

Ravi Menon: Inauguration of Swiss National Bank's Singapore branch

Congratulatory remarks by Mr Ravi Menon, Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, at the inauguration of Swiss National Bank's Singapore branch, Singapore, 11 July 2013.

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Mr Thomas Jordan, Chairman of the Governing Board, Swiss National Bank

Ambassador Thomas Kupfer

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

I am delighted to be here to celebrate the opening of Swiss National Bank's first overseas branch office, right here in Singapore.

The opening of SNB's Singapore branch is significant. It reflects the growing importance of Asian markets in the portfolios of many long-term investors such as the SNB. Currently, there are over 500 players in the asset management industry operating in Singapore with total assets under management of around USD 1.1 trillion.

If Asia is the heart of the global economy, then it is in Singapore that you feel the heartbeat. From Singapore, you will get a good feel of not just the well-established markets in Northeast Asia, but also the rapidly emerging ones in South and Southeast Asia. This new branch office will help SNB form closer and stronger ties with partners in this fast-growing part of the world. In particular, SNB will have the opportunity to exchange views with the vibrant asset management community in Singapore, including many Asia-focused managers and investment professionals.

We are doubly pleased that SNB has chosen to come to Singapore, because our two countries are like kindred spirits. The popular media sometimes calls Singapore the "Switzerland of Asia". We have always taken the comparison as a great compliment. Switzerland is known the world over for its stability, prudence, efficiency, and diligence – all attributes that we in Singapore also aspire to. Both Switzerland and Singapore are small trading nations with a shared interest in promoting free trade and maintaining an open, rules-based global economy.

Switzerland is an important economic partner to Singapore. Many Swiss multinationals have a strong presence in Singapore and they are a source of high value-added investments. Similarly, Singapore companies are actively making direct investments in Switzerland. Today, Switzerland is our 5th largest trading partner in Europe while Singapore is Switzerland's 4th largest trading partner in Asia.

As central banks, SNB and MAS share some common challenges. Since the financial crisis, the openness, financial soundness, and strong fundamentals of our two countries have made us highly attractive to global capital, with implications for monetary and exchange rate policies, on which we exchange views. Our two institutions also have to manage a growing pool of official foreign reserves in a global market that is increasingly uncertain.

The opening of SNB's Singapore branch is an important milestone in the strong friendship and good relations between Singapore and Switzerland, and between MAS and SNB. Through this branch, our two institutions will come even closer together and I look forward to new areas of cooperation.

We value highly our relationship with SNB. Working with SNB over the last ten months to set up this branch has been a real delight for MAS. You are clear in your objectives, methodical in your approach, and always gracious and understanding in your dealings. Thomas, you will always have the full support of my colleagues and I at the MAS, as SNB grows its presence here.

Once again, please accept my congratulations on the opening of your branch. Have an enjoyable evening ahead!