements in Latin America. They are the Peru-Singapore FTA, the Panama-Singapore FTA and the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement with Brunei, Chile and New Zealand.

17. Brazil was Singapore's 28th largest trading partner worldwide and 2nd largest trading partner in Latin America in 2007. Last year, total bilateral trade amounted to S\$3.2 billion, a 1.1% increase over 2006. For the period of January to October 2008, total trade between Singapore and Brazil amounted to S\$3.09 billion, a 12.1% increase compared to the same period last year.

18. Chile was Singapore's 75th largest trading partner worldwide and 6th largest Latin American trading partner in 2007. Bilateral trade last year was an all-time high of S\$364.6 million. This was an 18.1% increase over the previous year due to a strong showing in exports. Copper, Chile's top export, accounted for 72% of total imports to Singapore in 2007, with fish crustaceans and fish fresh chilled or frozen ranking next on the list. This year, bilateral trade has increased to S\$377.98 million between January to October, surpassing last year's total trade.

19. Peru was Singapore's 118th largest trading partner worldwide and 9th largest trading partner in Latin America in 2007. Total bilateral trade in 2007 was S\$56.1 million. Total trade between Singapore and Peru between January to October 2008 has already exceeded 2007's total trade at S\$60.45 million.

-End -

Note to Editor

Please use 'IE Singapore' or 'IE' if an acronym for 'International Enterprise Singapore' is required. In addition, unless otherwise stated, the use of statistics cited in our media releases, website or Statlink, should be attributed to IE Singapore.

Issued by IE Singapore and SBF

For media enquiries or interviews, please contact:

International Enterprise Singapore

Ms Celine SIM
Assistant Manager
Corporate Communications Group
Tel: + 65 6433 4815
Mobile: + 65 9760 9288
Fax : + 65 6337 8136
Email: celine_sim@iesingapore.gov.sg

Singapore Business Federation

Mr Gerald De Cotta
Director, Corporate Communications
DID: 6827 6896
Email: gerald@sbf.org.sg

Ms Rachael Fong
Executive, Corporate Communications
DID: 6827 6874
Email: rachael.fong@sbf.org.sg

National Archives of Singapore

About International Enterprise Singapore

International Enterprise (IE) Singapore is an agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry spearheading the development of Singapore's external economic wing.

Our mission is to promote the overseas growth of Singapore-based enterprises and international trade. With a global network in over 30 locations and our "3C" framework of assistance – Connections, Competency, Capital, we offer services to help enterprises export, develop business capabilities, find overseas partners and enter new markets. At the same time, we work to position Singapore as a base for foreign businesses to expand into the region in partnership with Singapore-based companies. Please visit www.iesingapore.com for more information.

About Singapore Business Federation

As the APEX business chamber, the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) champions the interests of the business community in Singapore, in trade, investment and industrial relations. Nationally, SBF acts as the bridge between the government and the businesses in Singapore to create a conducive business environment. Internationally, SBF represents the business community in bilateral, regional, multilateral fora for the purpose of trade expansion and business networking.

For more information, please visit our website www.sbf.org.sg

National Archives of Singapore

Companies participating in the mission

1. Asia Resources Corporation Pte Ltd
2. Global Crossing
3. Jurong Consultants Pte Ltd
4. Keppel Offshore & Marine Ltd
5. Keppel Integrated Engineering Ltd
6. Sembcorp Industries Ltd
7. Singapore Airlines Limited
8. Singapore Economic Development Board
9. VT Systems, Inc.

National Archives of Singapore

Snapshot of Singapore Companies in Latin America



Nat

ore

Singapore-Latin America Trade (by Country)⁶

	TOTAL TRADE		IMPORTS		EXPORTS	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
	S\$Million*					
Latin America ⁷	13,363.0 (+13.06%)	11,818.7	3,406.0 (-0.12%)	3,410.1	9,957.0 (+18.41%)	8,408.6
Panama	5,783.8	4,284.8	7.5	3.8	5,776.3	4,281.0
Brazil	3,198.0	3,164.4	1,303.8	1,137.8	1,894.2	2,026.7
Mexico	2,394.6	2,428.4	757.0	825.5	1,637.5	1,602.9
Venezuela	595.0	508.7	533.6	447.7	61.4	61.0
Costa Rica	372.9	374.9	346.4	340.3	26.5	34.6
Chile	364.6	308.6	231.2	253.9	133.4	54.7
Argentina	253.1	192.2	65.3	69.2	187.8	123.0
Colombia	147.8	278.8	63.6	200.9	84.2	78.0
Peru	56.1	68.8	18.7	45.8	37.3	23.1
Uruguay	33.4	40.6	23.1	29.0	10.4	11.7
El Salvador	33.2	33.6	25.9	25.2	7.3	8.4
Ecuador	30.8	29.7	9.0	15.5	21.8	14.2
Belize	25.4	24.3	0.2	0.9	25.3	23.4
Guatemala	20.7	12.8	12.2	5.8	8.5	7.0
Cuba	17.3	21.8	5.8	5.1	11.6	16.7
Honduras	9.1	17.1	0.37	1.7	8.7	15.4
Guyana	8.5	6.9	0.35	0.7	8.1	6.2
Bolivia	7.3	4.3	0.8	0.2	6.4	4.1
Paraguay	4.8	7.6	0.5	1.0	4.3	6.6
Nicaragua	3.4	5.4	0.10	0.0	3.3	5.3
Surinam	3.0	4.9	0.4	0.5	2.6	4.4
French Guiana	0.2	0.3	0.13	0.0	0.06	0.3

National Archives of Singapore

⁶ Source: International Enterprise Singapore

⁷ Rankings of the Latin American countries are in accordance with the Total Trade values of the respective individual countries with Singapore as of 2007.