

COMPLEMENTING 'HOME FOR TALENT' INITIATIVE

Unilever opens S\$80m leadership training centre

Facility, named Four Acres, is the MNC's first such centre outside the United Kingdom

LEE YEN NEE
 leeyennee@mediacorp.com.sg

SINGAPORE – The Republic's ambition to be a hub for training high-quality talent took a step forward yesterday with the opening of an S\$80 million global leadership development centre by consumer goods giant Unilever.

Officiating at the opening, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said that the facility, named Four Acres, complements the Home for Talent initiative, a strategy by the Economic Development Board (EDB) to make the country a place for companies to manage and develop talent to drive growth in Asia.

"Basing Four Acres here makes

sense for both Unilever and Singapore. To Unilever, we like to think that it enables (the firm) to take advantage of our talent development ecosystem and capabilities ... and helps (it) to groom leaders who will seize the opportunities in emerging regional markets," said Mr Lee.

"To Singapore, it also makes sense because Four Acres complements our Home for Talent initiative," he added.

Unilever's leadership development campus, located at Nepal Hill at one-north, is its first such centre outside the United Kingdom. The decision to base the campus in Asia reflects Unilever's strategy to grow its business in developing and emerging markets, which now account for more than 55 per cent of its global revenue, said Unilever's Chief Executive Officer Paul Polman.

The company aims to double the size of its business by 2020, and the bulk of the growth will be driven by sales in developing markets.

“With the partnerships we forged with local training vendors here, the people who train here will get an opportunity to be exposed to the faster growing markets and the issues that leaders face in Asia.”

Mr John Nolan
 UNILEVER'S SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES FOR GLOBAL MARKETS



Mr Lee speaking to Unilever staff during his tour of Four Acres yesterday. PHOTO: UNILEVER

"Singapore sits at the nexus of the developed and emerging world. It's a leading hub for leadership and innovation, and a gateway to the rapidly growing Asian economies. When our future leaders come here ... we know they will gain exposure to new insights and perspectives," said Mr Polman.

Four Acres in Singapore will deliver more than half of the 90 global leadership development courses Unilever plans to conduct globally every year. Between the campuses in Singapore and London, the programmes will train close to 3,000 employees annually.

Some of these courses will be con-

ducted in cooperation with educational institutions here such as the Singapore Management University and Human Capital Leadership Institute.

"With the partnerships we forged with local training vendors here, the people who train here will get an opportunity to be exposed to the faster-growing markets and the issues that leaders face in Asia. I think that will provide them with a unique experience that they probably couldn't get if they were in London," Unilever's Senior Vice-President for Human Resources for Global Markets John Nolan told TODAY.