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## **CSR in Malaysia gains momentum at the “International Corporate Social Responsibility Conference 2008 – Where Responsibility Meets the Bottomline”**

*OWW Consulting, RUSS Consulting and the EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry join forces to bring the Malaysian business community the first ever International CSR Conference complete with best-in-class CSR specialist speakers from 4 continents and the United Nations.*

**KUALA LUMPUR, 18 March 2008 (Tuesday):** From 29 to 31 July 2008 OWW Consulting, RUSS Consulting and the EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be hosting the first international CSR Conference in Malaysia: “International Corporate Social Responsibility Conference – Where Responsibility Meets Bottomline” in recognition of Malaysia’s fast growth and leadership in CSR. This groundbreaking event will take place at the Hilton Kuala Lumpur.

According to Dr Geoffrey Williams, Managing Director of OWW Consulting, Malaysia’s only specialist CSR consultancy: “Thanks to the Malaysian Government’s advocacy of CSR amongst Government Linked Companies and the incentives for private companies to stay competitive in the changing global corporate landscape, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles and practices are now being embraced by the Malaysian business community.”

Dr Williams explained: “The Malaysian business community’s adoption of CSR practices is far-sighted and many Malaysian companies are now ahead of the curve in comparison with other Asian countries. This is in step with the global trend towards more responsible and responsive corporate behaviour. So, there has never been a better time for Malaysia to host an International CSR conference to keep the momentum going and to build on the sophistication of Malaysian CSR practices.”

The CSR Conference will have three major highlights. Dr Williams explained: “First of all, this is the first time world-class CSR specialists from 4 continents will be gathering in Kuala Lumpur to share their cutting-edge expertise with the Malaysian business and corporate community. They will also be exchanging solutions and debating ideas on hot button CSR issues with homegrown Malaysian experts from across the corporate and NGO sectors. A wide range of issues from community affairs to environmental challenges to Human Resource management will be addressed at this conference.”

Flying in especially to participate at the event will be CSR luminaries from 4 continents. Currently, the confirmed panel of speakers include: Graham Sinclair, Director of UNPRI (United Nations); Simon Collins, CEO of Resource Alliance (UK); Dr Stephen Brammer, Deputy Director of the Centre for Business Organisations and Society, University of Bath (UK); Kee Kim Boon, International Labour Organisation (Jakarta); and Anne-Marie O'Connor, Head of SRI at the New Zealand Superannuation Fund.

The Malaysian panel of speakers is particularly distinguished, with Y.M Tunku Abdul Aziz Ibrahim President of Caux Roundtable Malaysia (Formerly Director of Transparency International and President TI Malaysia, Advisor to UN Ethics Office) leading the way as a confirmed keynote speaker. He will be joined by his colleague at Caux Roundtable Malaysia, Puvan J. Selvanathan. Also confirmed are Choon Bow Bow, Director of Marketing, WWF Malaysia; Terry Netto, Managing Director, People Potential (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd., Brian J. Lariche, Executive Director of The Liaison Combination (Malaysia), En. Wan Hisham Balkiah Wan Hassan, Country Head of Bureau Veritas (Malaysia) Sdn and Bhd; Dr Reza Azmi, Director and Founder, Wild Asia Sdn Bhd

Also attending are Malaysia-based foreign experts who bridge the gap between global and local CSR knowledge and expertise. These encompass a wide cross-section of experts including Julian Hyde, Director, Reef Check Malaysia; Petra Meekers, Head of Sustainability Asia, BiOX Malaysia; Jeff Zweig, Chief Guru, Webguru Asia, Malaysia, Mirella P.N.C. Soyer, Managing Director, The Liaison Combination Sdn Bhd and Dr Geoffrey Williams himself.

David Jones, Chairman of the EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EUMCCI) said: "The EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry is happy to be part of this groundbreaking conference because it is designed to facilitate not just normal networking and knowledge exchange opportunities but will also include a formal "Business Matching" programme for Malaysian companies and Fund managers from overseas who specialize in Socially Responsible Investment (SRI). This would not only make it simple for both sides to forge connections, but is also a first step towards getting more Malaysian companies to pro-actively get involved with SRI while fostering excellent bilateral business relations."

