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GIC head explains the 'smart way' to comply

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[SINGAPORE] Keeping up with increasing compliance is of great concern to companies, and Singapore's top sovereign wealth fund GIC Pte Ltd (formerly known as Government of Singapore Investment Corporation) is facing a similar challenge.

But companies have to be careful not to let onerous rules hold them back. GIC group president Lim Siong Guan said at a plenary discussion yesterday.

"Compliance is a big challenge, the way I see GIC

as a fund manager. And obviously, compliance is about making sure you follow the rules – and more so for GIC because it is the fund manager of the government and all our investments are in the name of the Singapore government, which means that there are other factors that we have to take into consideration, like reputational risks.

"I would say it is a continuous drive for me and my company to keep up with compliance," he said.

But Mr Lim added that there should be more peo-

ple at the operational level being more vocal in their views on compliance and providing feedback to management on the practicality of the rules – rather than just following the rules in silence. In other words, companies should "live within the rules but live in a smart way" and equip their people to make good decisions, he said.

GIC has in-house legal department, risk, compliance and audit teams that ensure that it adheres to best practices and complies with high standards of gov-

ernance and strong risk management.

While Mr Lim noted that trust is the most important quality for companies, greater transparency alone does not always lead to greater trust. Companies have to manage themselves with integrity that generates trust from employees and clients, he said.

Mr Lim was addressing a question on compliance from the audience at the Stars Singapore Symposium yesterday that saw close to a hundred participants. The Stars Symposi-

um targets talents who are earmarked to be leaders in their organisations.

Founded by Toni Schoenenberger, CEO of UBS Wolfsberg, the symposium is being held in Singapore for the first time, having been hosted in Switzerland for six years and in China for two years.

About 75 per cent of the participants came from the business sector, while the rest came from government, educational institutions, non-government organisations and the media.

Mr Lim, who has just

launched his book, *The Teacher And You: Leadership Through The Third Generation*, also shared his thoughts about global leadership at the symposium.

He emphasised the need for good self-management before leading others, and leading changes within the organisation. "Performing well today is not enough," he said, stressing the need for companies to embrace change "in good time" and "in good times", and to think ahead.