

**OPENING ADDRESS BY PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MS LOW YEN LING, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF FRANCHISING & LICENSING ASIA 2016 ON 13 OCTOBER, 10.00AM, MARINA BAY SANDS EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTRE**

Chairperson, Franchising and Licensing Association (Singapore), Ms. Donna Lee,

Executive Vice-President, Circulation, Singapore Press Holdings, Mr. Chua Wee Phong,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to join you at the opening ceremony of Franchising and Licensing Asia 2016 (FLAsia).

2. As a key event promoting entrepreneurship, business opportunities and intellectual property rights in Asia, FLAsia's strong standing in the franchising industry has attracted substantial representation of established and promising brands, both local and international.

3. This year's conference theme of "Enter, Expand, Explore" encourages brand owners to enter new markets, expand overseas presence and explore new business horizons.

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**Franchising and Licensing as Effective Modes of Internationalisation**

4. Franchising and licensing are proven means for brand owners to expand their international footprint.

5. An example of a home grown brand that has successfully internationalised through franchising is Fish & Co. Some of you would be familiar with Fish & Co., a casual dining seafood restaurant chain. With its robust franchise system, Fish & Co. has expanded its chain to more than 60 outlets in 11 countries. Its value proposition includes its strong

support for franchisees in marketing and training, and joint R&D to develop localised menu items. It has multiple types of offerings to suit different market needs, from full service restaurants to retail kiosks. Even as Fish & Co. expanded its overseas business, it created employment opportunities in Singapore. Over the past 3 years, the company has created 10 new job roles in business development, training and franchise audit to support the growth of its international franchise business.

### **Government's Efforts in Capability Development and Internationalisation**

6. The Singapore Government is committed to helping Singapore companies build capabilities and grow businesses overseas. We have various schemes in place that support the overseas growth of franchise businesses. Take the example of U E 3G Abacus, a company that provides third-generation abacus learning and training locally and abroad. Its established brand and proprietary training curriculum has allowed it to expand its scale locally, with about 80 instructors serving more than 1,500 students island-wide. To grow internationally, the company turned to SPRING's Capability Development Grant in 2013 to support the development of a robust franchise system. Since then, the company has successfully built its franchise network in Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and is now making plans to venture into South East Asia and India in the next few years.

7. Old Chang Kee, a household name in the F&B industry in Singapore, is another beneficiary of the government's assistance. Old Chang Kee has tapped on IE Singapore's Global Company Partnership scheme to develop its franchising system and international business development capabilities. It has since expanded into Australia, Malaysia and Indonesia through its franchise network.

### **Singapore – The Preferred Location for International Brands**

8. For international brands looking to expand into regional markets, Singapore's prime location and our cosmopolitan population make us an ideal place to test new business concepts and gauge acceptance levels in the region. Companies can tap on our robust intellectual property and

legal infrastructure, strong financing capabilities and overall conducive business environment in their venture into the region.

9. In this regard, we are encouraged to see FLAsia 2016 playing host to international country pavilions from Japan, South Korea and Thailand, with Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation (AT) and Thailand's Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce. These organisations have led their respective home grown brands to exhibit their products and services here. A number of Middle Eastern and European brands are also present with us today.

## **Conclusion**

10. I would like to thank the Franchising and Licensing Association of Singapore and BizLink for your efforts in promoting franchising and licensing as a means of internationalisation.

11. I wish all participants here today every success in your franchising efforts. Thank you.

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