Dr Williams added: "Our emphasis on SRI is the third element which distinguishes this particular CSR Conference from other similar events around the region. While CSR has become a buzzword and is definitely on the radar of more corporations and NGOs, SRI is lesser known and there is a huge scope for Malaysian companies to benefit from adopting SRI. As SRI is essentially the next step up from basic CSR practices, we hope that this Conference will kick off a strong interest in Malaysian companies looking to build a more deep-seated CSR framework in their business practices."

Dr Williams explained: “Furthermore, SRI is big business as there is around US\$4 trillion (RM12.9 trillion) in Global SRI Funds, an additional US\$300-500 billion (RM1-1.7 trillion) in Syariah compatible funds and in Asia around US\$32.3 billion (RM104 billion) in 180 funds. Global SRI Funds are equivalent to twenty-times the size of the market capitalisation of the entire Malaysian PLCs listed on Bursa Malaysia. If just US\$1 in every US\$1,000 of these funds can be attracted into Malaysia there would be extra capital worth twice the size of the top-100 companies on Bursa. There is definitely enormous untapped potential there and we hope to help Malaysian companies unlock it beginning with this Conference.”

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### **About OWW Consulting**

OWW Consulting is a leading provider of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) solutions and Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) research in Asia Pacific and the Middle East. We aim to help organisations to understand how their financial, economic, social and environmental performance can be enhanced through socially responsible business practices.

Our portfolio includes:

- CSR and non-financial risk assessments and audits
- CSR Reporting and Advisory Services
- CSR Assurance Services
- CSR Training, Coaching and Mentoring
- CSR / SRI Research Services

Our international partners include Vigeo Group , and Bureau Veritas , the leading non-financial assurance firm. Vigeo is a leading European Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) rating agency. Their clients include key French, UK, Swiss, Belgian, Dutch, Japanese, Italian and German asset managers and institutional investors.

We are Organisational Stakeholders of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and supporters of the UN Global Compact . OWW was the first signatory to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) in Malaysia and Singapore.

### **About RUSS Consulting**

RUSS Consulting is an Integrated Communications Consultancy established by Rasila Hamzah, an industry veteran with 30 years of experience in Public Relations and Corporate Communications, in July 2007.

We provide our Clients with the full-suite of specialised Communications services including Corporate Social Responsibility, Investor Relations, Public Relations, Crisis Communications and Management, and Public Affairs. We also offer a strong network of media, government and corporate contacts in Malaysia and Singapore and a presence abroad in countries including Indonesia, Thailand, India, China and Australia.

One of our outstanding features as an organisation is that our staff devote a chunk of their working time to pro bono projects such as this charity bachelor auction. We believe in striking a balance between leveraging our skills, resources and network for business purposes and for helping worthy causes.

### **About the EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EUMCCI)**

In May 2003 the EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EUMCCI) emerged from the former European Union Business Council (EUBC). The EU presence in Malaysia commenced through the European Community Business Council incorporated under the Registry of Companies on 8 May 1993.

The Chamber is a non-profit private sector organization. Members of EUMCCI are Bilateral Chambers and Business Councils and European or European-related companies through business councils or directly.

The EUMCCI Board comprises representatives from all the European Union countries present in Malaysia. They are appointed by the respective Bilateral Chambers of Commerce or Business Councils. In cases where such organization doesn't exist, they will then be represented by the respective Trade Commissioners/Commercial Counsellors.

EUMCCI carries out activities that will catalyze and stimulate networking of European companies in Malaysia with the Malaysian business community, business associations, relevant ministries, official representations and other chambers in Asia. These activities are balanced between social and business activities.

### **For more information, please contact:**

Nor Hezerine Mohd Noor, PR Executive  
RUSS Consulting  
No.26-3, Jalan 28/70 A, Desa Sri Hartamas,  
50480 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel : +603 2300 0795 / +603 2300 0705  
Fax : +603.2300 0295  
Email : erine.russconsulting@gmail.com

Regina Yau, Associate Director and Head of Secretariat  
RUSS Consulting  
No.26-3, Jalan 28/70 A, Desa Sri Hartamas, 50480  
Kuala Lumpur  
Tel : +603 2300 0795 / +603 2300 0705  
Mob : +6016 229 8860  
Email : ryau\_work@yahoo.com